

NEWS RELEASE

Government Announces Repeal of Bill 148; Good News for Construction

Toronto, October 23, 2018 - Earlier today, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Jim Wilson, the Minister of Labour, Laurie Scott and the Minister of Training Colleges and Universities, Merrilee Fullerton, jointly announced our new government's intention to introduce legislation to repeal amendments made by the *Fair Workplaces Better Jobs Act 2017* (Bill 148) that place an unnecessary burden on employers. The legislation, if passed, will amend the Employment Standards Act (ESA) and the Labour Relations Act (LRA). It will be called the *Ontario Open for Business Act* and be introduced in the Ontario Legislature this afternoon.

COCA applauds the government's actions to repeal amendments to the ESA that were made by the former government and which were unnecessarily burdensome and impractical for the construction industry. These specific amendments were made without consideration for the unique nature of employment in the construction industry. COCA sought relief from the scheduling requirements and the personal emergency leave obligations contained in Bill 148 from the former government and in the early days of our new government.

"COCA met recently with Minister Scott and with senior officials in Minister Wilson's Office to press for relief from a number of specific provisions contained in the Bill 148 amendments to the Employment Standards Act that are onerous and unworkable for the construction industry," stated COCA Chair, Steve Dietrich. "Our new government listened to our reasoned requests and they took the appropriate actions", Dietrich added.

The *Ontario Open for Business Act* will repeal the following scheduling provisions that will come into force on January 1, 2019:

- Right to request changes to schedule or work location after an employee has been employed for at least three months.
- Minimum of three hours' pay for being on-call if the employee is available to work but is not called in to work or works less than three hours.
- Right to refuse requests or demands to work or to be on-call on a day that an employee is not scheduled to work or to be on-call with less than 96 hours' notice.
- Three hours' pay in the event of cancellation of a scheduled shift or an on-call shift within 48 hours before the shift was to begin.
- The record-keeping requirements that relate to the above-noted scheduling provisions.

The *Ontario Open for Business Act* will amend the **Personal Emergency Leave provisions as follows:**

- Replacing the Personal Emergency Leave provisions with a straightforward package of annual leave days for every worker.
- Providing every worker with the right to take up to three days for personal illness, two for bereavement and three for family responsibilities.

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- Preserving the right of every worker in Ontario to receive three weeks of paid vacation after five years.
- Protecting current paid leave provisions for cases of domestic and sexual violence affecting an employee or an employee's child.
- Giving employers the right to require evidence of entitlement to sick leave that is reasonable in the circumstances

The Council of Ontario Construction Associations is a federation of 30 construction associations representing 10,000 general and trade contractors of all sizes, both unionized and non-union, that work in the industrial, commercial and institutional construction sector in all regions of the Province. COCA is the largest and most representative voice for the non-residential construction sector in Ontario.

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