

What's Inside

Panel Struck to Recommend New Skilled Trades System

Financial Accountability Office Identifies Structural Deficit

Red Tape Reduction Bills Introduced

Premier Re-Announces Investment in Schools

Cory's Appointment Completes Leadership Changes at Infrastructure Bank

Poll Finds Support for Tories Despite Decline Remains Strong

Former Premier Wynne Will Not Seek Re-election

Mould Discovered AGAIN at Milton Court House – All In-Person Proceedings Cancelled

Attempt to Start "New Blue Party" Underway

October 2020

PANEL STRUCK TO RECOMMEND NEW SKILLED TRADES SYSTEM

The Minister of Labour Training and Skills Development (MLTSD), Monte McNaughton, recently announced an Expert Panel on the Skilled Trades mandated to develop recommendations to help shape the design of the province's next skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

The five-member Panel is chaired by highly respected lawyer Michael Sherrard, co-founder of the award-winning labour and employment law firm Sherrard-Kuzz LLP. The other Panel members are Jason Ottey (director of government relations with LIUNA), Shaun Scott (director of organizational development at Linamar), Melanie Winter (human resources director with Cascades) and Melissa Young (executive director of the National Electrical Trade Council).

The work of the Panel is divided into two Phases:

Phase 1

A new service delivery model to replace the current co-delivery model (shared between the Ontario College of Trades and the MLTSD) which would enable the closing of OCoT, including:

- Which of the shared functions should be retained and delivered by the Ministry or another entity; and
- Which functions could be eliminated

This Panel is scheduled to deliver its report to the Minister on Phase 1 of their work in November 2020.

Phase 2

Matters respecting classification and training for the trades including:

- The criteria and process for trade prescription and the process for de-prescription
- The criteria and process for trade classification and re-classification; and
- Opportunities for initiatives that compliment training for tradespeople – e.g.: common core training for trades; standardization and harmonization of health and safety training

The Panel is scheduled to deliver its report to the Minister in June 2021.

A discussion guide will be published to assist the Panel with their engagement with key stakeholders.

The current system, with responsibilities co-shared among OCoT, MLTSD, TDAs, employers, apprentices and journeypersons, is the product of a long evolution and multiple consultations. Its genesis dates back to May 2007 when the government of the day engaged Tim Armstrong (former Chair of the OLRB, former DM Labour) to study and consult with stakeholders about the province's skilled trades system. His work culminated in a final report that was delivered in May 2008.

Armstrong's work was followed by another consultation and an implementation report by Kevin Whittaker (former Chair of the OLRB, retired Superior Court Justice) in 2009. Whittaker's report led to the introduction of Bill 183 The Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act 2009 and, as part of the normal legislative process, Standing Committee hearings before the Bill was passed into law on October 28, 2009. The Ontario College of Trades (OCoT) was then launched amid significant controversy in April

2011.

Right out of the gate, the College's priority focus on the strict enforcement of scopes of practice elevated the very heated public debate. To bring the temperature down, Tony Dean (former DM Labour, former Secretary of the Cabinet) was engaged to consult with stakeholders and make recommendations about enforcement.

Dean's recommendations are contained in his report that was delivered in 2015. Dean's work was followed up by a further selective consultation and report by Chris Bentley (former Minister of Labour) which was followed up by another by George Adams (former Superior Court Justice and among Canada's preeminent arbitrators and mediators). Since the time of its election in June 2018, the Ford government has restated its campaign pledge to wind down OCoT. Gradually various responsibilities have been transitioned over from OCoT to the government side. The responsibilities for the skilled trades system that resided with the then Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities were transferred to the newly named Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development (MLTSD).

The transfer of Ministerial oversight to MLTSD was important largely because the Minister there, Monte McNaughton, is smart, genuinely interested in the file, knows the stakeholders well, understands the labour relations environment in the province and has made this file a priority.

