

IBEW



Local 230

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April 13, 2010

Honourable Jason Kenney
Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Kenney:

Re: Esquimalt Crane erected by Temporary Foreign Workers

On behalf of the Vancouver Island - Building and Construction Trades Council which represents over 5,000 union construction workers I am writing you with shock and awe over the recent decision made by folks in your Ministry, which has allowed 25-30 Chinese temporary construction workers to assemble and erect a crane at the Public Works Esquimalt Graving Dock located just outside of Victoria, British Columbia.

The crane which is a Federal Public Works project referred to as part of Canada's "Action Plan" to economic recovery was awarded to Konecranes Plc of Finland, and although my understanding is that the crane was actually manufactured in China, there are plenty of Canadian manufactures who would have likely welcomed the work. What is extremely troubling however, is the fact that your Ministry is permitting 25-30 temporary foreign construction workers in from China to assemble and erect this crane, under the auspices of the "Business Visitor" classification.

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So, I spent five minutes and looked through your website to find the "Frequently asked questions" and further under that heading was, "What is a business visitor?" Which goes on to tell the world that;

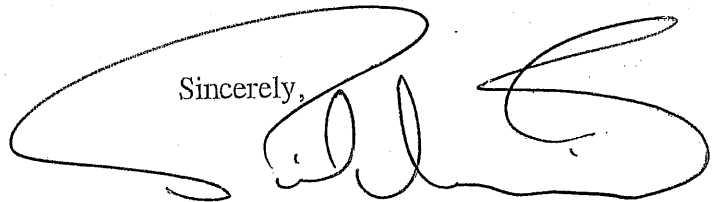
"A business visitor is someone who comes to Canada to engage in international business activities without directly entering the Canadian labour market. For example, someone who comes to Canada to meet with representatives of companies doing business with their country would be considered a business visitor. Visitors may be in Canada for business meetings or site visits (to observe only). A person invited to Canada by a Canadian company for training in product use, sales or other functions related to a business transaction would also be included." emphasis added

Currently there are over one hundred qualified crane erectors (Ironworkers) unemployed in the local area watching their tax dollars hard at work under your Government's Action Plan. The problem with that is the obvious fact they, are not hard at work, they are searching for a job, and your Ministry has worked hard at effectively barring them from finding that job.

I am strongly urging you to investigate this huge chasm of work permit misunderstanding and rectify it immediately by sending those Temporary Foreign Workers home and tender the project locally or allow Konecranes Plc to contract to a Canadian firm of their choice, so a local Canadian firm can bid on this project and put local tradesmen to work.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me in our Victoria business office.

Sincerely,



Philip Venoit
Business Manager/
Financial Secretary
President, VI-BCTC

PMV/jc
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Cc Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister
Robert Blakely, Executive Director-Canadian Building & Construction Trades Council
Wayne Peppard, Executive Director-BC & Yukon Building & Construction Trades Council