

March 23, 2016 by **On-Site Magazine**

The federal budget is getting a thumbs up across the construction sector for the government's long-term commitment to investment in infrastructure and labour initiatives.

"Infrastructure renewal is critical to the future of Canada," said Michael Atkinson, president of the Canadian Construction Association. "Budget 2016 commits an impressive additional \$60 billion plus in new federal infrastructure investments in two phases, while accelerating portions of the existing Building Canada Fund. The budget also commits unused portions of the previous Building Canada Fund to the Gas Tax Fund over the next two years."



Michael Atkinson, President, Canadian Construction Association

In addition to these new infrastructure funds, Budget 2016 also commits \$3.4 billion in investments for federal infrastructure assets, as well as \$2 billion over three years starting this fiscal year for a new post-secondary institution investment fund. Combined, these commitments will significantly accelerate the pace of infrastructure modernization across Canada.

"CCA looks forward to the timely implementation of Phase I and is optimistic that these funds will be available for the 2016 construction season," Atkinson added. "The Association also looks forward to working with the government in helping to shape Phase II of its infrastructure plan, which promises to be broader and more ambitious than Phase I."

The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) also supports infrastructure initiatives.

"The federal government clearly recognizes that there is an urgent need in Canada to make key infrastructure investments across the country," said PCA President Paul de Jong. "PCA members stand ready to make this government's vision for infrastructure a reality. We urge the government to ensure that there is fair access for contractors to bid on infrastructure projects in all jurisdictions, regardless of union affiliation."

Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) has long been a proponent of infrastructure investment.

“Our labour-management construction alliance agrees that in this slow-growth, low-interest rate environment, investing in public infrastructure is the best way to stimulate our economy,” says Andy Manahan, executive director of RCCAO.



Andy Manahan, Executive Director RCCAO

In fact, independent research by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) shows the economic benefits of public infrastructure through Ontario’s 10-year plan: a \$1-billion investment will result in \$1.7 billion in provincial tax revenue and \$1.6 billion for federal coffers with good capital spending.

“Our independent research has shown that public infrastructure investments have tremendous long-term economic benefits and are vital to improving our economic prospects, including wages,” Manahan says.

In addition, RCCAO believes that the [new Canadian Infrastructure Bank \(CIB\)](#) will be a viable option to finance, evaluate and deliver the country’s next wave of infrastructure investment and foster growth for Canada. RCCAO’s most recent report is called “Creating an Effective Canadian Infrastructure Bank,” written by Associate Prof. Matti Siemiatycki of the University of Toronto. “In light of the up-front infrastructure investment that was lower than expected, the CIB will take on a greater role,” Manahan says.

Canada’s Building Trades Unions have also jumped on board in support of some budget initiatives on the labour front. Of particular note is the proposed \$85.4 million over five years that is designated to support union-based apprenticeship training.

“The role of training centers has now been fully realized as foundational in the creation of a robust middle class defined by the skilled trades,” said Robert Blakely, Canadian Operating Officer of CBTU.

“This government has demonstrated their commitment to economic growth that benefits all Canadians.”

CBTU will continue to work with the Government on Employment Insurance and income tax measures that will facilitate the movement of unemployed Canadians to labour markets where work is available.

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