

Hebron Project Consultation

A brief submitted by

The Office to Advance Womens Apprentices



To the Hebron Public Review Commission



Office to Advance Women Apprentices

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Hebron Review Commission
Suite 903, Fortis Building
St. John's, NL

Dear Commissioner Ayre,

The Office to Advance Women Apprentices (OAWA) is pleased to offer the following submission to the Hebron Project Review Panel.

The Office to Advance Women Apprentices' mandate is to enhance employment opportunities for women apprentices to help them advance in their chosen trade within Newfoundland and Labrador.

We understand the value of this project to the province but also see it as an opportunity to advance women in the trades through direct employment. The submission to follow identifies areas in which women can play a vital role in the Hebron Project and suggestions to assist in making this happen. Women still face many barriers when it comes to employment in the skilled trades and also barriers for childcare services as it pertains to employment. In working together to remove these barriers, women will be able to play a major role in the success of this project for the lives of their families and for the betterment of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Diversity, innovation and engagement, is the underlying focus of the Office to Advance Women Apprentices in moving women forward and we offer these practical suggestions to assist them overcome barriers and be an integral part of the success of the Hebron Project.

We are open to any further discussions you would like to have on this matter.

Sincerely,

Karen Walsh/Kelly Hickey
Office to Advance Women Apprentices

Part 1 – Recommendations for Inclusion of Tradeswomen in the Hebron Project

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has received a ***have province*** status and as we are all aware the results are evident in the positive changes this has made for our Province – this Province is no longer looked upon as an exception but as now part of the country's norm. In comparison it is the intent through the support of the government of Newfoundland and Labrador and large diversity sector groups that under the direction of the Office to Advance Women Apprentices that women in the trades will become part of the ***norm*** and no longer stigmatized as women in male dominated trades. The Hebron Project can play a major role in this process.

The Hebron Project will bring much success to this province and women want to be part of that success. This presentation will aim to show that by considering women as a viable source of employment for the Hebron Project that we are creating a strong workforce within our province and filling the gaps for the ever anticipated skills trades' shortage.

The Office to Advance Women Apprentices works collaboratively with industry, government, labor, training institutions, community groups, and other key stakeholders to achieve common goals in relation to women's employment in apprenticeable trades. This Office is mandated to recognize and mitigate obstacles and barriers that impede a woman's ability to progress through her apprenticeship program.

It is in keeping with this mandate that the following points will be put forward on behalf of female tradespeople to ensure that they receive fair treatment for employment opportunities and other areas of the Hebron project.

In its presentation the Office to Advance Women Apprentices will put forward rationale for areas it would like to see in place for tradeswomen and their role in the Hebron Project. These recommendations are designed to increase the supply of women who have the skills required to support this project.

Recommendations

- That women make up at least 10% of the apprentices and journeypersons hired for the project
- That there be a committee struck within the diversity operations of this project to ensure that this minimum of 10% is met, maintained, and reviewed on a quarterly

basis and that a copy of this reporting information is assessable to the Office to Advance Women Apprentices for review.

- That Contractors are well informed of the percentage of women to be hired and will take into account diversity considerations when awarding contracts and that those contractors are to follow the clauses that are designed for hiring women.
- That there be a time frame set where contractors must ensure that they have exhausted the skilled labour pool (both female and male) in this province before they can hire from outside the province.
- That the Office to Advance Women Apprentices is identified as the main point of contact in the hiring of tradeswomen onsite. The Office to Advance Women Apprentices has over 400 tradeswomen in its electronic database and that is accompanied by up to date resumes - we therefore put forward the request that the contractors, through the various unions, avail of this Office when hiring females for various trades' positions. This provides an equal opportunity for all women to have their application reviewed for possible employment.
- That Hebron's diversity team work with unions to ensure that they accept female apprentices into their union.
- That the Office to Advance Women Apprentices receives copies of all trades positions that are advertised through local newspapers, websites and other recruitment searches so that they can be forwarded directly to women.
- That name hiring be available for women through the various unions and that the Office to Advance Women Apprentices be notified of the name hire opportunities.
- That a staff member from the Office to Advance Women Apprentices be appointed to an adhoc diversity committee so that there is a direct point of contact available for any diversity issues that come up so that there is strong representation on behalf of women in the trades.
- That there be a use of gender sensitive language in all internal and external communications
- That all areas of the site include symbols such as posters, etc. which show men and women working together and have strong supporting statements for an all inclusive respectful workplace.

