

Ontario Starting Down the Path to Growth, Renewal and Economic Recovery

July 8, 2020 2:15 P.M.

The COVID-19 outbreak has touched all Ontarians. It has created significant hardship for individuals, families and businesses and they need help to bounce back from the serious health and economic impacts.

In response, Ontario has introduced the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020*, part of a made-in-Ontario plan to help boost the province's economic recovery, create thousands of jobs, put more opportunities within reach of businesses, get infrastructure projects built faster, and improve the quality of life in every community across the province.

Restarting Jobs and Development

Building Code Act

The Ontario government is making it easier and faster to update the Building Code. The proposed changes will allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make regulations that will streamline the Building Code development process, align it with National Construction Codes and enable Ontario to respond faster to construction sector needs. This will reduce inter-provincial trade barriers, make Ontario more competitive and support economic growth.

Drainage Act

The Ontario government is working with the farm and food sector to reduce regulatory burden, while preserving the environmental rules that help to keep Ontarians safe and healthy. Streamlining administrative processes under the *Drainage Act* would encourage innovation in drainage practices, help to prevent flooding, and reduce costs for farmers, rural landowners and municipalities.

Reducing Delays for Environmental Infrastructure Projects

The Ontario government is making environmental approvals for wastewater and stormwater infrastructure work better for communities. It is proposing improvements to its Environmental Compliance Approval process providing a single, consolidated approval process for low-impact municipal sewage collection and stormwater management projects. This proposed approach

would mean that simple, routine changes by municipalities — including alterations, extensions, enlargements or replacement projects — could be pre-authorized to begin construction without needing separate approvals for each project.

The new process would ensure municipalities would be able to build this critical infrastructure faster, eliminating costly construction delays while maintaining strong environmental protections.

Environmental Assessment Act

The Ontario government is updating the almost 50-year old environmental assessment program to build a modern, practical process that supports strong environmental oversight and a strong economy.

Building on our enhancements over the past year, the government is proposing changes to the Environmental Assessment Act that will improve the environmental assessment program. The changes would allow us to focus resources on projects that have the highest impact on the environment, reduce timelines by half from 6 to 3 years for the largest projects, and match the level of assessment requirements with the level of environmental impact so critical infrastructure projects can get off the ground without undue delay.

Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act

By introducing an appeal process under the Farm Business Registration Program, The Ontario government can deliver a less expensive, faster and less cumbersome appeal process for Ontario farmers. If passed, applicants could appeal a decision through the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal, rather than through the courts. We are also clarifying the renewal process for eligibility for funding to provide greater consistency and fairness in the treatment of farm organizations.

Planning Act

Proposed updates will reduce red tape and speed up transit construction, the development of affordable housing and construction projects that are not in the Greenbelt. When making a zoning order, the proposed changes will give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing additional authority to apply inclusionary zoning (so that new developments may include affordable housing) and address site plan matters, such as the exterior design of buildings, landscaping and pedestrian and vehicle access.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Act

The Ontario government is proposing changes to permanently establish the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator and give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the authority to appoint the Facilitator. The Facilitator will continue to provide advice and make recommendations to the Minister on growth and land-use planning matters - helping to ensure that complicated and long-standing land-use planning disputes are resolved quickly across the province.

Occupational Health and Safety Act

As part of the government's commitment to keeping workers safe, an amendment to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* will allow nationally and internationally recognized standards to be updated more regularly. These standards set workplace safety expectations for everything from protective clothing to equipment, and they are established by organizations such as Canadian Standards Association Group (CSA). Updating standards without requiring regulatory amendments will allow employers and workers access to more current information on workplace standards.

Invest Ontario

As the province continues to reopen and the economy recovers, it's more critical than ever to position Ontario as a top tier destination for investment, domestic growth, and job creation. A key measure to support this objective is the creation of a new investment attraction agency, *Invest Ontario*.

