

Building Regional Adaptation Capacity and Expertise (BRACE) Program – **Climate Resiliency Capacity Building for Manitoba Decision Makers**

The BRACE program led by Natural Resources Canada, is a five-year (2017-2022), \$18 million initiative under the Adaptation and Climate Resilience pillar of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. The BRACE program aims to build capacity within and across targeted sectors and regions to understand, assess and reduce the risks posed by a changing climate. The program works in partnership with the provinces and responds to unique climate change adaptation needs and priorities across Canada.

In May 2018, the Manitoba government began this partnership with a series of BRACE engagement sessions with municipalities and infrastructure owners, Indigenous communities, and the business community. A key recommendation of this process was the need for a training program to support professional development on climate change adaptation.

Earlier in the same year, the Association created a Sustainable Development Task Group under the guidance of the Government Relations Department to advise, assist, support, and advocate for the sustainable development initiatives in the professions. Early in its development, the Task Group began to work collaboratively with the Manitoba government to review initiatives to integrate climate and social impacts consideration in infrastructure and engineering design, products, and processes.

In early 2019, the Association was successful in receiving grant funding to develop a scoping and strategic framework to implement the engineering and infrastructure elements of the BRACE program curriculum development and delivery. This work was completed in mid-2019 and submitted to the Manitoba government. More recently, the Association began working on the BRACE project for engineers and infrastructure

decision-makers, which is to design and develop a comprehensive training and capacity enhancement package. This BRACE project will be completed in collaboration with other sectors in Manitoba and will add to the resume of BRACE projects across Canada. Currently, 19 projects initiated by several other jurisdictions, institutions, and organizations with over 10 million strategic investments are funded under the BRACE program.

The project will be managed within the Association's Government Relations framework and reporting structure and delivered by three advisory committees: the Sustainable Development Task Group, BRACE Infrastructure Project Working Group, and the Indigenous Professionals Initiative Committee.

Key members of the project team include:



Project Manager – Curt Hull, P. Eng.

Curt Hull has decades of experience in project management and is one of the most widely recognized voices for climate change information and solution in the province. Curt has worked with Climate Change Connection and Climate Reality Project Canada (CRPC) over the past 13 years. He will be fulfilling this project management role as an independent contractor along with continuing to work part-time with Climate Change Connection and on the CRPC Board of Directors.



Technical Advisor – Jeff O'Driscoll, P. Eng.

Jeff O'Driscoll is one of only seven Canadian engineers to have achieved the

Infrastructure Resilience Professional certification from Engineers Canada. This gives the team a unique advantage as they hope to include rejuvenation of this certification program as part of their BRACE infrastructure project outcomes. Furthermore, he has been able to put his knowledge into practice in Manitoba and other parts of Canada.



Research Assistant – Trina Semenchuk

Trina Semenchuk is a leader in the undergraduate engineering program at the University of Manitoba and is well on her way to being a leader on climate change solutions. As President of the University of Manitoba Efficient and Renewable Technology Hub (UMEARTH), she directs and assists the initiatives of this engineering-student-run sustainability organization.

Supporting team members including the Director of Government Relations, Scott Sarna; Director of Equity and Representation, Lisa Stepnuk; Indigenous Professionals Initiative Coordinator, Nicole Everett; Government Relations Administrative Assistant, Suling Dong; Senior Advisor, Tom Goldsborough; and Academic Advisor, Dr. Marcia Friesen.

The project will be completed over a two-year timeframe. Currently, the project team is finalizing a project working plan and refining the Terms of References for the BRACE Infrastructure Project Working Group. For further information about the BRACE Infrastructure Project or if you would like to provide recommendations, contact Scott Sarna at SSarna@EngGeoMB.ca. ☎