
“BEST BID” NAMED CONSTRUCTION PHRASE OF THE YEAR

VICTORIA, BC December 18, 2017 – The British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) named “Best Bid” the most important two words in construction this year, following a statement by Premier Horgan in October to the BC Federation of Labour:

“Low bids might be good for BC Liberals, but “best bids” are what we are going to do,” said the Premier.

In construction, the success or failure of a project begins with the procurement process. The definition of “best bid” is potentially the most important definition for BC’s economy: it will determine which contractors are successful in making their bids for government projects totalling in the billions of dollars.

“The go-forward decision for Site C is an important example of why the definition of “best bid” matters,” says BCCA President Chris Atchison. “The Premier has stated that low bid is no longer BC Hydro’s most important consideration, referring to new priorities such as local benefit and the hiring of Indigenous workers. When subjective criteria enter the award process, we risk compromising the integrity of the final product and add risk for the taxpayers.”

At the very basic level, a “best bid” would be defined as an offer to do work at a stated price of the most excellent, effective, and desirable quality. The BCCA provides this industry-specific definition:

In a construction bid, desirable qualities are defined by a set of non-subjective criteria which the owner uses to identify the proponent with the optimal combination of relevant experience, skills, competencies, and price. Ideally (to insure a fair, open and transparent process) this is a two stage process, with the second stage focusing on the price.

“The industry fully supports initiatives which encourage equity seeking groups to participate in construction,” assures Atchison. “However, when construction procurement requirements in the public sector indicate preference for employment based on subjective criteria this gets in the way of the fair, open, and transparent processes that are the responsibility of government to all citizens.”

The most productive and positive way for a public owner to encourage employment from equity seeking groups is to continue to support industry-led employment and business development programs. These programs reach into BC’s communities to provide the training and supports that assist underrepresented British Columbians to find, qualify for, and succeed in construction careers with integrity of process and outcome.

“We acknowledge the Premier for recognizing that it’s not all about low bid, but if we don’t go to quality and experience first, then we are on a slippery slope,” cautions Warren Perks, BCCA VP of Industry Practises.