

BCCA makes initial response to new Business Task Force

The provincial government recently announced the formation of a new Business Task Force created to identify legislation, regulation, and procedures that unnecessarily increase the cost of doing business in British Columbia. The BC Construction Association has been invited to participate in this effort. The mandate of the Task Force is as follows:

- 1 Make recommendations on how to reduce the cost of doing business in British Columbia by streamlining and eliminating unnecessary provincial government legislation, regulations, processes and procedures.
- 2 Recommend priorities for the reduction of red tape and regulatory burden.
- 3 Recommend measures to prevent the creation of unnecessary new regulations.
- 4 Report quarterly on progress.

The Task Force will **not** be involved with any policy area already under review, in order to prevent duplications. This would include issues involving the Labour Code, WCB and Employment Standards.

The process of the Task Force is three-fold:

- 1 Industry groups are to identify priorities, and Government is to present the Task Force with an implementation plan
- 2 Government ministries will be asked to identify deregulation priorities.
- 3 The Task force will direct work on alternative regulatory mechanisms by ministries.

The BC Construction Association prepared an initial response for a meeting scheduled on June 12, 1998, with the Task Force. The following problem areas were addressed:

- 1 *Builder's Lien Act.* There are a number of outstanding issues with the new Act, such as: The new progressive release of holdbacks, and the potential for conflict between the subcontractor's payment certifier and the general contractor's payment certifier; the creation of an Owner's trust section; exclusion of "Highways" under the Act.
- 2 *Limitation Act.* There is concern about the effect of recent case law suggesting that the liability of a contractor could be extended to a period of 30 years or longer in some instances. We recommended the reduction of the "ultimate limitation" period from 30 years to 10.
- 3 *Payment of Sales Tax by Non-Resident Contractors.* Enforcement is needed to prevent an

unfair competitive advantage over Resident Contractors.

4 *Municipal Act and the BC Building Code.* There are numerous problems concerning both regulations and procedures. For example: Construction time and money lost due to delays waiting for inspectors; the limiting of liability for municipalities without consequent reduction of fees or relinquishment of authority; the duplication of regulations; conflicting regulations; the lack of knowledge about the industry; inconsistency of interpretation from one municipality to the other.

5 *Reinstatement of Services Previously Offered by the Building Standards Branch.* When the Building Standards Branch was eliminated, with it went the ability to do comprehensive Building Code interpretations, product reviews, and approvals. We recommended that these services be replaced. That there must be an effective mechanism whereby proposed code changes can be reviewed on an on-going basis; where products used in the construction industry can be approved to provide consistency throughout the province. That there needs to be a group, with authority, to whom a builder can go for a central authorized interpretation of the Building Code. This group will consult with the industry and keep stakeholders informed of interpretations and changes.

We would like to thank members who were able to contribute to this initial presentation, and would encourage members to relate any further regulatory issues they encounter, or recall, to the BCCA as this will be an on-going process.

1998 BC BUILDING CODE UPDATE

We have been expecting an announcement from the BC Government regarding when the new 1998 BC Building Code would be implemented. However, this announcement has been delayed. We suspect the delay is due to the Barrett Inquiry. The announcement is now expected some time during June or early July of this year.

WARNING!!

1997/98 was the first year BCCA produced the **Membership Directory & Buyers' Guide** in house. As a result of this change we have developed some competition.

There was considerable confusion last year with some of our members advertising in the BCCA Directory.

Remember to take precaution when approached by any form of solicitation in order to make sure of which directory you are dealing with.

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