



28 September 2020

Mr. Iain Stewart
President
National Research Council
1200 Montreal Road, Building M-58
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R6

VIA Electronic Mail

AND

Mr. Trevor Nightingale
Director General, Construction
National Research Council
1200 Montreal Road, Building M-58
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R6

AND

Hon. Navdeep Bains
Minister of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Re: National Master Specification Funding

Dear Messrs:

Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) is a national multi-disciplinary association in the construction industry, committed to delivering progressive education, certification and improving construction specifications in Canada. Established in 1954, it has been entrusted to advocate for the improvement of construction specifications and communication within Canada.

While CSC typically does not engage directly with Federal Ministers and leadership at NRC, certain circumstances warrant its engagement at this juncture. This letter is being sent in response to the notice posted on the National Research Council Canada, National Master Specification (NMS) portion of the website regarding funding, which reads in part:

“From 2015 to March 2020, the National Research Council of Canada, with funding support from two departments, has maintained the Canadian National Master Construction Specification (NMS) on behalf of the Government of Canada. While we work to determine future funding, updates and maintenance of the National Master Specification (NMS) are suspended...”
(<https://nrc.canada.ca/en/certifications-evaluations-standards/canadian-national-master-construction-specification>)

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As you are already aware, the NMS is a comprehensive set of master specification documents used by the design and construction community across Canada and it provides substantial support to both architecture and engineering firms as well as professional associations across Canada. Furthermore, the NMS:

- Establishes a professional standard of care with the standardization of technical language within the NMS and provides licensed architects and registered professional engineers with the ability to add, delete and modify information to reflect the design requirements of individual projects;
- Provides consistent information that knowledgeable design professionals can use when appropriately edited for their respective projects;
- Protects public project procurement practices by establishing a minimum level of entry for design professionals contributing to publicly funded projects and provides a fair and balanced evaluation criterion to government agencies when retaining architectural and engineering design services, confirming that political bias or supplier preference is removed from the technical specifications;
- Provides uniform content. The NMS is used by the professional community extensively to publish complete, clear and correct technical construction documents. The NMS provides standardized information that benefits building owners and government organizations by providing consistent and concise direction to contractors, manufacturers and suppliers through accurate descriptions of work results, resulting in competitive bidding outcomes and uncontested bidding processes;
- Provides equal access to Canadian content, establishing opportunities for all design professionals to access standardized specification information at a reasonable cost in both official languages;
- Provides content aligned with the National Building Code of Canada (NBCC); and
- Maintains a clear approach to specification language, provides a framework for improving technical content, provides predictable outcomes for project deliverables, and provides familiar content that reduces the time needed to edit and tailor specifications appropriate to project needs.

Should funding be discontinued and the NMS cease to exist, we firmly believe that smaller architecture and engineering practices would be at a disadvantage when compared to larger companies that have resources needed to maintain current specification information when competing for government projects. The disadvantage is further compounded when comparing specification content between design companies that maintain their own master specifications, in that they will not be consistent between effort and skill applied to the technical content, making evaluation and scoring of specification deliverables by government project procurement entities more difficult.

Should funding be delayed any further, it could result in major disconnects between the NMS that design professionals across Canada rely on to address design issues mandated by the National Building Code of Canada's (NBCC) upcoming release.

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Given the above, we humbly appeal to you to immediately return funding commensurate to the impact on duty and standard of care and quality of construction deliverables provided by the NMS. Furthermore, and in order to prevent issues arising in the future, including delays to updates and revisions as a result of backlogs due to funding, we request that an adequate funding model be put into place for the improvement of content and contributions from skilled content writers and reviewers. This will undoubtedly return a level of confidence to the NMS that is lacking at present in the construction industry.

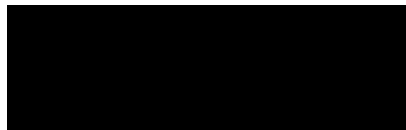
We look forward to receiving your timely response regarding this subject matter. Should you wish to discuss the NMS with us, we are available and at your disposal should you require any further clarification and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

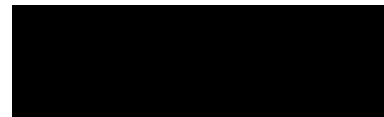
Construction Specifications Canada



Wyatt Eckert
President



Kazim Kanani, FCSC, CSP, CCCA
Vice President | Technical Studies



Nick Franjic, CAE
Executive Director

c/

Ms. Michelle Dumoulin, Vice President, Engineering – NRC

Mr. Serge Bijimine, Secretary General - NRC

Dr. Douglas Muzyka, Chair – NRC

Mr. Jason Urquhart, Manager, Canadian National Master Specification (NMS) - NRC

Mr. Simon Kennedy, Deputy Minister, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

Construction Industry Consultative Committee (CICC)

Mr. Mike Brennan, Chief Executive Officer – Royal Architectural Institute of Canada

Ms. Mary Van Buren, President – Canadian Construction Association

Mr. John D. Gamble, President and CEO – Association of Consulting Engineering Companies