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### **Nova Scotia's government rewards supporters at the expense of small business**

**HALIFAX** – The Nova Scotia government's appointment of Cordell Cole to its new Labour Management Review Committee sends a clear signal that the needs of Nova Scotia's non-unionized workers are secondary to rewarding the NDP government's financial supporters.

“The government has repeatedly refused to give non-unionized workers a voice on the Labour Management Review Committee. With Cordell Cole's appointment, it sends a clear message that the government is putting the interests of its friends ahead of the majority of Nova Scotia's workers,” said Heather Cruickshanks, President of Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia, which represents open shop/union free contractors.

As president of the Mainland Building and Construction Trades Council, Cordell Cole was at the heart of the NDP election funding scandal. His organization, representing unionized employees, donated \$50,000 to the NDP during the 2009 election, in clear violation of the \$5,000 campaign funding cap. Despite his involvement in the scandal and the fact that they were fined \$10,000 for the scheme, the NDP government used their majority to appoint Cole to the new committee.

The Labour Management Review Committee was formed after the government's passing of the controversial Bill 100 last year. Its mandate is to review, report on and make recommendations to the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development on labour-relations issues. It is comprised of ten committee members: five union representatives and five representatives from unionized employers.

“The fact that this committee has so much influence over labour issues in this province but not a single non-unionized representative is absolutely shameful,” said Cruickshanks. “Almost 80 per cent of Nova Scotia's workers are non-unionized. It's unbelievable that the government can deny the vast majority of Nova Scotians a seat at this table but happily appoint one of their union bagmen.”

The appointment of Cole to the Labour Management Review Committee is just the latest snub to non-unionized workers in this province. Last September, the Department of Labour and Workforce Development made a number of regulatory changes that were made without consultation or public announcement. They made it easier for unions to organize through the following: eliminating the requirement of unions to charge a nominal fee of \$2.00 when collecting potential members during a union drive; changing the definition of member in good standing from being a union member in the last 90 days to being a union member at any time in the past; and expanding the certification rights in the construction industry, providing the building trades to certify anyone in the jurisdiction of the collective agreement.

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 -

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