With OCoT currently treading water in wind down mode, Sherrard and his Panel have been charged with consulting, yet again, and to make recommendations with regard to the design of the next iteration of the province's skilled trade and apprenticeship system.

COCA's Skilled Trades Committee has been mobilized to develop its submissions to the Panel.

Good luck to Mike Sherrard and his panel members as they undertake their important review with a seven-month deadline.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE IDENTIFIES STRUCTURAL DEFICIT

The Finance and Accountability Office released its "Economic and Budget Outlook" on October 15th which forecast the following:

- Ontario's real GDP will decline by 6.8 per cent in 2020, the largest annual decline in economic output on record
- If the pandemic is relatively contained, in 2021 Ontario's GDP will increase by 5.1%
- Ontario's budget deficit will increase from \$8.7 billion in 2019-20 to a record \$37.2 billion in 2020-21 due to a sharp drop in revenue coupled with a strong increase in program spending
- The budget deficit will improve to \$20.4 billion in 2021-22
- deficit estimates could be reduced if the government does not fully spend unused contingency funds
- If the economic recovery continues and temporary COVID-19 spending measures can be phased out, the deficit will continue to improve to \$14 billion by 2023-24, but will not improve into the foreseeable future unless changes are made to taxation and program spending

The full report is available by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.fao-on.org/web/default/files/publications/EBO%20Fall%202020/Fall%202020%20EBU%20-%20EN.pdf>

RED TAPE REDUCTION BILLS INTRODUCED

The government recently introduced two more red tape reduction Bills:

1. Bill 213, Better for People, Smarter for Business Act proposes to amend 29 statutes and if passed to achieve the following:

- Require gas and electric utilities to adopt the Green Button Connect My Data and Download My Data standard to help Ontarians understand their energy use and reduce costs;
- Support renewable and alternative fuels and emissions reduction technology;
- Allow single traffic studies for an entire specified highway corridor or area to reduce duplication and enable developers to get shovels in the ground faster;
- Protect the environment and the health and safety of Ontarians by improving hazardous waste tracking;
- Consult on amendments to clarify when pre-start reviews are required in factories in order to make it easier for businesses to comply;
- Make it easier for property developers to get the environmental information they need by moving from a manual paper-based process to a much faster separate alternative digital delivery platform;
- Require water bottling companies to receive support from the host municipality prior to applying for a new or increased permit to take ground water;
- Help intercommunity bus carriers fill service gaps and meet local community transit needs.

- Enable the development of community micro-grids, which would allow homeowners and small businesses to share renewable energy that they generate
- Exempts land intended for use by a university receiving government funding from development charge

2. Bill 215, Main Street Recovery Act, if passed amends four statutes and if passed in its current form will make the following changes:

- Remove municipalities' power to make noise-related bylaws, in order to permanently allow deliveries 24/7 (the province used emergency powers to overrule the bylaws early in the pandemic);
- Increase fines for illegal taxicabs, from a current range of \$300 to \$20,000, to between \$500 and \$30,000; and
- Increase the number of board members on the Ontario Food Terminal Board from seven to a maximum of 13 and allow the terminal to operate as a wholesale fruit and produce market to include agricultural and other products.
- Enables the development of community micro-grids, which would allow homeowners and small businesses to share renewable energy that they generate; and
- Update the Assistive Devices Program, which provides aid to Ontarians who require hearing aids, prosthetic limbs and other

PREMIER RE-ANNOUNCES INVESTMENT IN SCHOOLS

On Tuesday, October 21, Premier Ford re-announced the government's \$550 million capital allocation for 2020-21 for schools. The \$550 million investment for the current year, part of the government's previously announced \$12 billion capital investment for education over the next 10 years, includes the construction of 20 new schools and improvements to eight more. Needless to say, our industry welcomes and applauds the investment.

CORY'S APPOINTMENT COMPLETES LEADERSHIP CHANGES AT INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

Back in April of this year, Michael Sabia succeeded Janice Fukakusa as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Infrastructure Bank (CIB). Fukakusa, retired former CFO and CAO with RBC and current Chancellor of Ryerson University, had previously signalled her wish to step down. Sabia is a prominent former federal public service senior executive and private sector CEO (BCE and the Caisse) and Order of Canada recipient who currently heads the Munk School at UofT.

