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WRLA Advocacy Bulletin 2

Dear WRLA Members

March 20, 2019

Yesterday's Federal Budget certainly contained a number of positive initiatives for our industry, which are the result of much of the lobbying we have been doing over these past several months. These additional incentives to increase the supply of housing, and make more houses, more affordable, for more Canadians are all good news for you our members and our industry colleagues across Canada.

Here are some of the favourable measures for our industry in the 2019 budget:

Increasing Housing Supply

- The goal is to build 42,500 new housing units across Canada, with a particular focus in areas of low rental supply, through an expanded Rental Construction Financing Initiative. The Budget makes an additional \$10 billion in financing available over nine years, extending the program until 2027–28.

First-Time Home Buyer Incentive

- The Incentive is aimed at eligible first-time home buyers with a minimum down payment for an insured mortgage, to apply to finance a portion of their home purchase through a shared equity mortgage with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).
- Approximately 100,000 first-time home buyers would be able to benefit from the Incentive over the next three years,
- The Budget also increases the Home Buyers' Plan withdrawal limit from \$25,000 to \$35,000, providing first-time home buyers with greater flexibility in use of their RRSP savings to buy a home.

National Housing Strategy

In 2017, Government launched a ten-year \$40 billion National Housing Strategy to help Canadians access appropriate housing. Since announcing the Strategy:

- The National Housing Co-Investment Fund has been launched, which is expected to help build 60,000 new units and repair or renew 240,000 existing units of affordable and community housing.
- Seven provinces and territories have signed bilateral housing agreements under the new multilateral Housing Partnership Framework. These agreements will see more than \$7.7 billion in new federal funding flow to provinces and territories over the next decade, to support the stock of community housing and address regional priorities.

Support for Skilled Trades' Development

- Starting this year, Government plans to invest \$6 million over two years to create a national campaign to promote the skilled trades as a first-choice career for young people. In 2019, the Government will appoint co-chairs to begin work on this campaign, lead initial consultations, and explore partnerships to assist with promotion of the skilled trades.
- Government also plans to develop a new strategy to support apprentices and those employed in the skilled trades.

What next?

As mentioned in our first Advocacy Bulletin last week, the next seven months leading up to the October 24th election are critical for us. We need to ensure we carefully and strategically lay out before candidates and the leadership of political parties, the key policy positions of our members and our Association.

While we are pleased with the measures in yesterday's budget, there is a great deal more the Federal Government can and must do in order for our industry and you its members to thrive. We intend on mounting an aggressive advocacy and lobbying campaign to get our messages across to the Government and key candidates running for office in the upcoming federal election.

In order to do this effectively, we will need your ideas and your support.

Let us know what you think of our plans. What are some of the key issues you feel we should be advocating with federal candidates and their party leadership? Would you be prepared to assist us in this effort? If so, in what way do you think you could be most helpful?

We have a great deal of work ahead over these next several months, and we need your support.

Please feel free to provide your thoughts and your feedback to us as it's so important and most welcome.

Sincerely

Liz Kovach
WRLA President,
Building Material Council of Canada Director, Prairie Provinces, Territories and Nunavut

PS: In order to keep you informed of our activities and progress, we will continue to regularly produce Advocacy Update Bulletins such as this. We hope you are finding this information useful.

cc: Andrew Reimer, Chair WRLA Government Relations Committee
Executive Committee: Tom Bell, Board Chair; Mark Westrum Past Chair; Joel Siebert 1st Vice Chair, Wendell Gillert 2nd Vice Chair, Mark Kuzma Associate Advisor
WRLA Directors: Rick Kurzac, Randy MacDonald, Sheila Carr, Ed Stol, Don Wygiera, Joel Seibert, Gregg Chester, Scott McKee, Allan Hall