



PRESS RELEASE

PWGSC ANNOUNCEMENT – A CONTINUATION NOT A BEGINNING

For Immediate Release

Ottawa, Ontario, June 20, 2011... Today's announcement from the department of Public Works Government Services Canada (PWGSC) of cuts to programs and positions resulting from a strategic review is one moment in an already long series of review processes in the federal public service. For five years departments have been following a Conservative mandate to review and cut. Now they are cutting into the bone of public service programs, if necessary, to reach questionable budgetary targets. According to department sources, PWGSC has received approval from Treasury Board for twenty-two "initiatives", nine of which will have a direct negative impact on jobs.

"It will be interesting to see whether the Conservative government leadership will stand before all Canadians and explain with each cut, what programs and which services are no longer available to Canadians", commented CAPE President Claude Poirier. "Mr. Harper, Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Clement are trying to sell this exercise by pitting taxpayer interests against public service employee interests. But the fact of the matter is that everyone in Canada will pay."

The lesson learned from passed cutting exercises is that reducing services for the sake of cutting can only be achieved if the realities of program delivery are ignored. Cuts in the 1990s to the federal public service resulted in an overworked and disoriented public administration, a disarticulation of services and programs, and a redirection of resources from taxpayers to a never ending series of politically driven reviews. Yet the Harper government appears to be disregarding past experience and is intent on repeating past errors even at the obvious risk of crippling the public service that serves Canadians.

Departments have no choice or voice. They must follow orders whether they believe that the orders make sense or not. During the election campaign, the Conservative Party promised that it would reach its budgetary targets without the loss of public service jobs. Then shortly after winning the security of a majority government, it changed its position from no-cuts to yes-cuts.

"Clearly, the Conservative government's claim that attrition would be enough to attain the desired savings was a fallacy... Is this a sign of what to expect over the next four years? Is this the kind of double speak that will now characterize Canadian government?" asks Mr. Poirier. "All I can suggest today to fellow Canadians is to keep a close eye on what is happening in Ottawa. The programs that you depend on may be the next ones to be cut."

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