



**For Immediate Release
November 29, 2010**

Time for government to consult on new labour law

HALIFAX – The Nova Scotia government is proposing changes to the province’s labour laws that go too far and shut out the majority of private sector employers in the province.

The Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia (Merit NS) today called on the provincial government to delay passing Bill 100 until there has been full, public consultation.

“Our 135 member employers across the province had no issue with the Nova Scotia government streamlining the number of employment and labour boards – that’s a positive move that we support,” said Heather Cruickshanks, President of Merit NS. “But Bill 100 goes far beyond that – it shuts out the vast majority of private sector employers from having a voice on future changes to labour laws and makes it tougher for governments to work with the private sector on less costly solutions.”

Cruickshanks, who will be appearing tomorrow at the Nova Scotia legislature’s Law Amendments Committee to speak on Bill 100, noted the following concerns with the legislation:

- The creation of a new Labour Management Review Committee to advise the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development on future changes to labour legislation (including the Trade Union Act) excludes private sector employers who are not unionized – despite these businesses representing more than 80 per cent of private sector workplaces in the province;
- Establishing successorship protection for government unions for work that is outsourced by the provincial government; and
- The lack of consultation with private sector employers on the parts of Bill 100 that cover more than just employment and labour boards.

“Government has the right to make changes to labour laws that will make it more difficult for the private sector in this province, risking higher costs and fewer jobs,” added Cruickshanks. “But the government should at least take the time to consult with businesses in this province on the impact that such changes would have on Nova Scotia employers and the economy as a whole before proceeding with these changes.”

In July 2010, the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development released a discussion paper that focused solely on the consolidation of labour relations boards and employment tribunals in the province. It made no reference to successorship protection or excluding private sector employers in future consultation.

Since 1994, the Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia has been the industry association representing open shop/union free contractors dedicated to serving the needs of employees in the construction industry. Merit also promotes safety, apprenticeship, training, efficiency and productivity. The organization represents 135 companies in Nova Scotia who employ approximately 1,500 workers.

- 30 -

Contact:

Bill McLellan
Executive Director
Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia
902-453-6248
billmclmeritns@eastlink.ca
www.meritns.com

Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia
216-30 Damascus Rd, Bedford, NS B4A 0C1
Tel (902) 453-6248 Fax (902) 453-0689 info@meritns.com www.meritns.com

PROUD MEMBER OF
MERIT™
CANADA
www.meritcanada.ca