

OPPOSITION PARTIES AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY URGE GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND LABOUR CONSULTATIONS

EDMONTON, AB (April 18, 2017): Today, the Wildrose and Progressive Conservative caucuses stood with representatives from Alberta's business community to call for the NDP to extend and enhance the consultation process in their review of the Labour Relations and Employment Standards Codes.

Today marks the NDP government's deadline for written and online survey submissions for the labour legislation review that could introduce sweeping changes.

Over the past month, the provincial government has only held four private meetings to directly meet with representatives from business. In the Legislature, the opposition parties have continuously warned the Premier and the Minister of Labour about the importance of adequately engaging job creators in our province when potentially introducing significant labour changes. The NDP government has done a poor job of holding meaningful dialogue with these groups and over the past month, they have voiced their concerns about the lack of proper consultation.

Business associations and opposition parties are requesting a more fulsome two-way dialogue to hear the concerns of these job creators. The NDP government must extend the consultation process past today's deadline and enhance the ability for Albertans to provide input.

Four private meetings are not adequate consultation, and the opposition caucuses are urging the provincial government to increase the number of meetings around the province and make the outcomes of the meetings more transparent.

"The number one focus for the government needs to be protecting jobs, but time and time again we have seen the NDP government continue to ram through changes that will only make things worse for Albertans. If they want to make positive changes, they should work with job creators across the province, not against them. It's critical the government extends consultations and start focusing on what's best for our economy."

-Brian Jean, Wildrose Leader

"Jobs are jeopardized every time businesses are uncertain about the future. The NDP government is creating more uncertainty with its rush to overhaul labour laws. It's just time for the government to slow down and listen to the people who actually create jobs in our economy, who are deeply concerned about potentially costly changes to labour legislation."

-Jason Kenney, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party

"An update of Alberta's labour laws is well overdue; however, the NDP needs to take the time to get this right. Our business community has already had to endure numerous unexpected policy changes and their unintended consequences during a severe economic downturn. We must reach out to all industry stakeholders in a more fulsome and transparent process to ensure their concerns are heard and considered."

-Dr. David Swann, Leader of the Alberta Liberal Opposition

"We have seen repeatedly from this government a pattern of driving through policies that go against the grain of Albertans and our industries. This isn't the Alberta way. Recent labour changes in other provinces were only done after nearly two years of consultations. The government needs to start listening to Albertans who are worried about the long-term prosperity of our province before they decide to try and ram through ideological legislation."

-Glenn van Dijken, Wildrose Shadow Labour Minister

"Over the past few weeks, I've heard from a number of concerned businesses and business associations regarding the lack of proper consultation for this labour review. When introducing changes that will impact every Albertan family, this NDP government must ensure they do their due diligence in facilitating a two-way dialogue. The NDP must do the right thing and enhance and extend the consultation past today's deadline."

-Richard Gotfried, Progressive Conservative Economic Development Critic

"Modernized employment rules should be flexible for small employers to better support job creation. Unfortunately this government missed the mark on substantive consultation with small business owners. The right thing to do would be to enhance and extend this important discussion so that entrepreneurs can weigh in with meaningful insights."

-Amber Ruddy, CFIB's Director of Provincial Affairs

"The AHLA (Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association) believes that a positive relationship between employers and employees can best be achieved when the needs of both are fully understood and appreciated. We ask that the consultation period be extended to ensure there is adequate time for Albertans to provide their input on the proposed changes and to share what the impacts of these will be on employers and employees, and the families they support."

-Dave Kaiser, Keep Alberta Working Representative

"Members of Restaurant Canada are overwhelming supportive of the extension of the consultation period. Members urge the Minister set aside more time for this extremely important topic, it simply cannot be rushed."

-Mark von Schellwitz, Restaurants Canada

For more information, contact:

Samantha Johnston, Wildrose Official Opposition. 780.720.5123

Yonathan Sumamo, Progressive Conservative Caucus. 587.784.5536

Harmon Moon, Alberta Liberal Caucus. 780.644.0926