

July 15, 2020

VIA Email: AEST.Minister@gov.bc.ca; FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Melanie Mark  
Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

The Honourable Carole James  
Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier

Dear Ministers Mark and James:

Re: Immediate funding needed for BC Centre for Women in the Trades (BCCWITT)

We are writing in support of the BC Federation of Labour's letter (dated July 7, 2020). Our members who work at BCIT work closely with their BCGEU colleagues who contribute to graduating workers in a variety of trades-based sectors. These workers contribute to the well-being and economy of BC. We also, as per our Equity Policy, support organizations such as BCCWITT that seek to address barriers and support workers in sectors based on gender. We support, in full, the BCFED's letter:

*We are writing to request funding for the BC Centre for the Women in Trades (BCCWITT), which is in danger of closing. BCCWITT has now exhausted its current government funding, and it will need to close its doors at a time when its programs and services are needed more than ever, due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We need your support to keep this critical project going.*

*The BC Centre for Women in the Trades was founded in June 2018 to develop programs and initiatives that address the barriers to recruitment, retention, and advancement for women and members of other equity groups. BCCWITT is led by women from the trades, along with industry and labour partners. The BC government made this possible through a Sector Labour Market Partnership pilot-project grant, funded by the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. This two-year grant ended in April 2020.*

*BCCWITT's objectives are key to improving the economic stability and prosperity for women and other equity groups in our province, including Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, LGBTQ2IS+ people, and people with disabilities. With the labour-force demand growing for the skilled trades in BC, increasing the proportion of women and other equity groups in skilled trades will contribute to:*

- *creating a strong, diverse, and resilient skilled trades labour force,*
- *narrowing the gender wage gap in BC, and*
- *ensuring that more people get to share in BC's prosperity, increasing access to*
- *family and community sustaining careers that include good wages, health benefits and less precarity.*

*Despite just getting started, this project is already having an impact. More than 1,500 women have joined the network. More than 90 networking and educational events across all regions of*

*BC have been hosted or coordinated by BCCWITT and have included personal development and leadership education. Seventy-nine men from industry have received intensive training to become Be More than a Bystander facilitators, championing the need for the systemic change needed in the trades.*

*This is not the time to close the BC Centre for Women in the Trades, especially because demand for the project's services have increased during this pandemic. The programs and services are in direct alignment with the province's recovery initiatives to address the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and other equity groups. Government funding at this key moment would have a profound impact on economic recovery efforts—supporting the significant number of underemployed and unemployed people in this province.*

*The BC Federation of Labour strongly believes in this project and knows the impact it is having on women and members of other equity groups in the trades. We respectfully seek your support to ensure BCCWITT can continue this important work.*

*We encourage you to reach out to BCCWITT's executive director, Nina Hansen, for more information on the successes of this program and how you can help with the urgent need for funding for this project. Nina can be reached at [nina@bccwitt.ca](mailto:nina@bccwitt.ca).*

We urge you to support BCCWITT.

Sincerely,



**Colin Jones**

President, BCIT Faculty & Staff Association

[colin\\_jones@bcit.ca](mailto:colin_jones@bcit.ca)

604.456.8020 | [BCITFSA.CA](http://BCITFSA.CA)

CC:

Mitzi Dean, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity, [Mitzi.Dean.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Mitzi.Dean.MLA@leg.bc.ca)

The Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources,

[EMPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EMPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, [FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Michelle Mungall, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness, [JEDC.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:JEDC.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Harry Bains, Minister of Labour, [LBR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LBR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Claire Trevena, Transportation and Infrastructure, [Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)

Sussanne Skidmore, Secretary-Treasurer, BC Federation of Labour, [SecTreas@bcfed.ca](mailto:SecTreas@bcfed.ca)

Kathy Kinloch, President, BCIT, [Kathy\\_Kinloch@bcit.ca](mailto:Kathy_Kinloch@bcit.ca)

Cory Langford, BCGEU Unit Chair, BCIT Vocational Faculty, [Cory\\_Langford@bcit.ca](mailto:Cory_Langford@bcit.ca)

Richard Schaeffer, BCGEU Unit Chair, BCIT Support Staff, [Richard\\_Schaeffer@bcit.ca](mailto:Richard_Schaeffer@bcit.ca)