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September 30, 2015

The Honourable Gordon Wyant
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds
Room 355, Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina SK S4S 0B3

Dear Minister Wyant:

Re: Feedback regarding Priority Saskatchewan draft policy review

Once again on behalf of the Board of Directors and membership of the NSBA, I would like to thank you for the Government's establishment of Priority Saskatchewan. Beyond that though, even more thanks and gratitude must be noted for engaging stakeholders from the business community, and particularly our Association, at the recent stakeholder consultation meetings in Regina. We very much appreciate the opportunity to review the draft policy documents and more so, the opportunity for consultation as Cabinet looks to establish policy around this important initiative.

The NSBA has gone on record in support of the 13 Action Items that Priority Saskatchewan has identified. We believe some of the items have greater impact in terms of their potential effectiveness than others, but all are valid. For instance Best Value as a measurement tool likely has a far greater impact in terms of a return on investment in comparison to lowest price. Price is important, of course, but should not be the only factor considered when determining value.

We also believe that Vendor Performance is a valuable assessment tool for determining future procurement contracts. Depending upon the potential candidates' respective past work history, this could be a potential benefit, or detriment, to the bidding company, which again, has implications in terms of Best Value. The third item that we would identify as a top priority for this initiative is Addressing the Knowledge Gap. Once these policies and tools are in place, it's imperative that government procurement officials have the knowledge and ability to implement them as intended. Otherwise, all of this good work will become moot.

Having been critical of other jurisdictions that have "local content" or "local knowledge" requirements, the NSBA believes that Saskatchewan's policy should not explicitly state such a requirement. Collectively, business operates best under a free and fair trade scenario and thrives in a competitive environment. In order to be able to do so, however, the playing field must be level. With all other things being equal, when assessing things such as value and return on investment, for instance, we believe that Saskatchewan companies will potentially have a competitive advantage in comparison to many of their counterparts as it relates to this new policy and directive. Other jurisdictions play that card, and we should be playing it too.

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"Supporting Saskatoon's business community"

In other words, the sum of the parts for the 13 Action Items could potentially benefit Saskatchewan companies – and by extension the provincial government and Saskatchewan tax payers – without explicitly stating local content, or local knowledge requirements.

We encourage you to continue your good work with your colleagues in Cabinet and Government overall in seeing this important initiative become policy. Therefore, we continue to offer our support on this file. Thanks again for your continued responsiveness and extensive work on this issue; both of which are very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Moen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith Moen
Executive Director

c.c. Rupen Pandya, President and CEO, SaskBuilds
c.c. Chad Leverick, President, NSBA