

# Public structures, private money

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Kerry Gillespie's story might have left the impression that all unions are opposed to public-private partnerships. Although certain public sector unions are against these innovative financial arrangements, there are a number of private sector unions that have a different view. A report commissioned by a construction union, Local 183, in 2004 came to the conclusion that alternate financing arrangements are appropriate for certain types of infrastructure.

The report recommended that "the appropriate job and benefit protection and guarantees must be reflected in any contract. This is a particularly sensitive issue for public sector pension funds as they cannot realistically be involved in projects resulting in job losses for their members." A 2006 follow-up report by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) entitled *The Infrastructure Funding Deficit: Time to Act* reinforced the idea of contractual guarantees to protect public sector jobs.

RCCAO, which includes both construction unions and contractor association members, is committed to the concept of alternate financing and procurement as a way to get desperately needed infrastructure built on time and on budget. Kudos to the Toronto Star for continuing the dialogue on this important matter.

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