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DES URBANISTES

The Honourable Tony Clement, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Industry  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

July 5, 2010

**RE: Changes to the 2011 Census questionnaire**

Dear Minister:

On June 26, 2010 the Canada Gazette published an Order in Council prescribing the questions for the 2011 Census questionnaire. The Canadian Institute of Planners is profoundly concerned with the decision to eliminate the long-form questionnaire of socio-economic, labour market and educational information. The rigorous, universal and longitudinal data supplied by this questionnaire is fundamental to policy and decision making. Planners rely on such data when designing and delivering services to citizens, selecting sites for facilities, and planning for transportation, housing and infrastructure. The proposed alternative of a voluntary National Household Survey would be an unreliable replacement for the long-form questionnaire, as the representativeness of the data is so uncertain. Lower quality data for decision-making will have serious and negative impacts on Canada's communities.

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) has been dedicated to the advancement of professional planning in Canada since 1919. Our 7,800 members are certified professionals whose expertise includes land use and development, transportation, social policy, economic development, environmental management, sustainability, and the preservation of natural resources. Planners depend on accurate, timely and consistent data on Canadian communities and households to support the provision of transportation, infrastructure, social services and economic development across Canada. Demographic information helps determine the location of community and commercial facilities, the feasibility of land use plans and zoning designations.

The mandatory framework of data collection under the current Census system provides a validity and comprehensiveness that is not likely able to be matched by a voluntary system, even if the voluntary survey is distributed to more households. **For these reasons we urge the Government of Canada to reverse this decision and reinstate the long form questionnaire in the 2011 Census.**

We fully understand Canadians' desire for privacy, security and freedom from intrusion. Where valid concerns on these points exist, we urge that they be aired and addressed. However Statistics Canada is a world leader among statistics agencies for managing and protecting citizens' information. We believe that eliminating the Census long form would be a great mistake with repercussions reaching far beyond 2011. Should you find it useful, we would be pleased to meet with you or your staff to discuss our concerns and help map out a new way forward.

Yours sincerely,

Marni Cappe, MCIP, RPP  
President, Canadian Institute of Planners