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From: CLRInfo
Sent: April 16, 2020 10:29 AM
Subject: COVID 19 Update: April 16
Attachments: Letter_PMJT_PJH_April_15_2020_BC_Construction_Recovery_Stimulus..pdf

Importance: High

CLR Members,

Federal Government Announcements

The Prime Minister (PM) didn't offer any significant details today in terms of changes to the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) which offers \$2,000/month to those who can't earn an income due to the pandemic. He did indicate again that the program will be available to Canadians who are season workers, those earning less than \$1,000/month, or those who have ran out of EI eligibility. More details are yet to be announced.

The government is also wanting to increase wages for essential workers earning less than \$2,000/month (ie: nurses, elderly care workers). The PM Will be talking with Premiers about this tonight. Another issue on the agenda for that meeting will be ensuring access to the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE's).

As part of the constant effort to make the programs government has implemented accessible to those most in need, the government says it is listening to businesses and citizens who are continually asking for more help. As a result of that input, the government has made changes to the Canada Emergency Business Account. To date, 195,000 loans have been approved (more than \$7.5 billion in credit to small and medium sized businesses). Despite this, many businesses have complained that they do not meet the eligibility criteria. As a result, the federal government has changed the eligibility threshold. Now, businesses with payroll in 2019 between \$20,000-\$1.5 million (expanded from the \$50,000 to \$1,000,000 announced previously) will be eligible to receive a government backed interest free loan up to \$40,000. The loans will be partially forgivable and are available through Banks and Credit Unions. The loan can be used for operational costs and other immediate business needs. Property owners will also now get Canadian Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance providing small and medium sized businesses with support for commercial rent for April, May and June. The federal government needs to discuss this with the provinces and Territories since rental relationships are their responsibility to govern.

Provincial Government Announcements

The BC government is providing enhanced relief for businesses by reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25%, along with new measures to support local governments facing temporary revenue shortfalls as a result of COVID-19.

The Province is taking significant new steps to support B.C. businesses, non-profits and other organizations. Included in this is a further reduction in the school property tax rate for commercial properties to achieve an average 25% reduction in the total property tax bill for most businesses (up to \$700 million). The BC government is also postponing the date that late payment penalties apply for commercial properties in classes 4-8 to October 1, 2020. This will result in giving businesses more time to pay their reduced property tax, without penalty.

The Province is addressing cash flow and revenue shortfalls with new measures that provide additional support for municipal governments, providing them with the resources necessary to meet their operational costs and other responsibilities.

Full release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020FIN0020-000703>

CLR Advocacy

There are a number of issues that the CLR, often in partnership with other associations, are advocating to government for on behalf of our members. Many of these advocacy efforts have resulted in support measures implemented for the benefit of our members and industry. I wanted to share one such advocacy effort that we have participated in. Attached is a letter to the Prime Minister and BC Premier for your information that calls on all levels of government to identify “shovel-ready” infrastructure projects which can be tendered as soon as possible. In addition, we are encouraging senior officials within both federal and provincial governments to work together to identify those projects for stimulus funding which require additional work; that is, those projects which require additional permitting, regulatory approvals, and Indigenous consultation and/or accommodation. Read the attached letter for details on the requests.

As the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), governments and other experts keep telling us. We are far from seeing an end to this pandemic. We have more information and resources available to us now that will improve our ability to continue to manage our businesses in a manner that keeps our industry operating as well as our workers safe. But there is no opportunity whatsoever to loosen up on any controls at this time. Please continue to maximize safety at least to the levels expected by government Guidelines. Our ability to operate and continue to be seen by government as an essential service depends on our focus on, and ability to, maintain safe operations.

Please let CLR staff know if you have any questions or concerns that we can assist you with.

Sincerely,

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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