



ACEC-CANADA PARLIAMENT HILL DAY 2023:

Overview

ACEC-Canada's voice is being heard

On October 19th, 2023, ACEC-Canada brought over 65 representatives of the consulting engineering sector from across the country to Ottawa for in-person meetings with legislators and policy makers during its first in-person Parliament Hill Day since the pandemic.

The following recommendations were presented to the Members of Parliament (MPs), Senators, political staff, and civil servants with whom our members met:

- The National Infrastructure Assessment announced in 2021 be implemented to detail the long-term strategy for addressing Canada's infrastructure needs.
- The government of Canada immediately renew funding for the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program or unveil its successor program by spring 2024 to address immediate infrastructure needs.
- Future federal infrastructure investment programs allow for multi-project applications based on sound asset management planning, as well as individual project applications.

These recommendations, which were part of ACEC-Canada's pre-budget Submission for Budget 2024, comprise our ongoing message on the importance of consulting engineering to developing and delivering critical infrastructure across the country.

Engaging with all parties across the aisle

Over the course of the day, ACEC-Canada members took part in a total of 35 meetings with individuals from across party lines, Senators, and political staff. The numbers break down as follows:

11 Liberal MPs

13 PC MPs

2 NDP MPs

3 BQ MPs

1 Green MP

1 Senator

3 Political Staff

Key results

- Approximately 75% of participating MPs were familiar with the consulting engineering industry;
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- Close to 95% of participating MPs expressed their support for ACEC-Canada's goals and advocacy messages; and
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- 100% of participating MPs encouraged ACEC to continue its advocacy on these issues.

What participants shared about their meetings

The members shared that the meetings were overwhelmingly positive, with several MPs supporting specific ACEC-Canada recommendations and asking questions that fostered conversation. Some of the comments ACEC-Canada received from participants included:

"Engaged discussion."
"Well received on both sides."
"Open discussion."
"Very open and positive meeting."

"Conscient des enjeux."
"Très belle rencontre. "
"Réceptif et favorable. "



Patrick Aubin (AtkinsRéalis)



The Honourable Ed Fast, MP, Miles Yi (Stantec Consulting Ltd) and Raya Smertina (ACEC-Canada Board)

Parliament Hill Day 2023

The political context

ACEC-Canada members arrived on Parliament Hill at a tumultuous time, with the Liberal government facing strong headwinds on issues such as inflation, housing, and immigration. The Conservatives in Opposition had been gaining momentum for the past several months and had used this momentum as an opportunity to be critical of decisions made by the Liberal government. They have also used this opportunity to share more details of their plans for Canada if elected, making this a crucial time to discuss the challenges that our industry is facing to ensure that all parties are aware of our recommendations on how to address them.

Additionally, the Liberal/NDP Confidence and Supply Agreement was in jeopardy, with the parties disagreeing on how best to move forward to address issues such as healthcare and housing/infrastructure. The Agreement ensures that an election will not be held prematurely due to a failed confidence vote, indicating that, if all goes according to plan for the Liberals, the next election does not have to be held until Fall 2025. This means that, while the Conservatives were in campaign-mode to capitalize on their momentum, the Liberals and the NDP have been focused on trying to address key issues and implement the promises that they have made over the past several years to ensure that, once an election is called, they can show that they have delivered for Canadians.

This political context provided an opportunity for ACEC-Canada and our members to meet with all parties to discuss our recommendations. Infrastructure is not always at the forefront of the public's mind, but with increasing pressure regarding housing, and all parties focusing their attention on housing needs and the infrastructure that necessarily must come with it, there was a window of opportunity to address the challenges that our industry is facing with all parties.



Journalist and political commentator
Chantal Hébert and ACEC-Canada
President & CEO John Gamble



ACEC-Canada President & CEO
John Gamble

Meetings

Over the course of the day, ACEC-Canada members met with 40 Members of Parliament (MPs) from across party lines, Senators, political staff, and civil servants.

