



2009 Western Premiers' Conference Dawson City, Yukon

COMMUNIQUE Friday, June 19

WESTERN PREMIERS AGREE ON A PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

DAWSON CITY – At the 2009 Western Premiers' Conference, Premiers will work in partnership with the federal government to make employment insurance fair for all Canadians.

They welcomed the appointment of the federal working group on Employment Insurance (EI) and committed to making a joint submission to the committee.

Premiers agreed the following framework should shape EI for the benefit of all Canadian workers:

1. Employment insurance should be reformed using a principled approach that gives Canadians equal support regardless of the territory or province they work in.
2. It should build a temporary bridge to get workers through these challenging economic times.
3. The program should be streamlined from having 58 regions with different eligibility standards to nation-wide benefits that reflect employment opportunities in urban centers and rural and remote communities.
4. An emphasis on training should be a critical component of the reform.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Premiers applauded federal efforts to invest in major infrastructure partnerships this year. These are important for short-term economic stimulus.

They agreed the federal government's high priority on accelerated infrastructure funding is making a significant difference. In their 2009 budgets, western provincial and territorial governments have allocated approximately \$40 billion to large-scale public

works and capital infrastructure projects in the next two years. This is in addition to projects going ahead under the federal Building Canada Plan.

They stressed that time is of the essence and governments must maintain momentum by continuing to work together to simplify processes, approve projects and deliver results.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Premiers supported the need for an amendment to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* to permit the federal government to enter into equivalency agreements with provinces and territories, on a case-by-case basis, to help avoid duplication and overlap in the environmental assessment process. They also called on the federal government to replace the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* with modern legislation.

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