

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Committee about Small and Medium Enterprises in Federal Procurement.

My name is Wayne Coulson, and I am the owner of our 58 year old, second-generation family business located in Port Alberni on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Coulson Group of Companies has evolved from its start in the timber business back in 1960 and has ended up today as one of the largest firefighting heavy lift companies in the world, operating a fleet of four C-130 Hercules and four Sikorsky S-61 Helicopters with its primary markets being in the United States and Australia.

We currently are modifying a Boeing 737-300 into a firefighting air tanker which will be the first of its kind and have worked with the Strategic Aerospace and Defence Initiative (SADI). This aircraft, which we named the ***Fireliner***, will be a multi-purpose airtanker with the ability to carry up to 68 passengers along with a 15,000 litre tank installed in the cabin for firefighting or spray operations in case of an oil spill.

We have also pioneered a cleaning technology with ice, utilizing a Federal program called Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), which I would like to discuss today. I also would like to inform the Committee of programs that are working extremely for us and offer opportunities we see for improvement for Small or Medium Enterprise in Canada.

Firstly, I would like to let the Committee know how appreciative we are to be able to work with so many wonderful Federal employees worldwide. We are supported throughout the world by in excess of 30 Canadian Embassies that go over and above in our experience to coordinate meetings in foreign countries. We travel worldwide promoting our Canadian-developed technologies – the C-130 Hercules tanking system and our operational capabilities to support foreign government wildfire initiatives.

Our first experience with Federal Government programs goes back three years ago with the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP). It was determined through discussion with a team of very bright Federal Government employees that oversee the IRAP program locally that modifications were required to our existing prototype Ice Blast technology. A path was negotiated forward and after a year of refinements our new machine, ***Icestorm 90***, has been taken from a prototype to full production. In the last six months, 40 machines have been sold and we have received a provisional patent for the technology.

What has happened that is exceptional is not only was this technology nominated by RnD 100 Awards (An international competition that recognizes the 100 most exceptional innovations in Science and Technology from the past year), but it was also awarded and recognized as one of the top one hundred. This award of excellence from this organization has had a significant positive impact on our business and we are truly honoured.

What is missing is the opportunity for Canadian Government agencies to benefit from this leading cleaning technology that could be utilized with significant cost savings in a variety of Federal operations.

As a small business, we understand our responsibility to sell the product and are focused on sales to create cash flow and sustainability. However, we think there is an opportunity to bring monies back to the Government from innovations supported by Government in the startup phases. Our suggestion

would be to have a Ministry adopt an outreach technology platform where Innovations funded by government get reviewed by a team and trialed wherever cost savings can be achieved within government. This concept would bring full circle the financial assistance provided to Small or Medium Enterprises and bring monies back to the Canadian Government through cost savings provided by Canadian Innovations. An initiative such as this would provide further accountability to the Government for the monies expended on Innovation and Research, as well as provide the business with sale revenue, thus, strengthening the Canadian Economic base.

In the case of the internationally recognized *Icestorm 90*, the intended outcome would be for government to embrace a past funded innovation by creating a welcoming pathway of opportunities within government with a focus on cost reduction and, additionally, provide environmental leadership within its own infrastructure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to Committee members today. I am very honoured to have been asked.