

New Trade and Mobility Agreements – What they mean for contractors

Discussion Moderated by:

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Agenda for this Session

- Panel Introduction
- Context – Brian Clewes
- Alb. Perspective – Darlene Bouwsema
- BC Perspective - Robert Musgrove
- Questions and discussion from the floor

Trade Agreements - Making it Easier to do Business

- Political jurisdictions construct regulations to mitigate risk.
- Viewed through the regulators lens the regulations make sense.
- The problems occur;
 - when companies transact business between jurisdictions.
 - workers move between jurisdictions.

Making it Easier to do Business

- Regulations are rarely seamless between jurisdictions.
- To business these differences make no sense.
- Until recently, little political will to address;
 - Regulations reflect the political power and culture of a jurisdiction.
 - Political downside of change bigger than upside.

Making it Easier to do Business

- Globalization and economic competition changed the equation.
- Half of Canada's GDP comes from international trade and governments have long seen Canada's internal barriers as economic handcuffs.
- Nonetheless, agreements to remove barriers are a difficult to negotiate, sell & implement.

Agreement on Internal Trade

- Introduced in 1994 a Pan Canadian attempt at regulatory coherence.
- However getting 14 jurisdictions to comply proved difficult.
- AIT produced lots of activity but little material change for business or workers.

Alberta and BC took action

- The Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement.
- Conceptually TILMA introduced two important distinct leaps forward over AIT;
 - Enforceability - Political will
 - Liberalization of trade/mobility in all areas unless specifically excluded – the opposite of AIT.

TILMA – Has it made any difference?

- Certainly TILMA has galvanized political foes.
- It has also generated renewed interest in AIT and addressing its shortcomings.
- However
 - Ø Have regulatory barriers been removed?
 - Ø Are the frontline regulators acting differently?
 - Ø Do contractors find it easier to do business?
 - Ø Is it a “race to the bottom” as claimed by some?
 - Ø How does the new AIT agreement affect Red Seal?

Has it made a difference?

- To provide more detail and address these and other questions please welcome Robert and Darlene.