

**Presentation to
House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
Pre-Budget Consultations
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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance.

My name is Kim Allen and I am the chief executive officer of Engineers Canada.

Engineers Canada is the national body that represents the 12 provincial and territorial regulators of the engineering profession.

Our constituent associations represent over 250, 000 professional engineers in Canada, protecting and serving the public interest. Over 60, 000 undergraduate students are attending the 43 accredited engineering schools across Canada.

We accredit the engineering programs in those universities to ensure that all graduates meet the academic requirement for licensure with the provincial and territorial regulators.

Engineers are committed to the public's safety. Today, we are offering long-term solutions to government on issues where the engineering profession can lend its expertise, education and experience to help create a safer, more sustainable, and prosperous future for Canada.

I will offer recommendations on three topics – infrastructure, foreign credential recognition and skills. The federal government could include these as part of a viable long term economic solution for Canada.

Infrastructure

Provincial and territorial statutes obligate professional engineers to work in the public interest. Engineers have a responsibility to manage the risks associated with their work, and the impacts on the public and on the environment. The strict adherence to standards, codes, legislation and regulations ensure that all Canadians enjoy a high standard of safety and reliability in their infrastructure. There is a need for additional and consistent investments across the country to maintain this standard.

Engineers Canada believes that a continued economic recovery and enhanced economic growth are possible through a sustainable, strategic long-term infrastructure plan. This will help ensure Canada's economic competitiveness and maintain our quality of life. The plan must include requirements for proper asset management of core public infrastructure. This plan must also consider the vulnerability of key assets to extreme climate events, can support increased investment and attract talent. It should be in place for 2014.

Core public infrastructure like roads, bridges, buildings, water, wastewater, drainage and flood control systems are the backbone of Canada's economy. When Canadians can safely and efficiently get to work, move the goods they

produce and provide the services their clients need without being impeded by congestion or the results of infrastructure neglect, productivity improves.

The availability of predictable funding for proper operation and maintenance of these assets is essential to protecting the quality of life and safety of Canada's communities. These investments extend the useful life of infrastructure. Pay now or pay more later.

We believe that it is the responsibility of the federal government to take the lead to work with provincial, territorial and municipal governments to ensure that predictable funding is available for building and maintaining core public infrastructure over the life cycle of these assets.

Engineers Canada also believes that governments must work to prioritize projects receiving funding to first address deficiencies in core public infrastructure. While public infrastructure extends beyond the roads, bridges, buildings and water systems we all rely on, those core assets keep Canadians safe and healthy and must be considered first.

Foreign Credential Recognition

Engineers Canada also believes that the federal government must work with its provincial and territorial partners to attract and retain the talent it needs to grow our economy. Improvements to immigration system and measures to address the specific skills shortages across the country will help put the right people in the right jobs, at the right time. That is good for the engineer and good for the country.

Recent plans put forward by the federal government to change how credentials are assessed for the purposes of immigration may help. In consultation with stakeholders, including regulated professions like engineering, the federal government must align application and assessment practices efficiently to integrate immigrants into our economy and society in a timely manner.

More than 20% of the professional engineers in Canada were trained internationally. Our constituent associations process about 5,500 applications annually for International Engineering Graduates. This is among the highest for regulated professions.

Engineers Canada supports the concept of "license-ready" immigrants in regulated professions. In practice, this means that the federal government must work with regulated professions to make sure that the assessment of credentials for the purpose of immigration is recognized by provincial and territorial regulators. To do so would avoid delays for applicants, delays for the regulators, and delays for the government and for prospective employers.

Skills

By 2020, we expect over 95,000 engineers to retire and 16,000 new engineering jobs. Managing the process and recruiting to meet this replacement demand is a priority and it focuses attention on the need to find experienced and specialized engineers.

Engineers Canada calls on the federal government to work with provinces and territories to focus on supporting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education at all levels and with special emphasis on promoting diversity.

Net growth of professional engineers across the country in the past five years was 15.8%. The Territories, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alberta and Manitoba grew at rates significantly above the national average.

Engineers Canada and our constituent associations are committed to improving the representation of both women and indigenous peoples in the engineering profession.

Women comprise about 47 percent of the total workforce in Canada but fewer than 11 percent of the engineering workforce. Today, only 18.6 per cent of engineering interns are female. Engineers Canada believes aiming for 30 percent new female entrants by 2030 is possible. Federal support in developing programs to help women study and work in this area would be beneficial to our economic growth.

Filling the skills gap and labour shortage can best be achieved by tapping all of our potential as a nation, while welcoming those from abroad who can complement and diversify our strengths.

In closing, I would like express our thanks and appreciation to the Committee for allowing Engineers Canada to present our recommendations to you as *you* prepare your recommendations for the next federal budget.

Thank you for considering our comments, and I look forward to answering your questions.