

March 23, 2020

The Honourable Scott Moe
Premier of Saskatchewan
226 Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B3

Dear Premier Moe:

I am writing on behalf of private sector engineering firms in the province. We want you to know that our industry stands ready to support the Government of Saskatchewan in both the development and continued maintenance and of Saskatchewan infrastructure during COVID-19. There are three critical things to which we wish to draw your attention:

1. One of the many ways engineers provide professional services is through planning and design, with these types of services being very well suited to remote delivery. Many Saskatchewan engineering firms pivoted quickly to working remotely, and are well positioned to contribute to economic recovery through infrastructure stimulus.

The types of things that would support SK infrastructure stimulus would include honouring the capital commitments in the Budget Estimates introduced on March 18, as well as fast-tracking, where feasible, future contemplated capital projects in the Provincial Capital Plan. There is precedent for this approach. Historically, in times of economic downturn the planning and design portion of capital projects continued, even though construction was paused, in recognition of the significant lead time necessary for design services to be completed. In fact, it has been demonstrated that infrastructure stimulus can play a key role in economic recovery, and to do this, **our firms need to start designing now, because it will take six months to two years before these designs are completed and be ready to support shovels in the ground.** If layoffs begin now, our member firms will be unable to maintain industry capacity to support any proposed infrastructure stimulus.

2. Society NEEDS sustained infrastructure systems delivery at this pivotal moment in history. Another way engineering can deliver value during wide population redistribution is to ensure the infrastructure systems people depend on are not impacted during this health crisis. Right now there are rebalanced and amplified load demands on all types of infrastructure, including: telecommunications and internet, power, energy, water, wastewater, sanitation and critical transportation connections.

It is possible that increased service levels required to support these additional demands will be too much for public engineers alone. Our members can offer extra capacity to reduce the consequences of additional unprecedented system strain. We are locally based, already know many of these systems well, and are ready to assist. Engineers, public or private, all take oaths to protect public health and safety.

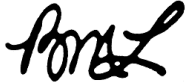
You are already seeing the internet and cell phone service being overtaxed. Other systems are being used in unprecedented ways as well. Therefore, our industry strongly believes the Operations and Maintenance of these infrastructure systems, which also includes construction services to maintain these levels, must be classified as an **essential service**. Maintaining essential infrastructure that supports our current quality of life is critical to also maintain a sense of normalcy and to avoid further unneeded stress for Saskatchewan citizens during this health crisis.

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3. Also consider whether it may become necessary to repurpose current capital assets in the province. The engineering community offers the expertise and experience to facilitate much of that retooling or repurposing. As examples, pipelines can be rerouted, and smaller but no less important items such as dropping additional electrical capacity into repurposed buildings all require engineers.

Premier Moe, private sector engineering companies can help Saskatchewan survive these turbulent times. Please let us know how we can contribute.

Sincerely,



Beverly MacLeod

Executive Director

Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – Saskatchewan (ACEC-SK)

Cc: Hon. Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Trade and Export Development
Hon. Dustin Duncan, Minister of Environment, Minister Responsible for SaskPower
Hon. Greg Ottenbreit, Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency
Hon. Don Morgan, QC, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister Responsible for SaskTel
Hon. Bronwyn Eyre, Minister of Energy and Resources, Minister Responsible for SaskWater, Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy
Hon. Gordon Wyant, QC, Deputy Premier, Minister of Education, Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds
Hon. Donna Harpauer, Minister of Finance
Hon. Lori Carr, Minister of Government Relations