Coalition for Fair Construction Practices

April 22, 2010

RE: Bill C-429: An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood)

Dear :

We are writing to you as representatives of Canada’s construction industry to set out some principal concerns that we have with respect to Private Members’ Bill C-429.

Like many Canadians, we were disappointed to learn that the Bill received passage at second reading in the House of Commons yesterday, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates for further study and review.

As you are aware, Bill C-429 was introduced by Bloc Quebecois Member of Parliament, Mr. Gerard Asselin, M.P. and looks to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act to require the Minister:

“... before soliciting bids for the construction, maintenance or repair of public works federal immovables and federal real property, the Minister shall give preference to the concept that promotes the use of wood while taking into account the cost and greenhouse gas emissions”.

Recognizing the current economic challenges facing all sectors of the Canadian economy, we are concerned that this proposed amendment would restrict fair and open competition among material providers in Canada. We do not oppose public policy that encourages the development of markets for new and innovative products, but we do oppose the protection or promotion of one industry at the expense of others.
Currently the construction industry marketplace operates on the basis of allowing the design professional the latitude to select the best material for the project. There are many factors that will influence this decision (structural, architectural, environmental, safety and economic). Any undue advantage given to one industry would certainly come at the expense of another material.

We look for your engagement and that of your caucus colleagues in the coming weeks to ensure that there is a better understanding of how support for this Private Members’ Bill will have a negative impact on the Canadian construction industry from coast to coast and request your full support in ending Bill C-429 at the Committee stage.

Thank you in advance for your interest with respect to this important national issue. We welcome an opportunity to meet or discuss further with you any additional information you might require.

Yours sincerely,

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Michael Atkinson
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