At the same time, it was announced that the fledgling Crown Corporation's CEO, Pierre Lavallee, would be leaving for other opportunities.

It was recently reported that former Infrastructure Ontario President & CEO, Ehren Cory, will become the new CEO at the CIB. Earlier in his career Cory spent 11 years with global consulting firm McKinsey where he was a partner before joining IO in 2012 where he assumed the top job in 2017. We wish Ehren well when he takes on these new leadership challenges.

The mission and mandate of the Canadian Infrastructure bank can be found on the organization's website:

<https://cib-bic.ca/en/about-us/mission-and-mandate/>

POLL FINDS SUPPORT FOR TORIES DESPITE DECLINE REMAINS STRONG

A recent survey of 1,000 Ontario residents conducted by Abacus Data shows support for the Tories, although in a post honeymoon decline, remains relatively strong. Key take-aways from the survey include the following:

- 52% (down 8% since May) approve of the job of the Ford government's performance while 24% (up 9% since May) disapprove.
- 83 % of PC voters approve of the Ford government's performance, 40% of Liberal voters and 28% of NDP voters
- 59% approve of the way the Ford Government has worked with the federal government
- 56% approve of the way the Ford government has helped businesses during the pandemic
- 34% disapprove of the Ford government's handling of the long-term care system
- 41% disapprove of the Ford government's reopening schools during the pandemic, the only item tested in the survey where more disapprove than approve
- 46% have a positive view of Mr. Ford while 28% have a negative view
- 36% of decided voters would vote PC, 29% would vote NDP and 26% Liberal (Both the PCs and NDP are down from the June 2018 election results while the Liberals are up)
- Support for the Tories is strong in all parts of the province
- PCs lead in every age category except 18-29 where they trail badly

The full report can be accessed at the following link:

<https://abacusdata.ca/ontario-pcs-ford-approval-vote/>

FORMER PREMIER WYNNE WILL NOT SEEK RE-ELECTION

Kathleen Wynne has announced that she will not seek re-election in the next province-wide campaign.

Wynne, age 67 and the MPP for Don Valley West since 2003, served as Ontario's 25th Premier from 2013 to 2018. She won the leadership of her party following the resignation of former Premier Dalton McGuinty and became premier of a minority Liberal government in 2013. She then led the Grits to a majority in 2014 before being reduced to just eight members in her party's resounding defeat in the 2018 general, in which she retained her seat. Wynne is expected to continue to serve actively in the Ontario Legislature until the next general election scheduled for 2022.

MOULD DISCOVERED AGAIN AT MILTON COURT HOUSE – ALL IN-PERSON PROCEEDINGS CANCELLED

As readers of this space well know, the shovel-ready Oakville Court House construction project was cancelled by the Ontario's Attorney General several months ago. The Oakville Court House was intended to replace the aging Milton facility. Now the Milton Court House has been shut down because mould has been discovered again in the building. Is this the ultimate irony?

<https://www.ontariocourts.ca/en/milton-courthouse.htm>

ATTEMPT TO START “NEW BLUE PARTY” UNDERWAY

Disgruntled former Conservatives Jim Karahalios and his wife Belinda (the former PC MPP, now the Independent MPP for Cambridge) have initiated a process to start a new political party in Ontario called the New Blue Party. The proposed party's tag line is “The Right Way Forward” (I'm pretty sure the pun is intended). Their website profiles Jim's career, showcases his “Axe the Carbon Tax” advocacy and reflects a strong anti Red Tory bias.

In order to be officially recognized as a political party in this province, the Karahalioses require 1,000 Ontario resident Canadian citizens who are aged 18 or older to sign and submit a form to Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer.

More information is available on their website at <https://www.jimkarahalios.ca/>