- That qualified women are developed as trainers and mentors where possible and to have female Shop Stewards on site.
- That where possible more than one woman is placed on the same job site so that women are not to spread out and segregated from each other.
- That it is an all inclusive workforce and that strong considerations are given to areas of accommodations, cafeteria, washroom facilities, social activities, etc.

Part two of this presentation will discuss the need and importance for daycare services for tradeswomen working on this project.

Part II - Daycare Service Requirements for Tradeswomen

Introduction

Through speaking with hundreds of female apprentices at the Office to Advance Women Apprentices (OAWA) there are two main issues that are identified to be the major barriers that women face when looking for employment in the trades. The first would be the continued, unfounded and inaccurate stereotype that women cannot work in the trades and the second is the utter lack of reasonable and actual childcare options. Since there are other groups that are addressing the need for changing the issues surrounding unfair gender stereotyping and the need for things like enumerated targets for women, we wish to draw your attention to the significant and tangible issues surrounding female apprentices' other major barrier to employment on the Hebron Project, the lack of and need for accessible childcare options.

Background

There is an under-representation of women in the Oil and Gas sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. This issue led to the development of the *Fueling the Future: Women in Oil and Gas* conference held in St. John's March 8-9, 2011. The purpose of this conference was to "celebrate the contributions and increase the participation of women in the petroleum industry."

To open up the conference the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education, gave the morning keynote which set the tone for the well-attended two-day convention. She explained that the conference would house discussions that revolved around the opportunities- and the challenges- that women face when it comes to accessing opportunities within this industry. The well-received conference brought together women working in the industry, government and NGO representatives, academics and other stakeholders together to discuss the issues surrounding women in the Oil and Gas industry. Many topics came up about the challenges that had to be addressed including a necessary culture shift to allow for the inclusion of women and the obligation for industry leaders to initiate change in a meaningful way.

Locally, although females account for approximately 47% of the provincial workforce, women's participation in the province's prosperous oil and gas industry remains extremely low, even lower than the national rate (Boland, 2005). In a report published by Women in Resource Development Committee (now Women in Resource Development Corporation, WRDC), it was revealed that only 5% of those employed by Hibernia's Bull Arm site were women. Moreover, when the production phase began, only 5% of those employed by the Hibernia offshore platform were women (WRDC, 2008).

Similar trends were also found in other oil industry projects in the province. Husky's White Rose Project employed only 12% female engineers, with women only accounting for 6% of the projects technicians and technologists and 3% of the marine crew (Husky Energy, 2006; 2007; 2008).

Although government has taken a pro-active approach to equality by investing in key areas crucial to the economic and social advancement of women in this province, including funding for things like the OAWA and WRDC, there are still many barriers to be addressed. Even with government raising the bar in many aspects of our resource developments, where industry partners consider historically under-represented groups in their employment and business access planning, we do not expect the representation of women to increase significantly at this time. There is a clear dissonance between well-meaning policies on diversity and the lack of women being hired and retained. This discrepancy demonstrates the need for additional resources and support, such as more accessible and affordable childcare spaces, to facilitate the employment connection for women.

Benefit: Women's Positive Effect on Industry

Although, research in the area has not yet been widely developed, industry have considerable anecdotal evidence that women have at least a number of noticeable positive effects on the workforces. Through ongoing consultations with industry we hear a consistent message that, in general, women on site usually decrease the accident and injury rate. This is of particular interest to many companies in the Oil and Gas sector since health and safety has become such a priority. In addition, several companies that deal with expensive machinery report that female workers are easier on the machines and its parts which means less down time for maintenance. As well, one of the main contributions of women in the Oil and Gas industry is the distinct increase in innovation and opportunity to grow for businesses who have women on their crews and teams. There is a shift in perspective that is occurring around the issue of women in natural resource industries which should be facilitated and optimized. This is especially true at such an important economic time for growth and prosperity in our province.

