

March 26, 2020

The Honourable Jason Kenney, MLA

Premier, President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Relations
Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

[sent via email]

Dear Premier,

The Consulting Architects of Alberta (CAA) is a business and advocacy voice for Alberta's architectural firms working very closely with the Alberta Association of Architects (AAA) who regulate our profession through the Architects Act. In addition, we work together with the Consulting Engineers of Alberta (CEA) and other associations throughout Alberta. In recent days an *Alberta Joint Industry Response Team* has been formed from the architectural, engineering, construction and trades community creating a combined response team for the present and eventually a recovery team for the future. This demonstrates the industry is positioned right now with incredible experience, depth and talent to serve Albertans in the days, weeks, months and possibly the years ahead with confidence and certainty.

The CAA is 100% behind steps being taken in response to the COVID-19 outbreak by your Government during this crisis. Keeping the entire industry (architects, engineers, constructors and trades) moving forward despite monumental challenges is essential to Albertans. Once this crisis passes it is crucial that our building infrastructure (both public & private sector) is not abandoned and left incomplete – it must be operational to house, heal, teach and support our collective needs as quickly and fully as possible.

First (and importantly) we need clarity from your government on architects being considered an essential service. Not only will this help to keep industry businesses open, but it will provide continuity for the legal requirements of the Alberta Safety Codes Act. This will also provide at your disposal a body of qualified architects and their resources to assist your government in responding in the short term and be there as we recover. The architectural profession (and its engineering partners) has a tremendous impact on Alberta's building industry, resulting in about \$800 Million supporting the province's building construction GDP which is much larger. Without architects and engineers Alberta cannot realize the full potential the entire industry brings to our provincial GDP. Many of the firms in Alberta can be easily overlooked as many architectural practices are small businesses and are equally susceptible to financial risk as are larger firms. Small, medium and large architectural firms contribute much to Alberta and is fundamental to growing our GDP.

Second, we need to see stability for the entire infrastructure industry particularly for buildings (vertical infrastructure) in the public and private sector along with provincial and municipal transportation projects (horizontal infrastructure). In addition, this will ensure projects critical for responding to the COVID-19 crisis can move forward, especially those sponsored by Alberta Health Services (AHS) and confirmed in the last 24hrs as essential to continue towards completion.

Many of Alberta's architectural practices have instituted remote working protocols to continue providing their services within Alberta while keeping everyone safe. We remain ready and willing to keep our industry moving forward and to step into action as part of an overall economic recovery plan spearheaded by your Economic Recovery Council.

While there will be inevitable and unparalleled disruption to construction, it is important that it can resume quickly to full capacity once we have collectively emerged from this crisis. Taking essential steps now will ensure we have projects "shovel ready" for our construction partners to build is critical for rebounding the Alberta economy. Considering the double-edged sword of COVID-19 and the bottoming of oil prices we will need significant innovation and outlying thinking on all fronts to change how we design, procure, fabricate, assemble and even operate our buildings at less cost and risk in the post COVID-19 era. On this point, the CAA along with our industry partners are available to meet (virtually) with Minister Prasad Panda and/or Deputy Minister Shannon Flint along with their team at Alberta Infrastructure immediately.

Finally, on behalf of the CAA I want to assure you that as you develop public health and emergency planning measures, know that we are only a phone call away.

Sincerely,



Allan Partridge
Chair, Consulting Architects of Alberta
780 970 4411
chair@consultingarchitects.ca

email copy:

Honourable Prasad Panda MLA, Minister of Infrastructure
Shannon Flint, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure
Alberta Joint Industry Response Team Members