



# PRESS RELEASE

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### Canadian Public Works Association announces Canada's first "Report Card" for Infrastructure

**Ottawa, ON** -- The Canadian Public Works Association (CPWA) today announced the release of Canada's first "Report Card for Infrastructure." CPWA President Darwin K. Durnie was joined in Ottawa by representatives of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Construction Association, and the Canadian Society of Civil Engineering – all fellow "Report Card for Infrastructure" partners.

"The Report Card gives us a first look at where our municipal infrastructure currently stands and, given that two-thirds of Canadian infrastructure is owned and managed by municipalities, it is an important snapshot of where we are in regard to our nation's infrastructure which is truly the backbone of our economic and social well-being. Thanks to the efforts of our public works professionals across Canada we are able to develop this important benchmark that will guide future discussions on infrastructure investments" Durnie said.

The Report Card is a collaborative effort of the four partner organizations and includes input from ten additional organizations who are stakeholders in infrastructure.

The Report Card findings indicate that the water sectors of our municipal infrastructure are doing fairly well. Both potable water and wastewater are currently assessed in the "Good – Adequate for Now" category.

Canada's road network received an average of "Fair – Needs Attention." This means that we must be vigilant in addressing the roads and highways as they are essential to keeping Canada moving and competitive. In addition, an average rating of "Fair" means there currently are pockets of "Poor" ratings for roads in some municipalities.

In our opinion, infrastructure that currently earns a "Poor" rating is unacceptable and even those currently earning a "Fair or Good" rating translate to continuous work to be done to keep our communities healthy, safe, viable, economically competitive and sustainable. Infrastructure fails exponentially and it takes more dollars and effort to stay ahead of the failure curve if you allow it to reach poor condition.

One area of good news was in the storm water sector which rated a "Very Good – Fit for the Future." CPWA believes that the new emphasis, attention, and investment by large municipalities on storm water

are reflected in the results. “Very Good – Fit for the Future” is the rating that CPWA would have liked to see assessed in all areas” said Durnie.

An unexpected outcome from the Report Card for CPWA was that of the 346 municipalities that responded, only 123 of those were able to provide rigorous enough data to comply with the requirements of the Report Card project. CPWA has asserted that asset management is a crucial part of the planning, construction, management, operations and maintenance of infrastructure and will continue to work with all levels of government to build that capacity.

Improving the “state of the art” asset management with partner organizations and federal and provincial governments remains a focus of the CPWA strategic plan. CPWA highlighted the need for capacity building of agencies and practitioners in its pre-budget submission to the Federal Government.

Development of an inventory of assets, evaluating their condition and then comparing that to the level of service desired and the funding available provides communities with critical information for decision-making. CPWA believes the Report Card can provide a repeatable, robust system that is comparable across the country, and allow the next steps in predicting funding needs by all levels of government, be it grants, borrowing or P3’s.

“As public works practitioners, our members are called upon to provide advice to elected officials on priority areas for investment. Without proper asset management, it’s nearly impossible to ensure that taxpayer dollars are directed to where they are most needed,” Durnie explained. “Asset management will help us to attain the highest value and longevity from our infrastructure assets – having a report card that tells us where we are now is a crucial step.”

Overall, the message from the Report Card is that, as a nation, we certainly cannot afford to be complacent with the current status of our infrastructure. Infrastructure Canada and the Government’s Building Canada infrastructure program, buoyed by the recent stimulus efforts dedicated to infrastructure, have helped our municipalities put focus on their infrastructure. These much needed Federal programs have made a tremendous difference in our municipalities’ ability to better our nation’s infrastructure. These Federal programs must continue to provide reliable funding on a long term basis and support the development of greater asset management planning.

Fortunately, the Federal Government recognizes the importance of infrastructure and, in preparing for the next Long Term Plan for Infrastructure, the Government has recently held regional roundtable events to talk about and prioritize the components. They have met with municipal leaders and stakeholders to gather input and expertise. “Clearly, the Government has committed to continue funding infrastructure and should be congratulated on their efforts,” Durnie commented.

CPWA congratulates and acknowledges the work done by the public works professionals in the participating municipalities, and would like to make special mention of Mr. Ric Robertshaw from the Region of Peel who participated in the development of the Report Card on behalf of CPWA.

*Established in 1986, the Canadian Public Works Association (Association Canadienne des Travaux Publics) is the national voice for the Canadian public works community.*