Benefit: Retaining Young Women in Our Province

There are several benefits of women's increased participation in natural resource industries including Oil and Gas and Mining. Firstly, by increasing women's involvement in this workforce women are financially contributing, and in many cases supporting, their families in a more substantial way. This lifts women and families out of poverty and allows them to contribute more to our local economies, helping local businesses grow. As well, it allows the province's young women to stay in the province and work instead of having to move away. With meaningful and accessible employment here at home,

women are much more likely to stay and raise families which further contributes to stabilizing our economy long-term. It furthers the retention of our educated and trained youth while contributing to the professional and personal development of women in the industry.

Benefit: Increased Labour Market Pool of Workers

Our labour market has changed considerably over the last few decades. The majority of families now are now two-income, with both parents working outside the home. This, of course, causes problems for parents who need to utilize childcare in order to participate in the workforce to provide for their families.

In this province there is a great need for more childcare spaces. Many families are on waiting lists for daycare spots for years, even with signing up to these lists at on the day of the birth of their child. As stated, one of the biggest barriers to women's employment is the lack of actual and accessible childcare spaces. By providing much needed spaces, the Hebron Project would be able to more fully avail of the labour force we have here in Newfoundland and Labrador. This allows for some solutions to the pending labour shortage experienced by industry while addressing the needs of families in the province.

OAWA Suggestion to Increase Benefits and Increase Women's Participation

We are not suggesting that the Hebron Project can fix the issue for childcare across the province, but there are proactive initiatives which the Hebron Project can embark on so that women can more fully avail of the natural resource development of this project while answering many of your worker shortage needs.

We are willing to work with those involved with the Hebron Project to come up with reasonable solutions for the project and the workers. There are several options which could be discussed on this issue. One such suggestion may be as simple as working with the community of Bull Arm to build a childcare centre, offsite, for the children of workers. Upfront costs of construction on such a building would likely be too high for many businesses to consider with the short term construction phase of the project, but a new building created for this project to house a local childcare centre would likely open up options for those who are interested in embarking on a daycare business. Likewise, once Hebron is operational, a similar construction project for a childcare centre where most workers will be based (likely St. John's) would be of major benefit to the area.

Benefits of the Hebron Project Creating a Childcare Location Offsite: Creating a Legacy

Continuing on with such a building would be seen as an investment in the future of the community and would cast a positive light on the Hebron Project to the people of Bull

Arm years after the construction phase. If a second location was created in St. John's, a similar affirmative notion of the project would exist in the city and would demonstrate the Hebron Project's commitment to its workers. As with all natural resource development, companies who profit from the raw resources and the people of an area ought to give back to the communities in which they benefit. Such constructions or other solutions to increase childcare spaces for these workers would be seen as great benefit by the employees and communities. This would also allow for "freed up" childcare spaces at other childcare centers in the surrounding areas.

Such an undertaking as creating a childcare centre for the construction and operations of the Hebron Project would create a legacy for the project. It would demonstrate that the Hebron Project was prepared to put tangible measures in place to encourage the participation of women on their work sites. These measures would be the cornerstone of future industry projects and would illustrate the project's commitment to diversity.

As well, the convenience of child care close by to those working on the site would make the Hebron Project a much sought after place of employment. In addition, the workers who would utilize such local childcare would have the opportunity to be more productive while onsite since they would know their child or children were nearby in case of emergencies and their childcare "spot" was reliable. This would be a major encouraging factor for many women working in the trades and in other areas in the oil and gas industry to work on the Hebron Project. This would also be a persuasive reason for many men to want to work on the Hebron Project, as well, since childcare is such an issue for young families in this province.

Conclusion

Government and industry alike have realized and spoke of the benefits of having more women in the workforce on such developments as the Hebron Project. These benefits are wide ranging and include women's positive effect on industry, an expanded labour pool to gain workers from, the retention of women and young families in Newfoundland and Labrador and much more. Knowing the barriers to women participating fully in the Oil and Gas industry allows us ways to decipher solutions to remove them. One such major barrier is the lack of reasonable and actual childcare spaces. By removing the barriers and building childcare centers for the project, the Hebron Project would be regarded as a leader in the industry and it would women in the trades and in other sectors that the project has a real commitment to diversity, leaving an admirable legacy for years to come.