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NDP calls for procurement policies that create jobs rather than sidelining Saskatchewan workers

NDP Leader Ryan Meili met today with out-of-work tradespeople and joined them in calling on the provincial government to introduce a community benefits agreement that would ensure work for Saskatchewan tradespeople on Saskatchewan infrastructure projects.

“The government’s failed procurement model is holding Saskatchewan and its workers back,” said NDP Leader Ryan Meili. “When it comes to infrastructure projects, we need an approach that keeps Saskatchewan workers on the jobsite, not the SaskJobs website.”

Meili said Saskatchewan is lagging behind other provinces like Alberta and British Columbia on procurement. These provinces have introduced community benefit agreements and Manitoba has implemented a minimum construction wage system — strategies that ensure local companies can compete for projects and local workers have access to jobs. Such initiatives would help address the fact that Building Trades Workers worked 57 per cent fewer hours in 2017 than 2012.

“It’s frustrating to see big projects moving forward in the province while local folks can’t find work on them,” said Troy Knipple, a journeyman pipefitter from Regina. “I know there are a lot of skilled workers across the province worried about not being able to put food on the table or pay bills. Fixing the flawed procurement policies would go a long way to help out.”

“The Sask. Party’s approach of adding PST to construction labour while handing over big contracts to out-of-province corporations has hurt Saskatchewan workers,” Meili said. “Stories like Troy’s are not unique: there are 6,400 fewer full-time jobs in Saskatchewan compared to last month, and 1,200 fewer construction jobs than a year ago.”

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