

For immediate release

March 16, 2017

CUPE MB: PALLISTER’S PROPOSAL TO REPEAL P3 LEGISLATION IS A STEP BACKWARDS BASIC PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ARE NEEDED, NOT “RED TAPE”

WINNIPEG – The Canadian Union of Public Employees Manitoba has serious concerns about legislation introduced today by the Pallister government to repeal a law that provides basic measures for accountability and transparency when it comes to public-private partnerships.

Section 14 of the Pallister government’s *Bill 24 - The Red Tape Reduction and Government Efficiency Act* proposes to eliminate the existing *Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*, in its entirety.

“*The P3 Transparency and Accountability Act* contains basic but essential protections for public investments and access to services,” said Kelly Moist, President of CUPE Manitoba. “How can Premier Pallister call the P3 Act “red tape”? It provides minimum provisions for a fair process on P3 projects, most of which involve tens or hundreds of millions of dollars and long-term contracts.”

“P3 projects are controversial for a reason,” added Moist. “These projects often take public funds and oversight and turn them over to a for-profit entity. Why would any government want to repeal a law that protects the public interest and public funds?”

CUPE has raised concerns in the past about P3s. The existing legislation only provides basic protections and access to information. In one case in Portage la Prairie, for example, CUPE raised concerns that a wastewater treatment plant renovation and expansion worth hundreds of millions of dollars would cost the public more through a P3, key financial information was not made available to the public, and there was no serious effort to engage in public consultations. CUPE is concerned that P3 projects routinely have poor results on every measure of public interest, from quality of service to timelines and cost.

“The people of Manitoba have always been on the hook for any problems resulting from using the P3 model for public projects. If the *P3 Act* is eliminated, we will be on the hook and blindfolded,” concluded Moist.

“If Premier Pallister wants to show Manitobans he is committed to his promise to protect public services, he will cancel his plans to repeal *The P3 Transparency and Accountability Act*, and strengthen it instead.”

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is Canada’s largest union representing more than a half-million members. In Manitoba, CUPE represents approximately 26,000 members working in health care facilities, personal care homes, school divisions, municipal services, social services, child care centres, public utilities, libraries and family emergency services.

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