Invest Ontario will promote the province as a key investment destination, making Ontario more competitive while sending a strong signal to investors that the province is open for business. It will be a "one stop shop" for businesses and investors. It will move at the speed of business and drive greater economic growth, support strategic domestic firms and attract business from around the world to create good jobs in Ontario. It will initially focus on three important sectors for COVID-19 recovery where Ontario has a globally competitive advantage: advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and technology.

Invest Ontario will include greater business development and deal structuring expertise and build on the many benefits of investing in Ontario, including: a good quality of life, a highly skilled talent pool, a strong and growing innovation sector, and a pro-job creation jurisdiction that can help businesses thrive.

Reducing Regulatory Costs to Business Act, Burden Reduction Reporting Act and Modernizing Ontario for People and Businesses Act

The Ontario government is committed to business recovery and job creation, which is why it is taking urgent action to modernize how it operates. The province is proposing to merge the *Reducing Regulatory Costs for Business Act*, 2017 with the *Burden Reduction Reporting Act* so that all burden reduction requirements would now be in a single law - the *Modernizing Ontario for People and Businesses Act*. This new act would enshrine the government's seven burden reduction principles into legislation, so that businesses can count on clear, focused and effective rules that maintain or enhance protections for people's health, safety, and the environment. These proposed changes will broaden the reach of burden reduction requirements to encompass legislation, regulation, policies and forms - and to include additional stakeholder groups like for-profit and not-for-profit businesses. This will ensure the government is doing everything it can to communicate clearly, ensure digital rather than paper pathways where possible, and deliver on the province's commitment to be a modern regulator.

Transit-Oriented Communities Act and Ministry of Infrastructure Act

The Ontario government is advancing the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Program, which will help connect people to places by building communities that are centred around transit stations along the four priority subway projects. The TOC approach provides real opportunities to build complete, mixed-use communities that are connected to transit, building not only subway stations but vibrant communities. By partnering with third-parties, TOCs will make it easier and faster for commuters to get to the places that matter most - bringing housing, including affordable housing, and jobs closer to transit. Transit-Oriented Communities are part of the government's plan to build new, sustainable transit faster so people can get where they want to go, when they want to get there.

Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act

Investment in infrastructure is a key component of economic recovery. Construction puts local people to work, and provides the province with assets that allow people and goods to move more efficiently. The Ontario government is looking at ways to accelerate key provincial highway construction projects by identifying and proposing changes that would remove potential "bottlenecks", allowing construction to start earlier and finish sooner.

Strengthening Communities

Environmental Assessment Act

The Ontario government is committed to giving local municipalities more say in landfill approvals, as committed to in our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. We are proposing a

change that will require new, large landfill applicants to ensure there is local support from host municipalities, and certain neighbouring adjacent municipalities within 3.5km that meet certain criteria as part of the approvals process.

This is a balanced approach that puts communities at the center of decision-making and provides more certainty for landfill applicants, while ensuring enough landfill capacity in the province.

Municipal Act and City of Toronto Act

The Ontario government is proposing changes that will enable municipalities and local boards to hold virtual meetings, at their discretion, and to allow municipal councils the option to permit their members to vote by proxy when absent.

Planning Act and Development Charges Act

The Ontario government has a housing shortage, which is driving up costs and making it unaffordable to rent or buy a home. Now, more than ever, builders need certainty about costs in order to build more housing and support economic recovery.

Based on consultations, Ontario is proposing changes that will give municipalities flexibility to fund community services for new developments through modified development charges and a new community benefits charge.

The modified development charges will allow municipalities to recover 100 per cent of the cost to build critical community services like long-term care, child care, public health facilities, playgrounds, libraries and affordable housing. A separate community benefits charge will enable municipalities to fund growth-related capital costs of services due to higher density developments that aren't funded by other tools. Municipalities will continue to fund parkland with the existing mechanisms and added accountability.

Development charges and the community benefits charge will work together to ensure municipalities can pay for the infrastructure and services growing communities need.

The proposed changes will increase the supply of housing, ensure growth pays for growth, support municipalities in building complete communities, and make municipal revenues and costs for builders clearer from the start.

