May 11, 2026

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P.
President of the King's Privy Council for Canada
Minister responsible for One Canadian Economy

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons

Sent via email: engagement@pco-bcp.gc.ca

RE: GETTING MAJOR PROJECTS BUILT IN CANADA – ICBA STRONGLY SUPPORTS REPOSITIONING CANADA

Dear Minister LeBlanc and Minister MacKinnon,

On behalf of the more than 4,500 construction and resource companies that make up the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA) – Canada's largest construction association – I write to register our support for the legislative, regulatory, and policy reforms outlined in the discussion papers released on May 8, 2026. The package would cut federal reviews and decisions to one year, run impact assessments and permits in parallel rather than one after the other, and replace a tangle of separate departmental approvals with a single federal decision per project. It would use regional assessments to pre-clear the corridors and zones where Canada wants to build. And it would give the Canada Energy Regulator and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission clear authority over the projects they were designed to oversee. Our members have been making this case to Ottawa for years. Executing on all of this is important if Canada is to reverse a decade of missed opportunity.

Five Years to a Federal Decision Is Not Caution – It Is Decline

The discussion paper itself acknowledges that major projects in Canada have "often taken more than five years" to receive the federal decisions necessary to begin construction. In British Columbia, our members live with project approval timelines of much longer for major developments. Australia approves comparable LNG projects in eighteen months. Capital and skilled trades are mobile. Investors making multi-billion-dollar decisions on where to build the next mine, terminal, or pipeline are watching Canada – and watching the calendar.

Economic Zones and Trade Corridors – Get This Done

We are particularly supportive of using regional impact assessments to designate economic zones covering transportation corridors, energy production and transmission, telecommunications networks, and industrial regions. Pre-approving classes of activity within defined corridors – subject to project-specific conditions – is a sea-change. It eliminates the duplication of redoing baseline studies for every separate project. It gives investors a predictable framework. And it lets Indigenous communities, provinces, and proponents focus on how a project gets built rather than relitigating, project by project, whether anything can be built at all. Pairing this with the CER as the sole federal reviewer for international and interprovincial pipelines, transmission lines, and offshore renewables – without a parallel review under the Impact Assessment Act – is the same principle in different form: One project, one review, one decision.

Economic Reconciliation Works When the Process Works

Our members partner every day with Indigenous-owned and Indigenous-affiliated businesses across Western Canada. Cedar LNG is the world's first Indigenous majority-owned LNG project. Ksi Lisims has the Nisga'a Nation as a direct partner. Between 2018 and 2024, British Columbia's natural gas sector alone delivered $10.8 billion in supply chain spending across 120 municipalities, with Indigenous supply chain spending growing four times faster than overall spending. That is what economic reconciliation looks like – and it was produced by commercial partnership, capacity building, and equity participation, not by legal architecture grafted on top of the constitutional duty to consult.

Section 35 Is the Standard

We note however, that the Indigenous engagement questions in this consultation are framed entirely around aligning these reforms with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The constitutional duty to consult under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* is the established legal standard, and courts have built decades of case law around it. Indigenous communities, industry, and the Crown know how to operate within it. And every major Indigenous-industry partnership in this country – from Cedar LNG and Ksi Lisims to the Haisla, Nisga'a, Tsawwassen, and Tahltan agreements – was built within that framework, before either UNDRIP or BC's related *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* came into force.

The UNDRIP overlay has not strengthened reconciliation in British Columbia. On the contrary, it has created confusion and investors and businesses are left wondering how or if they can move forward with projects or other commercial transactions. Premier Eby acknowledged on April 2, 2026, that sections of BC's DRIPA need to be suspended for up to three years.

The Crown Consultation Hub proposal is the right idea precisely because it makes the existing section 35 duty work better – one coordinated process per community, per project, with proper capacity funding. What it should not become is a back door for consent thresholds, through "consult and cooperate" language or otherwise, that converts a working constitutional standard into something investors, builders, and First Nations partners alike cannot predict.

Build Canada. Build It Now.

Canada has the resources, the geography, the workforce, and the markets to be the strongest economy in the G7. Our members want to deliver on that promise – and the proposals released on May 8, done well and matched by genuine provincial alignment under "one project, one review," will help us do it. We urge you to move to legislation – but only after removing all traces of UNDRIP.

Sincerely,
INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND BUSINESSES ASSOCIATION

Chris Gardner
President and CEO