



# 2013 Survey of N.S. Political Party Leaders

August 23, 2013

Thank you for filling out this important survey. Please send your responses no later than **August 30, 2013**, by email to [brad@mainlandbuildingtrades.ca](mailto:brad@mainlandbuildingtrades.ca) or by Fax to 450-1013.

## TOPIC: PROVINCIAL TENDERING PRACTICES

**Background:** Regulations under the Labour Standards Code, Occupational Health and Safety Act, and Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act have been undermined through inadequate enforcement. For example, current government tendering processes for construction contracts have criteria that include records of compliance with health and safety, apprenticeship, and trade certification regulations; however, companies that comply with these regulations have at times lost contracts to companies that have not complied with the regulations, primarily because the latter are able to offer services at a lower cost.

Government departments, for the most part, no longer use the bid depository system established to ensure fair competition among pre-qualified contractors who comply with the existing legislation. Accordingly, non-pre-qualified contractors, who may have poor compliance records, have been permitted to bid on and win government contracts.

### Provincial Tendering Practices Questions

Considering provincial tendering processes, if elected Premier today would you support or oppose:

	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Adherence to the <b>bid depository process</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Giving tender preference</b> to companies that demonstrate strong compliance with Occupational Health & Safety regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
<b><i>Giving tender preference</i></b> to companies that hire apprentices and support apprenticeship programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOPIC: APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**

**Background:** Nova Scotia will soon face a shortage of certified tradespersons. Fewer than half of apprentices in Nova Scotia complete their training. Many must leave Nova Scotia because only approximately 25% of eligible employers participate in apprenticeship training. Roughly half of the trades in Nova Scotia are designated ‘certification only’ with no apprenticeship training programs available.

Trades with apprenticeship programs have an established ratio of apprentices to journeypersons to ensure Nova Scotia apprentices have training opportunities across all blocks of training toward their certification.

Recently, *The Minister’s Reference Group on Apprenticeship* recommended creating an arms-length agency to build and maintain a new, industry-led apprenticeship system. The group comprised of employers, employer associations, sector councils, union representatives, Nova Scotia Community College and Department of Labour and Advanced Education officials met to discuss ways to improve employer engagement in apprenticeship.

**Apprenticeship Training Questions:**

If elected Premier today, would you oppose or support the following decisions as ways to strengthen apprenticeship practices in the building construction industry:

	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Support	Strongly Support
Ensure all construction trade apprentices have <b><i>access to employment</i></b> on provincial job sites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Introduce <b><i>apprenticeship pathways</i></b> for all certified trades in Nova Scotia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Strongly Oppose    Oppose    Support    Strongly Support

Improve apprenticeship training by implementing recommendations from the **Nova Scotia Reference Group on Apprenticeships**

          

**TOPIC: ENFORCEMENT**

**Background:** Thirty-two workers died from work-related injuries in Nova Scotia in 2012. Two enforcement officers currently cover the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act for roughly 60 designated trades in 18 counties. This limits the number of site inspections. Although there is a higher number of provincial safety officers, they have no power to enforce violations of non-certified tradespeople on worksites or apprenticeship ratio violations discovered at work sites. Responsibility of enforcement of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act rests with the Skills and Learning Branch of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Certified journeypersons undergo rigorous safety training, which increases occupational health and safety standards on construction sites in Nova Scotia. Stricter enforcement to ensure certified journeypersons and registered apprentices in compulsory trades on construction sites would enhance safety in these workplaces.

**Enforcement Questions:**

If elected Premier today, would you oppose or support the following decisions as ways to strengthen legislative and regulatory compliance in the building construction industry:

Strongly Oppose    Oppose    Support    Strongly Support

**Transfer enforcement** of the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act to the **Safety Branch** of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education

          

Increase enforcement to ensure compulsory certified tradespersons on job sites hold the **credentials as required** by the Apprentices and Trades Qualifications Act.

Strongly Oppose    Oppose    Support    Strongly Support

Increase enforcement to maintain the *ratio of qualified/certified journeypersons to apprentices* for each trade as required by the Apprentices and Trades Qualifications Act.

                

**TOPIC: FIRST CONTRACT ARBITRATION LEGISLATION**

**Background:** First contract arbitration legislation is designed to assist newly certified unions and employers to achieve a first collective agreement. The construction industry in Nova Scotia is currently excluded from first contract arbitration legislation. Access to first contract arbitration for organizing workers outside the industrial and commercial sectors is crucial.

**First Contract Arbitration Legislation Questions:**

If elected, would your party plan to *amend the existing first contract arbitration legislation*  Yes     No

If yes, would your party *consult the Building Trades* on these changes  Yes     No

**TOPIC: WAGES & BENEFITS**

**Background:** Currently, trades people have difficulty finding work in many parts of Nova Scotia and there is a shortage of work that provides unionized wages or their equivalent.

Nova Scotia has no 'fair wages' legislation that requires contractors or subcontractors bidding on provincial contracts to pay at least a provincially standardized wage.

The Nova Scotia construction industry is excluded from the Mandatory Minimum Wage Order that dictates when most employers are required to pay overtime to their employees. Other groups are entitled to overtime after 48 hours worked over a seven-day period whereas trades people must work 110 hours over a fourteen-day period (55 hours per seven-day period). Unionized employers who provide better coverage for overtime are often disadvantaged when bidding for work against non-unionized contractors who pay less or disregard overtime for their workers.

The Mainland Building Trades feels that one or a combination of these issues helps explain the loss of skilled workers to other provinces.

**Wages & Benefits Questions:**

If elected Premier today would you support or oppose:

	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Legislation compelling all building trades contractors who bid on government contracts to pay trades people <b>at least a prescribed provincial wage</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensuring <b>all</b> trades peoples in Nova Scotia are covered under the same <b>standard overtime legislation</b> as other working groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**TOPIC: LABOUR REPRESENTATION ON GOVERNMENT COMMITTEES**

**Background:** Nova Scotia has engaged labour and management through inclusion in provincial government bodies where decisions affect the construction sector. For example, the *Labour Management Review Committee* was established to assist in the development and maintenance of labour legislation and policies that encourage collective bargaining and constructive dispute settlement, which would in turn improve labour relations and collective bargaining. Other government committees and groups have also engaged labour - for example *The Minister’s Advisory Panel on Apprenticeship*.

**Labour Representation on Government Committee Questions:**

If your party formed a government today, would you:

Retain the <b>Labour Management Review Committee</b>	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Include a Building Trades representatives on <b>key provincial committees</b> that impact the building construction industry	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No



## FINAL QUESTIONS

In your opinion, what is the *single most important issue* facing the construction trades in Nova Scotia today?

**CLICK ON BOX TO ADD TEXT**

What would your party do *different from the other parties* to encourage the creation of good-paying construction jobs in Nova Scotia including rural Nova Scotia?

**CLICK ON BOX TO ADD TEXT**

If your party formed a government today, what *advice would you give* the Mainland Building Trades for creating an effective and productive working relationship between it and your government?

**CLICK ON BOX TO ADD TEXT**