



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 4, 2011

Merit Nova Scotia's President, Heather Cruickshanks, endorses comments by Terrance Oakey, Merit Canada's President, on supporting new legislation for "Union Disclosure" through the Private Member's Bill tabled yesterday by Conservative MP, Russ Hiebert, requiring Canadian labour unions to publicly disclose their financial statements.

Union disclosure long overdue – Merit Canada supports new legislation to increase union financial transparency and accountability

Canada's Open Shop construction sector says unions must move into the 21st Century

OTTAWA, October 3, 2011 – Merit Canada, representing Canada's open shop construction associations, strongly support a new federal Private Member's Bill introduced today by MP Russ Hiebert that would, if passed, ensure greater accountability and transparency among Canada's unions.

"This legislation is long overdue," said Terrance Oakey, President of Merit Canada. "It's time for Canadian unions to move into the 21st century with regard to transparency and accountability."

Oakey pointed out that it is sound public policy to have a transparent public disclosure regime in place for Canadian labour unions. "Workers facing a union drive should be able to learn where their forced union dues will be spent," said Oakey, "and Canadians should know because of the tax free treatment that unions receive."

The Private Member's Bill, brought forward by Conservative MP Russ Hiebert, would require all Canadian labour unions to publicly disclose their financial statements or risk losing their tax exempt status. Every labour union in Canada would be required to file a standard set of financials each year, which would then be posted on a public website.

A Nanos Research poll in September 2011 indicated that 83% of Canadians agreed with mandatory public financial disclosure for both public and private sector unions on a regular basis. “Paying union dues is a condition of employment for hundreds of thousands of Canadians, regardless of whether they are union members, so it is essential that unions meet the highest possible standards of transparency for how those dues are spent,” Oakey said.

Merit Canada was established in November 2008 as a united national voice for eight different provincial Open Shop construction associations. Open Shop construction represents approximately 70% of the Canadian construction industry, and our member companies directly employ approximately 60,000 people.

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