

**From:** [EA Modernization \(MECP\)](#)  
**To:** [EA Modernization \(MECP\)](#)  
**Subject:** Update on amendments to the MTO Class EA  
**Date:** December 15, 2023 5:02:07 PM

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Greetings:

I want to thank you for your interest and involvement to date in actions the government is taking to modernize Ontario's environmental assessment program. Today, I am writing to provide you with an update on decisions made by the province on the proposed amendments to the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (MTO Class EA).

### **Ministers Decision**

Following consultation with Indigenous communities, proponents, stakeholders and government agencies, the Minister has made changes to the MTO Class EA to better align assessment requirements with potential environmental impact.

The amendments include:

- changing the assessment requirements for projects so they better align with a project's potential for environmental impacts, including:
  - renaming Project Groups to more accurately reflect the types of projects in each group
  - shifting certain projects to lower Project Group to better align their assessment requirements with their potential for impact
  - removing the option to "step down" a Group B project to a Group C as it is no longer needed as a result of project group changes
  - exempting additional projects from the requirements of the EAA where they are considered to have a low potential for impacts (e.g., rehabilitation projects within the existing right of way)
  - establishing a screening process that, if successfully completed, would exempt additional projects from requirements of the EAA on a case-by-case basis
- eliminating the requirement to advance the planning of projects beyond preliminary design stage of the MTO Class EA process, consistent with other Class EA processes
- creating a formal issues resolution process to address concerns raised during the MTO Class EA process and public review periods
- improving the MTO Class EA's readability so it's easier to understand and follow
- addressing outdated references to legislation, organizations, and terminology

Note: the amended Class EA does not include any changes related to the [Moving to a project list approach under the Environmental Assessment Act](#). At the time of this decision to amend the Class EA, the review of input received on that proposal remains underway.

These amendments will reduce duplication and improve the process for lower-risk transportation infrastructure projects, while maintaining strong environmental oversight and protection.

The amendments to the MTO Class EA came into effect on December 15, 2023, which is the day the decision was posted on the ERO. Detailed information on the amendments can be found at: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-7678>.

**Background**

In 2019, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks sent a request to all provincial Class EA holders to propose changes that would better align requirements for projects with their potential for environmental impacts, eliminate duplication and find efficiencies in the Class EA assessment process. In response, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) submitted a proposal that recommended several amendments to the MTO Class EA.

On July 8, 2020, the proposed amendments to the MTO Class EAs were posted to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) for a 45-day public comment period.

On behalf of the ministry, I would like to thank you for providing comments on the proposed amendments to the MTO Class EA. All comments received on the proposed amendments have been considered by the Minister when making the decision about the amendments.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ministry's EA Modernization Team: [EAModernization.MECP@ontario.ca](mailto:EAModernization.MECP@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

Annamaria Cross  
Director, Environmental Assessment Modernization Branch  
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks