
March 30, 2010

Philip Hochstein
President
Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of BC
#211- 3823 Henning Drive
Burnaby, BC V5C 6P3

Dear Philip:

I am responding to your letter of March 23, 2010 concerning the BC Safety Authority's (BCSA) proposal for ensuring the currency of Field Safety Representatives (FSR's) knowledge of the BC Electrical Code.

As you know, the FSR is a qualified individual who has the legal authority to declare conformity of the contractor's electrical work to the BC Electrical Code. This is a position of considerable trust that allows the regulator to follow a risk management approach to regulatory oversight. Further, it allows a contractor considerable operational freedom while still being responsible for safety. Without this, industry operations would be significantly constrained by constant intervention by the regulator who would of necessity employ the traditional regulatory practice of hands-on inspection of every project.

To clarify BCSA's approach, I offer the following:

1. BCSA's view is that working knowledge of the current electrical code is fundamental to safety.
2. When the FSR program was initiated in 2004 under the new *Safety Standards Act*, it replaced a number of provisions in the old *Electrical Safety Act and Regulations* and did away with the requirement for a contractor to have an Accredited Representative and Registered Representative. In itself the creation of the FSR represented a significant reduction in regulations and administrative requirements in the electrical industry.
3. In seeking currency, BCSA is not proposing new regulations, but implementing existing provisions in the *Safety Standards Act and Regulations*.
4. Harmonizing the FSR training and code knowledge with Alberta's certified master electrician by 2012 is an objective of both Provinces to fully comply with the investment requirements of the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA).

.../2



As you are aware, the steering committee for this consultation, of which you were a member until your resignation in August, 2009, worked hard to provide input into a workable process to support the objective of currency of code knowledge.

However, we acknowledge that our approach to implementing this objective has left a number of unanswered questions and understandable concerns that need to be addressed. For this reason, we are advising our stakeholders in the electrical industry that, while an option is on the table, there are other options that could achieve the primary objective. We will continue to work with the representative industry associations, as well as individual FSR's, in a renewed initiative to find an acceptable approach to ensuring all FSR's in British Columbia are current in their knowledge of the BC Electrical Code. Further, we are committed to managing our cost structure prudently. We will maintain an open dialogue on important and sensitive issues such as who provides the training, its scheduling and registration fees.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a stylized "C".

Peter Cook, Chair
Board of Directors

pc: The Honourable Premier Gordon Campbell, M.L.A., Premier of British Columbia
The Honourable Rich Coleman, M.L.A., Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Ms. Barbette Cejalvo, Executive Director, BC Electrical Association
Mr. Robert Lashin, Chair, Electrical Contractors Association of BC
Ms. Deb Cahill, Executive Director, Electrical Contractors Association of BC
Mr. Manley McLachlan, President, BC Construction Association
Mr. Harry Diemer, President and CEO, BC Safety Authority