Focusing on the Environment and Health

The Ontario government is committed to holding polluters accountable, while reducing the burden on responsible businesses. The province is reviewing the province's compliance policy to ensure it can quickly and effectively address noise and odour incidents with known or potential environmental and/or health impacts.

This review will allow the government to focus more of its resources on incidents and complaints that pose a higher risk to the environment and/or human health.

Creating Opportunity for People

Education Act

The Ontario government is proposing multiple amendments to the Education Act:

- Ontario is listening to parents, caregivers and students impacted by the closures of the province's demonstration schools due to the COVID-19 outbreak and proposing amendments that would provide the capacity for a second-year option for all first-year demonstration school students during the 2020-21 school year.
- The government is also proposing to broaden the qualification requirements for Director of Education positions that would allow school boards to select the best candidate for their respective communities. The requirement that only qualified teachers can be Directors of Education has not been updated since 1997, and this overdue amendment would allow school communities to choose from a wider pool of candidates with a wider skill set, and who are representative of Ontario's diverse population.
- The Ontario government is committed to supporting school boards in building and sustaining a positive school climate that is safe, equitable, inclusive, and accepting for all students to support their education and well-being. A proposed amendment would allow regulations to remove the discretionary powers of principals to suspend kindergarten to grade 3 students for minor infractions.
- The Reciprocal Education Approach (REA) is a successful initiative created in collaboration with First Nation partners, school board associations and the Ministry of Education. The government is proposing an amendment that reflects feedback collected through those collaborative partnerships and is responsive to the emerging considerations identified during REA's inaugural year.

Justices of the Peace Act

As part of the government's plan to press forward boldly towards a more accessible, responsive and resilient justice system, the province is proposing changes to fill justice of the peace vacancies faster. The current process to appoint justices of the peace is outdated and slow. This has created obstacles to filling vacancies, resulting in delays for people waiting for their day in court.

The proposed changes would ensure greater transparency and encourage more diversity throughout the recruitment and appointment process. They would require the committee to publish diversity statistics at every step of the process in their annual reports (the disclosure of

this information would be voluntary). Proposed changes will also change the composition of the committee to increase efficiency while ensuring the participation and representation of local representatives and non-lawyers.

Marriage Act

The Ontario government is taking decisive action to stop the spread of COVID-19 and some of the necessary measures have delayed some marriage and wedding plans. To ensure couples can use marriage licences purchased between December 1, 2019 and the last day of the province-wide emergency, the government is proposing legislative amendments to the *Marriage Act* that extend the validity period of most marriage licences that were not used due to the provincial emergency. If the proposed amendments to the Marriage Act receive Royal Assent, Ontario will waive the provincial fee for licences if a couple requires a new licence because critical information on the licence purchased during that timeframe is no longer accurate, or the original unused licence has been lost or destroyed.

Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act and Ontario French-language Communications Authority Act

To give secondary students more choice in high-quality online learning courses - no matter where they live or go to school - The Ontario government is proposing amendments that would broaden the mandates of both TVO and TFO to position them to provide centralized administration, coordination and support for teacher-led online learning in the English-language and French-language publicly-funded education systems.

Payday Loans Act

The Ontario government is taking necessary action to protect the province's most vulnerable consumers by proposing amendments that would limit the interest rate that may be charged on payday loans in default to 2.5 per cent per month (non-compounded). The government is also proposing to set \$25 as the maximum fee that payday lenders could charge for dishonoured payments.

These proposed changes would provide relief for payday loan borrowers who may be unable to repay their loans on time.

Provincial Offences Act

Provincial offences courts are the busiest courts in Ontario's justice system. Fifty-nine municipal partners administer court operations for *Provincial Offences Act* matters heard by the Ontario

Court of Justice. Due to COVID-19, provincial offences matters scheduled between March 16, 2020 and September 11, 2020 have been adjourned and rescheduled to a later date. As part of our commitment to keeping people safe and maintaining access to justice throughout the public health emergency, the Ontario government is amending the *Provincial Offences Act* so that municipally-run courts can make greater use of technology to deliver justice services remotely and reduce in-person court appearances.

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