

**Winnipeg Construction Association
Manitoba Heavy Construction Association
Mechanical Contractors Association of Manitoba
Merit Contractors Association of Manitoba
Construction Labour Relations Association of Manitoba**

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Construction industry applauds commitment to update minimum wages

Winnipeg - The provincial government's decision not to repeal the Construction Industry Wages Act (CIWA) was applauded by industry leaders Thursday, following a meeting with Finance Minister Scott Fielding who also committed to establishing a CIWA review panel with broad worker-employer representation to update the construction industry minimum wage rates.

"We had a good discussion with Minister Fielding, who confirmed that rather than repealing the CIWA, Manitoba will update the minimum wage rates for the construction industry workforce," said Ron Hambley, President of the Winnipeg Construction Association.

Other industry leaders included in the Minister's conference included Peter Wightman, Executive Director of the Construction Labour Relations Association of Manitoba, Yvette Milner, President of Merit Contractors Association of Manitoba; Chris Lorenc, President of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association; and, Ramona Coey, Executive Director of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Manitoba.

Each of the construction associations present at the meeting noted most of their industry members pay wage rates in excess of the minimums outlined by CIWA.

"Across the sectors of the construction industry, employers understand the need to be competitive in wages and benefits, and therefore pay in excess of the CIWA minimum wage rates," Wightman said.

Milner added that in the open shop sector which Merit represents "construction firms big and small work hard to recruit and invest in training and retaining all their employees – trades, labourers and professionals. "

The construction associations stressed the need to task a new CIWA review panel to review and recommend updates to the minimum wage rates. The last minimum wage adjustment was made in 2017.

CIWA sets out the minimum hourly and overtime wage rates, and the standard hours of work per day, week or month in the heavy construction, and the industrial, commercial, institutional construction industry sectors.

"We know the pandemic's economic shutdown will require strategic thinking and continued investment in our construction industry workforce in the next years and it is necessary to help put Manitoba on solid ground for recovery," Lorenc stressed.

The association leaders thanked Minister Fielding for the frank discussion Thursday, and added they look forward to working with him to support development of a strong labour force and capital investment environment in the province.

“Ensuring we have a strong, skilled labour force trained in trades is fundamental to getting Manitoba back to work, and critical to attracting investments in the Manitoba economy,” added Coey.

For further comment, please contact:

Peter Wightman, Executive Director
Construction Labour Relations Association
clram@mymts.net

Yvette Milner, President
Merit Contractors, Manitoba
ymilner@meritmb.com

Ron Hambley, President
Winnipeg Construction Association
rhambley@winnipegconstruction.ca

Chris Lorenc, President
Manitoba Heavy Construction Association
clorenc@mhca.mb.ca

Ramona Coey, Executive Director
Mechanical Contractors Association of Manitoba
ramona@mcamb.ca