



AUG 20 2020

Ms. Réjeanne Aimey
Chair and President
Mr. Sandro Perruzza
Chief Executive Officer
c/o Mr. Stuart Atkinson
Lead, Policy and Government Relations
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers
satkinson@ospe.on.ca

Dear Ms. Aimey and Mr. Perruzza:

Thank you for providing me with copies of your correspondence of May 6 and 14, and June 11, 2020, addressed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, regarding the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers' recommendations with respect to Canada's post COVID-19 economic recovery plan. I regret the delay in responding.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the biggest economic shock since the Great Depression. The first priority of government support will be to get Canadians back to work, particularly in hard-hit sectors. That said, we also have a strategic opportunity to help build toward the future we want, a more globally competitive, resilient and sustainable future where Canada achieves net-zero emissions by 2050.

The Government of Canada recognizes that the environmental crisis cannot be neglected during the current health crisis. This is why, during the global COVID-19 outbreak, the federal government is continuing to take aggressive action to protect the environment while supporting the economy and the health, safety and jobs of all Canadians.

As part of my mandate as Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I am implementing the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change to meet and exceed Canada's 2030 target under the Paris Agreement, and lead government-wide efforts to develop a plan for this country to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Conditions related to climate change have also been built into new financial support for businesses as part of the Government of Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 12, 2020, the federal government announced support for large- and medium-sized businesses through

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the establishment of the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility to provide financing to Canada's largest employers in order to keep their operations going. Recipient companies must publish annual climate-related disclosure reports, including how their future operations will support environmental sustainability and national climate goals. In addition, the Government has provided \$1.7 billion to clean up orphan and/or inactive oil and gas wells in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, creating thousands of jobs and having lasting environmental benefits.

As part of the economic recovery and longer-term transition, the Government of Canada will continue to support the growth of clean electricity with a modern, resilient grid. Non-emitting electricity systems are important not only to help Canada reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also to ensure a competitive economy. I appreciate the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers' recommendations related to distributed energy resources and emissions-free technology.

The Government of Canada also recognizes the opportunity to electrify a significant portion of the economy. A low-carbon electricity supply with a modern grid can provide the foundation to enable greenhouse gas emission reductions across other sectors. Currently, only 20 percent of Canada's energy requirements are being met by electricity. The federal government is exploring ways to support a significant expansion of this country's electrical infrastructure, including new interties, energy storage, smart technologies, services to transform the grid, and the requirement to electrify end uses.

In terms of supports for students and young Canadians looking to enter the workforce, Environment and Climate Change Canada's Science Horizons Youth Internship Program allows for the creation of accessible and predictable funding opportunities for companies that are looking to hire interns, recent engineering graduates and students. It provides wage subsidies to eligible employers to hire university, college and polytechnic graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

Up to \$15 000 in funding is available to employers for 6- to 12-month internships in the environmental and clean technology sectors, providing youth with hands-on working and skills development experience to help them gain employment. The Program aims to focus, in particular, on youth facing barriers to employment, including Indigenous, visible minority or disabled youth, as well as youth living in rural or remote areas, or in official language minority communities.

The objectives of the Program are to help young Canadian graduates gain valuable work experience to support their success in the job market, support green jobs for youth, help companies and organizations grow their green workforce, and contribute to economic growth in environmental and clean technology sectors.

In 2017–2018, the Science Horizons Youth Internship Program helped more than 1 000 young graduates across the country obtain practical work experience in Canada's green economy. On April 22, 2020, the Prime Minister announced \$9 billion in new COVID-19 funding for post-secondary students and graduates, part of which will support the creation of 116 000 jobs for young people to get the experience they need to start their careers, including through the Program. For more information, I invite you to visit www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/science-technology/managing/horizons-youth-internship-program.html.

Please be assured that the Government of Canada will continue to take important steps with its partners and stakeholders to leave a cleaner, more prosperous world for this and future generations.

I appreciate the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers' recommendations on these important issues. Please accept my best regards.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.