

Council and taxpayers need to know the full impact of closed tendering says Union

By **Content Team** - May 26, 2017



Formed in 1952, CLAC is one of Canada's fastest-growing unions. Operating through 15 member centres, it is the country's largest national, independent, multi-sector union representing over 60,000 workers in almost every sector.

The union issued the following media release Friday.



CLAC is calling on the Sault Ste. Marie city council to pass the motion put forward by Councillor Matthew Shoemaker to look deeper into the costs and impact that closed tendering is having on its citizens and finances.

Presently, the city can only allow contractors that are signatories of two unions—the International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and the Labourers International Union of North America—to work on municipal projects. This prevents many local companies and their workers from working on projects like the court house or improvements to the water treatment facilities. According to many studies, this also drives up the costs of these taxpayer-funded projects.

"This is an issue of both cost and fairness," says Ian DeWaard, CLAC representative. "The current tendering restrictions are preventing local contractors from bidding on public projects and this is fundamentally wrong. All qualified union and non-union companies should have the right to bid on publicly funded projects. Fair and open tendering is the only way to give residents the right to work in their own community and to achieve maximum value for money on municipal projects."

Councillor Shoemaker's resolution calls on the city to look at the cost and feasibility of pursuing a case at the Ontario Labour Relations Board to become a non-construction employer. This would allow the city to freely tender all construction projects. There is precedent for success in such a case. In September 2016, the Greater Essex County District School Board was granted non-construction employer status, after being bound to construction collective agreements for years. Councillor Shoemaker's resolution also calls on the city to do further analysis on how much closed tendering is costing taxpayers and how quickly the costs of pursuing the non-construction designation could be recovered by the savings on construction projects.

"CLAC is calling on all councillors to support this resolution so they can get the facts they need to make an informed decision about next steps," says DeWaard. "We believe that the study will show that when particular unions are able to monopolize work that is paid for by municipal governments, costs go up and public dollars buy less of the needed additions, refurbishments, and infrastructure replacements."

The path to pursuing a non-construction employer designation is not easy and will take considerable resources, but until the province fixes the flaw in the current law that treats municipalities like contractors, it is the only option.

Content Team

Hi, we're the content team for SaultOnline. If you would like to share a tip about a story or an event, please let us know by using the handy [Contribute Form](#) or sending an email to contribute@saultonline.com. We'd love to hear and share your side of our Naturally Gifted area! | Interested in contributing content on a regular basis or starting a Community Blog on SaultOnline? We'd also love to hear from you! Send us an email to contribute@saultonline.com with your thoughts.