These meetings resulted in productive, interactive conversations on the importance of consulting engineering companies to strong, resilient communities. Attendees gained insight into each party's short- and long-term vision for infrastructure and procurement and understand what steps ACEC-Canada should take to ensure our recommendations are considered by key-decision makers both in Government and in Opposition.

ACEC-Canada members met with the following individuals over the course of the day:

Members of Parliament:

- François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry;
- Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Public Services and Procurement;
- Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change;
- Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of National Revenue;
- Peter Fragiskatos, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities;
- Charles Sousa, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement;
- Members of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology (INDU);
- Members of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities (TRAN);
- Members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources (RNNR);
- Members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (ENVI);
- Members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates (OGGO); and
- Opposition critics for Environment and Climate Change; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; Infrastructure and Communities; and Natural Resources.

Senators:

- A member of the Senate Standing Committee on Banking, Commerce, and the Economy (BANC).

Senior Political Staff:

- Special Advisor to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement;
- Senior Policy Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance; and
- Policy Advisors to the Leader of the Official Opposition.



Bernard Bigras (AFG-Québec), Hugo Delaney (WSP), Catherine Milioto (Group Intervia Inc.) and Justine Mainguy (AtkinsRéalis) meeting with MP Francesco Sorbara and his staff

Next Steps

In the coming months, ACEC-Canada staff will cultivate the relationships our members established during their meetings by:

- Connecting with the MPs that indicated that they were interested in meeting with ACEC-Canada but who were unavailable on October 19th;
- Continuing to advocate on the issues that we highlighted during our Parliament Hill Day, including the implementation of the National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA), the funding of the Investing In Canada Infrastructure Program (or its successor), and the allowing of multi-project applications for infrastructure projects;
- Submitting a Pre-Budget Submission to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance; and
- Continuing to meet with civil servants, political staff, and politicians from all parties to discuss a variety of topics critical to our industry, including QBS and improving procurement policies, language requirements for procurement documents, and the streamlining of infrastructure project approvals.



Marc Savard (CIMA+) and Sabrina Martineau (AtkinsRéalis) meeting with MP Gerard Deltell



Christy Cunningham (ACEC-NL), Kate Friars (CENS), Brad Dawe (Stantec) and Aaron Ferguson (COWI) meeting with MP Joanne Thompson

CCEA Gala and Reception

Following the meetings on Parliament Hill, ACEC-Canada members gathered for an evening of celebrations at the Canadian Consulting Engineering Awards (CCEA) gala. An invitation was sent to all MPs and Senators to attend the reception and awards presentation; several attended, including MP Francesco Sorbara (a member of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology), MP Tako Van Popta (the Conservative Shadow Minister for Pacific Economic Development), and MP Cathay Wagantall, who had the Schreyer Award-winning project located in her riding.

Additionally, ACEC-Canada reached out to all MPs who had a CCEA award winning firm or project in their riding with project information to encourage them to share this accomplishment on their social media. Several MPs shared congratulatory posts on social media, including MP Steven Mackinnon [Library and Archives Canada's Preservation Storage Facility (Stantec)], MP Cathay Wagantall [K3 Project – South Shaft Headframe (Hatch)], and Mark Gerretsen [Waaban Crossing (Hatch)].



ACEC-Canada President & CEO John Gamble, MP Francesco Sorbara and AFG-Québec President & CEO Bernard Bigras



MP Francesco Sorbara and ACEC-Canada Vice President Martine Proulx



MP Jean Yip and her son (a recently-graduated engineer) with ACEC-Canada President & CEO John Gamble



David Evans, ACEC-Canada Board; John Gamble, ACEC-Canada President and CEO; MP Jean Yip and her son; Suzanne Demeules, AFG-Québec Board Chair; and David Murray, ACEC-Canada Past Chair



Rahim Ahmad, Associated Engineering; MP Cathay Wagantall; and Leon Botham, NewFields



MP Tako Van Popta (center) speaking with ACEC-Canada members