

Government votes against transparency and accountability

December 05, 2013 · posted by NDP caucus communications

On Thursday, the government voted against an NDP bill which would have made public-private partnership projects (P3s) more transparent to Saskatchewan families and more accountable to taxpayers.

“This is a disappointment,” said NDP Leader Cam Broten. “This bill could have put the government on the same page as the rest of us. Saskatchewan people, including the Opposition, want P3 deals to be transparent and accountable to taxpayers, and we don’t want to go down the P3 road if the costs aren’t competitive. I’m somewhat surprised the government refused to support that, even in principle.”

Bill 605, *The Public-Private Partnership Transparency and Accountability Act*, called for an independent accountability watchdog on each P3, and would prevent the government from using the P3 method for major capital projects if there are less than three bidders on the contract. The law would also require the full price tag of the project – including the cost of credit – to be reported to taxpayers.

“Secret deals are not in the best interest of taxpayers,” said Broten. “We wanted to shine a light on P3s so government, taxpayers and the Opposition could make common sense, fact-based decisions.”

“This government is talking about allowing private companies to operate our kids’ schools along with other valuable public services and infrastructure. I think facts and ongoing responsibility to Saskatchewan people should absolutely be a requirement in the law.”

The NDP initially hoped to bring the P3 transparency and accountability bill to a vote in the Spring, but had the opportunity Thursday because of a government error.

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