

## Increasing leadership roles for women in transportation - Industry stakeholders discuss opportunities

March 14, 2017 (Vancouver) – On the heels of International Women’s Day, the Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table (Skills Table) and the Western Transportation Advisory Council (WESTAC) will host a roundtable discussion to identify strategies for increasing the number of women in the transportation industry.

The invitation-only “Women in Transportation Roundtable” will bring together women who hold senior positions in transportation and champions, both male and female, who have shown interest to develop and promote women in transportation.

Discussions will focus on the obstacles women face in reaching the executive level, opportunities for advancement, success stories from women in the field and the competitive advantage of having more female employees in senior positions.

Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, Member of Parliament for West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, will provide welcoming remarks on behalf of the Government of Canada.

“I’m proud to be part of a government that’s showing leadership in increasing women’s participation in the job market. This roundtable matters, because a workforce with more women is a workforce that’s stronger and more innovative,” said the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour.

“Creating more opportunities for women to contribute their talent to strengthening Canada’s economy is critical to growing our middle class. I’m pleased that we’re working collaboratively, through initiatives like this, to increase Canada’s competitiveness and create a skilled, diverse workforce,” said Parliamentary Secretary Pamela Goldsmith-Jones.

Panellists will include representatives from the transportation industry such as TransLink, Vancouver Airport Authority and Teck.

In addition, Catalyst Canada, the leading non-profit organization dedicated to expanding opportunities for women through workplace inclusion, will speak to its *Diversity Matters* study. *Diversity Matters* provides essential data showcasing the benefits of diversity in management, particularly how companies experience financial gains and returns on their investments when they employ more women.

The study finds that organizations with more women in management frequently outperform those that do not. Many companies in the study experienced an increase in stock price on announcing the appointment of women to senior leadership positions.

Presently, the transportation sector in Canada is losing out on these benefits, as recent research conducted by the Skills Table shows female participation in transportation is 25 per cent, compared to 50 per cent for all other industries.

“Women are underrepresented in the transportation industry, to the detriment of companies’ bottom line and Canadian competitiveness,” said Krista Bax, Executive Director for the Skills Table. “This roundtable will bring together leading minds in transportation and supply chain sector to discuss the many benefits of having women participate in the industry that extend well-beyond socio-economic factors, and actionable strategies to realize these benefits.”

“WESTAC members understand the importance of diversity in a successful company. By supporting this roundtable and ongoing initiatives, we will increase women’s participation in transportation at all levels,” said Oksana Exell, President & CEO, WESTAC.

Studies related to the roundtable discussions are available and can be downloaded by accessing the following links:

Why Diversity Matters

[http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/why\\_diversity\\_matters\\_catalyst\\_0.pdf](http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/why_diversity_matters_catalyst_0.pdf)

Women in Transportation Careers – Understanding Participation in Canada

[http://apgst.ca/projects/pdfs/APG\\_WIT\\_web.pdf](http://apgst.ca/projects/pdfs/APG_WIT_web.pdf)

The project is funded by the Government of Canada’s Sectoral Initiative Program (SIP).

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**About Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table**

The Skills Table is a non-profit, regional partnership between labour, business and education/training institutions. Our mission is to ensure the Asia Pacific Gateway has enough people with the right skills and training to meet its needs. The Skills Table produces labour market information, works to address skills gaps and researched the future of work in the Gateway.

**About WESTAC**

WESTAC (Western Transportation Advisory Council) is a council of transportation leaders in business, labour, and government from across Canada, with an interest in the long-term competitiveness of Western Canada’s trade and transportation network. A neutral and trusted platform for over 40 years, the WESTAC forum hosts conversations on important issues in transportation and encourages collaboration on supply chain challenges.