



## **BC ENGINEERS OUTLINE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS OF INFRASTRUCTURE STIMULUS SPENDING**

**Choosing project consultants based on qualifications and reconsidering March 2011 project deadline among top considerations**

VANCOUVER, BC (December 18, 2009) -- The Consulting Engineers of BC (CEBC) today released a *Review of Government Infrastructure Stimulus Spending* report, which analyzes the impact of current government infrastructure programs and makes recommendations on how to maximize taxpayer benefits. Key recommendations outlined in the report include:

- Using a Qualification Based System (QBS) of Procurement for consulting engineering services at all levels of government
- Extending the federal March 2011 project completion deadline
- Utilizing a variety of infrastructure project delivery methods
- Improving program transparency
- Outsourcing program delivery
- Streamlining Provincial / Federal environmental assessment processes

Infrastructure projects analyzed by CEBC include small and large taxpayer-funded projects in British Columbia – from fixing potholes in roads, to seismically upgrading schools, to building new hospitals and bridges. The complete report can be obtained at the CEBC website:

<http://www.cebc.org/files/pressreleases/cebcGovernmentInfrastructureSpending.pdf>

Mike Currie, President of CEBC, said one of the key findings of the report relates to the March 2011 deadline for completion, which puts projects at risk for delays, errors, and budget overruns. “Communities are worried that if they don’t move quickly enough to meet the deadline, they run the risk of building an outdoor curling rink when what they really wanted was an indoor hockey arena. It is important to ensure that projects are done right, and not just done quickly.”

The CEBC report focuses on ensuring the public gets maximum benefit for dollars invested in new infrastructure. “After consulting with our members and hearing about their front-line experience working with the various levels of government, we decided to produce a set of



recommendations that will assist the BC government in improving the delivery and execution of the current infrastructure stimulus funds, as well as future infrastructure programs,” Currie said.

Currie noted that CEBC is concerned about inconsistencies in approach among the various levels of government to selecting consultants for project engineering and design. The organization wants the BC Government to mandate competitive Qualifications Based Selection Procurement (QBS), which prioritizes credentials in order to provide the best quality work and long term value. “The infrastructure stimulus program is not currently designed to favour qualifications-based procurement, which is becoming the preferred method of procurement for industry and governments. Instead, projects are being selected on a shovel-ready basis and consultants are often being chosen based on price,” he said.

In February 2009, CEBC announced its vision for maximizing employment and economic benefits in British Columbia from the \$20 billion in federal and provincial infrastructure spending over the next two years. CEBC’s vision recommended a balanced portfolio of phased infrastructure investments to impact today’s jobs and economic activity, while planning processes such as environmental assessments to allow all levels of government to make long term investments that will continue to pay dividends well into the future.

Over the past year, the BC Government has announced a portfolio of infrastructure projects to create long term benefits and improve the quality of life within BC in order to stimulate the economy, restore consumer confidence and keep people employed. The BC Government’s selection of infrastructure projects includes projects that CEBC envisioned would positively impact jobs, while providing sound long term investments.

The recommendations outlined in the CEBC report released today are intended to increase the benefits of the current infrastructure stimulus program funding.

### **About the Consulting Engineers of BC**

CEBC represents the consulting engineering firms that are the front-line service providers in BC for infrastructure projects. Its members have benefitted from the government's increased funding of infrastructure programs and they play a critical role in the delivery of these programs.



CEBC members provide diverse engineering design and project management services that enable projects to be safely and cost effectively constructed, operated and maintained. More information about CEBC can be found at [www.cebc.org](http://www.cebc.org)

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