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Regulation

Construction industry welcomes Canadian government pledge to reduce red tape

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A federal initiative to reduce red tape for business will make a difference to construction companies, industry stakeholders say.

“It is getting more difficult for businesses of all sizes to conduct business efficiently,” says Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario.

“There are times you have provincial regulations, which are then duplicated and require almost the same things at the federal level.”

Diane Ablonczy, Canada’s secretary of state, recently announced the federal government will take action to meet its commitment to reduce the “paper burden” for business by 20 per cent this fall.

“The government understands the implications of the administrative paper burden on businesses’ bottom lines,” said Ablonczy. “That is why we made a commitment to reduce paperwork, which includes streamlining government regulations, eliminating duplicate or overlapping obligations, and reducing the frequency of filing documents.”

Last year, 13 federal departments and agencies completed a baseline count of the obligations imposed on businesses in legislation, regulations, policies and forms.

The government will now implement reduction plans toward the 20-per cent target. The initiative is seen as very beneficial for small and medium-sized businesses, which have limited resources to deal with administrative burden, added Ablonczy.

“Any measure the federal government can take to reduce the administrative burden, particularly for our sector, which is dominated by medium to small businesses, is welcomed,” says Jeff Morrison, director, government relations and public affairs, Canadian Construction

Association.

Any given construction company can find itself dealing with Revenue Canada, Industry Canada, Environment Canada and even Statistics Canada at any one time and that adds a significant paper burden, says Morrison.

“There are tax forms, regulatory forms and StatsCan forms a company can deal with —less time spent on those will add efficiency,” says Morrison.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that even a 20 per cent paper burden reduction will save thousands of hours of administration and improve Canada’s economic standing worldwide.

“Establishing Canada as a world leader in effective, efficient and accountable regulation would be great branding,” says Laura Jones, vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and co-chair of the federal Advisory Committee on Paperwork Burden Reduction.