

ALBERTA Trade Contractors Council

#204, 2725 12 St NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7J2 Phone 403 250 7237

August 23, 2022

Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides
Minister, Advanced Education
Government of Alberta

Re: STAE – August 22 Meeting Follow Up

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

Once again, thank you for meeting with us on Monday, August 22, at the McDougall Centre in Calgary. The Alberta Trade Contractors Council (ATCC) representatives agreed the meeting was very worth while. We sincerely appreciated the opportunity to share our concerns with you and that you appeared to be resolved to find workable solutions that would benefit all. The following ATCC representatives attended the meeting:

- Terry Milot, ATCC Chairman; ECAA Director, Government Relations; Vice President, Chemco Electric
- Mark Schendel, ATCC Vice-Chairman; MCA AB Past President; Estimator/PM, SMC 2.0 Ltd.
- Ashely Peddie, ATCC Director; ARCA President; General Manager, Peddie Roofing
- Wilma Agnew, SMACNA AB Executive Director
- Robin Bobocel, ECAA Executive Director
- Russ Evans, ATCC General Manager; MCA AB Executive Director

We offer the following as a summary of the discussion.

1. While the cancellation of period exams in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid 19 was understandable, the continued suspension of exams in 2022, and possibly 2023, is unacceptable to the construction trades. This is especially true in the compulsory trades where there is significant liability at stake, and serious public safety concerns. For example, a natural gas installation by a non-tested journeyman poses a significant threat to any homeowner and possibly even the installer themselves.

It was expressed that the continuation of the exams during the review process may indirectly influence the outcome of the review. This appears to be a strawman argument as it can be just as easily expressed that not having the exams will influence the outcome. We do not believe the current review is a valid reason for cancelling the



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externally administered period exams going forward. We do believe the decision to continue the suspension of exams was done in a vacuum, without consultation of industry, and as such did not take into consideration the serious impact this decision may have on industry liability and public safety.

It is our understanding from the conversation that you agreed with the need for independent period exams and that options would be explored on how this would be accommodated. Exams proctored by the secondary institution's instructors may be an option available at little or no additional cost.

2. ATCC expressed concern with a serious omission in the representation on the new STAE Provincial Board and with the overall weighting of various groups represented. When we met a year ago, we were assured the construction industry would be well represented, yet we feel that is not the case.

The Alberta construction industry operates primarily (over 80% of businesses) in an open shop environment and accounts for over 10% of Alberta's workforce. The majority of this workforce are journeymen or apprentices. The construction trades also represents a significant portion of the compulsory trades. How the STAE is governed and how it operates, trains and delivers apprentices to the industry is very important to business owners. ATCC is concerned that the STAE board is heavily weighted toward institution and union representation and lacks representation from business owners. Ultimately, it is business owners that share the burden of training apprentices and they own the liability for the work that journeymen and apprentices perform. They have significant 'skin in the game' and need to be represented on the governance board.

We understand that the current board is filled to its legislated limit, however, you will attempt to rectify the imbalances we brought to your attention at your earliest convenience.

3. Micro-credentialing or "Branching," a term used yesterday by your Chief of Staff, McKenzie Kibler, remains a concern for the ATCC. During our conversation yesterday, we discussed examples of current discussions between your staff and members of a sloped roof, roofing association regarding the possibility of splitting the trade to residential shinglers and commercial flat roofers. Going forward, ATCC recommends that AE Staff be directed to proceed with such discussions, only when they are confident



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they have strong representation from all of the affected sector's stakeholder groups. This will result in a much more effective use of your staff's time and resources and result in a stronger more united sector program going forward. We believe that you agreed with this strategy.

Again, we appreciate all the stakeholder engagement meetings that have taken place and the information we continue to receive from your department. We understand the massive undertaking the new STAE has been, and we do agree with and support the majority of the changes being implemented. The ATCC representatives are extremely pleased that you are open to hearing our concerns on key issues and we look forward to these issues being resolved in a timely manner.

Sincerely



Terry Milot
Chairman, Alberta Trade Contractors Coalition.

