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Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
Institut royal d'architecture du Canada

April 7, 2020

The Honourable Bill Morneau
Minister of Finance
Department of Finance Canada
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Hon. Bill Morneau,

This letter is in follow-up to the letters that we, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), sent to you on March 18, March 24, and March 31, 2020.

We applaud the government for committing to the purchase of personal protective equipment for individuals most at risk of exposure while working and quick access to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

Our members validated these needs in a COVID-19 Pulse Survey we conducted between March 23 to March 31, 2020.

Hundreds of members provided feedback to six questions that were asked to gather information about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The top themes included financial hardship, human resources, technological challenges, mental health and safe return to operations. Here are a few examples from the hundreds of responses we received:

Financial hardship and immediate need for cash flow

- “Cash flow to sustain basic living expenses”
- “Self-employed single member practices have little or no government support that 'fits'”

Human resources, specifically, actual and impending layoffs and strong desire to retain staff

- “Support for keeping staff on payroll. A temporary layoff is still a layoff”
- “Concerned about the ability to remobilise quickly when the crisis eases/passes”

Safety concerns related to virus transmission

- “Knowledge about how we can safely continue work on construction sites”
- “Government of Canada Health information, job site safety practice information”

Technology

- “More WiFi bandwidth and [internet providers] to reduce their rates so that our staff are not forced to pay additional costs while working from home”
- “Extra costs related to new remote working video and internet subscriptions”



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Mental health

- “It has totally changed my life, and my daily routine”
- “Need support resources to share with staff on stress and anxiety”
- “Severe financial instability and uncertainty affecting practice viability and potentially the mental health of individuals remaining in the firm”
- “Isolation”
- “Uncertainty for future”

Need to safely and quickly return to operations, specifically, resumption of projects and RFPs

- “Severe financial instability and uncertainty affecting practice viability and potentially the mental health of individuals remaining in the firm”
- “Greater clarity, i.e. construction continue or not”

Architects are a key service provider for critical infrastructure and—as such—it is imperative that businesses resume as quickly and safely as possible to support rebuilding and restructuring.

The RAIC continues to be at your disposal to support the government and will assist in any way that we can. Do not hesitate to reach out for our support during this pandemic, we are all in this together and the RAIC offers its support to get through this together.

About the RAIC

The RAIC a not-for-profit association that is the leading voice for excellence in the built environment in Canada. The RAIC is a national organization with over 5000 members across all provinces and territories.

Sincerely,
John Brown
President

Mike Brennan
CEO

CC Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Chair of Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 Response

Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

Hon. Melanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages

Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade

Jeremy Broadhurst, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Prime Minister

Elder Marques, Chief of Staff to the Minister of Finance

Rick Theis, Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister