

New Infrastructure Programs Must Meet Cities and Communities' Needs (07/09/2013)

ST. JOHN'S, NL- Strengthening Canada's local economic foundations must be the top priority for federal, provincial and territorial governments as they prepare to design a new generation of cost-shared funding programs this fall. That was the message sent today by municipal leaders as the board of directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) wrapped up its meeting in St. John's.

"As a country, we must guarantee that all communities receive a fair and predictable share of new funding to address their growing infrastructure needs," said FCM president Claude Dauphin. "The federal budget promised longer-term investments in the local roads, transit, water and wastewater systems that support our national economy, and now it's time to turn that promise into reality."

In order to meet the Budget 2013 commitment to ensure that new programs will be up and running before next year's construction season, board members agreed that governments must act quickly to set priorities and sign funding agreements for the new 10-year, \$14 billion Building Canada Fund. FCM board members also emphasized the importance of taking action to strengthen Canada's housing system. At a time when new home construction has tailed off, and fewer Canadians are able to enter the housing market, Ottawa can create jobs and support growth by working with cities and communities to jump-start rental housing construction across the country. The federal government must also follow through on its pledge to work with FCM on the design of new affordable housing programs.

While in St. John's, board members also endorsed national recommendations for improving rail safety in the wake of the Lac Mégantic disaster, and called for closer collaboration with local governments.

"The lesson of this year's budget was simple: governments working together should be the rule, not the exception," said Dauphin. "It's time to expand cooperation among all orders of government so that we can strengthen our economy, keep our communities safe, and prepare our country for the future."

More than 100 municipal leaders from across Canada sit on FCM's Board of Directors and Standing Committees, representing more than 2,000 member communities across the country.

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