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Releases

BCFED seeks guarantees from Clark government for use of apprentices on public infrastructure projects

Vancouver - Yesterday, Premier Clark announced more than $13 million in funding to expand and renovate trades apprenticeship training facilities at North Island College in Campbell River. But ironically, Victoria has no tangible guarantees in place that apprentices will even be used in the construction of the new facilities, says the BC Federation of Labour.

And in a letter sent today to Clark, the Federation is calling on Victoria to set a basic standard that apprentices make up 25% of the construction labour force on all provincial government infrastructure projects, to ensure that apprentices receive the practical on-the-job experience required to complete their training.

“Technical training with modern equipment in new facilities like those being constructed at North Island College is a key part of the training process,” says BCFED president Irene Lanzinger. “But we also know that employer sponsorship of apprentices to provide practical work opportunities is equally important, because at least 80% of apprenticeship training occurs on the job.”

Lanzinger says that here in BC, the lack of employer placements is the biggest obstacle for apprentices trying to complete their training.

“The lack of apprenticeship work opportunities also creates challenges for governments that seek to expand the supply of skilled trades positions,” she says.

“As the largest employer and biggest infrastructure builder in BC, the provincial government has a responsibility to adopt and follow a proactive model for apprenticeship placement practices.”

‘That’s why we’re urging the Clark government to publicly commit to a minimum of 25% apprentices on the North Island College project, as well as on all public infrastructure projects funded by the provincial government.

“If we are going to build a skilled workforce for BC, we need to do all we can to make that happen,” says Lanzinger, “and setting a 25% standard is a simple, practical step we can take.”