



# NEWS RELEASE COMMUNIQUÉ

## CANADIAN CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS LIBERAL FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIP AND SKILLS TRAINING

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**OTTAWA** – The Canadian Construction Association (CCA) today applauded Liberal Leader Paul Martin's announcement regarding support for increasing the number of apprentices and skilled tradespeople in Canada. CCA was particularly pleased with the announcement that apprentices taking training courses would no longer be subject to a two-week waiting period before becoming eligible for EI benefits – a longstanding CCA priority.

The announcement made by Paul Martin today in Waterloo committed a future Liberal government to the following:

- Increasing the number of apprentice graduates to 75,000 annually by 2016, with an interim target of 50,000 by 2012.
- Investing \$3.5 billion to ensure these goals are met.
- A commitment to, "ensuring that Canadians collecting Employment Insurance while away from work on a National Red Seal Apprenticeship Program will no longer be subject to a two-week waiting period before becoming eligible for EI benefits, providing the course is successfully completed."

CCA is seeking clarification from Liberal officials as to whether apprentices in all trades would qualify for the elimination of the two-week waiting period, or whether it would be restricted to only Red Seal trades – Red Seal trades do not include all trades in Canada. CCA has long called for an expansion of the Red Seal program to other trades.

"Canada is facing a challenge in producing enough skilled workers – today's announcement by Paul Martin would greatly assist in ensuring that a stable source of skilled labour would be available to meet the demands in the years ahead," stated Murray Farmer, Chairman of the Canadian Construction Association. "We look forward to working with the next federal government in implementing such measures".

"Today's announcement by Paul Martin is good news for the Canadian construction industry, particularly the announcement regarding the elimination of the two-week waiting period," stated Michael Atkinson, President of the Canadian Construction Association. "Individuals in training programs attract people from all ages, many of whom have families and other responsibilities."

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