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## Advocacy Bulletin 6

Dear Members;

As the federal election date of October 21<sup>st</sup> rapidly approaches, public opinion polling suggests we are witnessing one of the closest federal election races in recent history. It would appear to be still quite a toss up as to whether the Liberals or the Conservatives will capture the most seats, and whether they will do so with enough seats to form a majority government. Suffice to say that we're likely in for a late night on Monday (or an early Tuesday morning) before we know the final results.

### **WRLA at Work:**

Since prior to and during the federal election campaign, WRLA has been very busy advocating with the major political parties for policies that will help stimulate economic growth in the residential construction sector, a sector which we all know first hand has been quite stagnant these past couple of years, particularly here in western Canada.

We have aggressively lobbied party leaders, party platform committees, MPs, and candidates with specific policy recommendations to help grow our sector and maintain and create important jobs for Canadians.

If the party platforms are any indication, our messages seem to have been heard.

If elected, among other things the Liberals propose to expand their new first-time home buyer program; they propose to retrofit 1.5 million homes, over the next five years; and, propose to give interested homeowners and landlords a free energy audit along with a \$40,000 interest-free loan to retrofit their home.

Meanwhile, if elected, the Conservatives propose to extend the period that home buyers can amortize an insured mortgage to 30 years from 25 years. The Conservatives also propose to review the stress test and would not require people renewing existing mortgages to qualify under the stress-test rules if they are switching to a new lender.

While all these policies would be most welcome by our members, we will need to be vigilant in order to ensure that whichever party does form government, follows through on its commitments. The time for talk is almost over and the time for action is about to begin in earnest.

In addition to our advocacy efforts with politicians and their political parties, we have also prepared an opinion piece (commonly referred to as an Op Ed), in which we highlight the challenges faced by our sector, we re-iterate our various policy positions, and strongly urge the new government to take action on its commitments soon upon taking office.

These opinion pieces have been sent for publication to all weekly and daily newspapers in the western provinces. And while there is no obligation for the papers to carry the opinion pieces, we are certain that many will, as they will see the value of our positions and our efforts to stimulate growth in a sector which is so critical to the economy of our region.

So, for now I believe that's it. Again, I trust you are finding this information useful. Any questions, comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Best regards,

Liz Kovach

President WRLA

Director Prairie Provinces, Building Materials Council of Canada

cc: Andrew Reimer, Chair WRLA Government Relations Committee

WRLA Executive Committee: Tom Bell, Board Chair; Mark Westrum Past Chair; Joel Siebert 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Wendell Gillert 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Mark Kuzma Associate Advisor

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