

MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Infrastructure investment is Canada’s economic healthcare program”

MHCA offers recommendations at federal government roundtable meeting

(July 18, 2012 - Winnipeg, MB) – The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) offered support for a Long Term Infrastructure Program (LTIP) that is permanent in nature, and recognizes the clear links between investment in infrastructure and Canada’s economic productivity, competitiveness and therefore growth.

“Infrastructure investment is Canada’s economic healthcare program,” said Chris Lorenc, President of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA).

The MHCA offered its assessment at a round table meeting of key stakeholders to explore the creation of a long-term plan for public infrastructure that extends beyond the expiry of the *Building Canada* plan in 2014.

The MHCA offered a number of key recommendations to the Honourable Steven Fletcher, Minister of State (Transport) on key features of an LTIP:

- It should reflect Canada’s commitment to reinvest in the growth of our economy and the capacity to generate wealth with which to fund core social programs that enable our envied quality of life and standard of living.
- Recognize the clear link between investment in infrastructure and economic growth – *Canada’s economic healthcare program* (see below)
- Transition, over three years, all federal gas tax revenues dedicated to municipalities to address their collective municipal infrastructure deficit which hovers around \$243 billion
- Encourage LTIP projects to be tendered between October and December for the following season, and award contracts in a timely manner. This would have the impact of extending the construction season, enhancing worker incomes and reducing their reliance on EI benefits.

- Educate Canadians about the advantages associated with public private partnerships (P3s) – better, cheaper, faster - as one method of funding investment in Canada's infrastructure.

The LTIP should recognize the clear link between infrastructure investment and economic growth. *“In structuring the program, the government should approve and promote projects that best contribute to and support local, provincial, regional and national economic growth,”* said Chris Lorenc, MHCA President.

New development in Winnipeg is a prime example of how the LTIP can reflect a clear link between infrastructure investment and economic growth. *“IKEA would not be in Winnipeg if there was no investment in fundamental infrastructure, namely street, sewer and water,”* says Chris Lorenc, MHCA President. He added that, *“by investing in re-developing Kenaston Boulevard, along with sewer and water, Winnipeg opened the door to IKEA, an exciting new development. IKEA alone will create more than 300 jobs plus new shopping destination, tourism, hotel and entertainment growth in the economy which will support the quality of life Winnipeggers have come to enjoy.”*

The MHCA also sees Manitoba as an important Canadian gateway to global trade and strategic investing in infrastructure ensures it stays that way. The MHCA supports a number of key infrastructure investment projects including CentrePort Canada Way to help launch CentrePort Canada, Canada's first inland port; the development of the Port of Churchill as Canada's northern trade gateway; and major highways across Manitoba which help sustain Manitoba's trade profile including, the Perimeter, Highway 75 south to the United States, the Headingly, St. Norbert and Emerson by-passes and the Emerson border crossing.

Additionally, most Manitoba municipalities will be required to invest billions of dollars over the next decade to repair, replace or expand existing infrastructure to keep pace with aging infrastructure, along with demands coincident with growth. Those include water and wastewater treatment and distribution systems, mass public transit and city streets many of which are already in deplorable condition. In addition, municipalities face pressure to upgrade community centers and other civic structures.

“Canada's Long Term Infrastructure Program could be an important initiative to help address the municipal infrastructure deficit many Manitoba communities are now facing while generating economic growth and jobs,” said Lorenc.

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