

Council of Ontario Construction Associations Report to the Membership

June 2021

Council of Ontario Construction Associations

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As we hit the halfway mark of another unusually challenging and in several ways a sad year, we see the faint glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel beginning to glow a little brighter. Even as the deadly Delta variant takes hold, more and more people are getting their first and second vaccinations and the all too familiar daily metrics of the pandemic (deaths, patients on ventilators, ICU admissions, hospitalizations, infections) appear to be in a slow but steady decline.

Government Relations

COCA's primary role is to work with our members and senior officials at Queen's Park to ensure that the province's laws, regulations, and policies support success in the construction industry. This government relations work is the backbone of COCA's being, it's our "raison d'être". Here are some highlights of our government relations work in the first six months of 2021:

- Our pre-budget submission to the government recommended relief for contractors from pandemic related delay claims and unanticipated costs, strengthening the province's workers' compensation system, investments in public infrastructure maintenance and expansion, clarity and fairness in Community Benefits clauses and the development of a new skilled trades and apprenticeship system. [Read the Submission](#)
- COCA urged Prime Minister Trudeau and the federal government to strongly oppose the shutdown of Enbridge Line 5 which provides much of Ontario's energy supply and that is being pushed by the Governor of Michigan. [Read the Letter](#)
- We outlined our objections to Bill 238 to its sponsor, the Minister of Labour Training and Skills Development, Monte McNaughton. We recommended that the maximum insurable earnings ceiling for both the payment of premiums and for the payment of claims must be the same and increased by 2% from the previous year. Unfortunately, our advocacy fell on deaf ears and Bill 238 was passed into law without amendment. [Read the Submission](#)
- As part of the Sherrard Expert Panel on the Skilled Trades' phase 2 consultation, COCA made a detailed submission that addressed the following three issues: i) criteria and process for prescribing a trade and de-prescribing a trade; ii) criteria and process for classifying a trade as compulsory and declassifying a trade as compulsory; iii) what else would be complimentary to the review? [Read the Submission](#)
- COCA made a detailed submission to the MLTSD regarding the review of the Working at Heights program and endorsed the submission made by a joint working group of the construction and electrical utilities section 21 committees on which several COCA members participated. [Read the Submission](#)

- COCA supported the transfer of the First Aid regulation out of the WSIA and into the OHSA and provided advice to the government on some of the details. [Read the Submission](#)
- Now that the WSIB's unfunded liability has been eliminated, COCA recommended that the WSIA be updated to mandate that the provincial workers compensation scheme be 100% funded on a sufficiency basis and that the WSIB establish a funding policy that requires funding to fall within a corridor of 105% to 115% on a sufficiency basis. [Read the Submission](#)
- During the province-wide lockdown, we urged the government to allow commercial construction to continue to operate which for reasons unknown and illogical, had been selected for shutdown; we were not successful. [Read the Letter to Premier Ford](#)
- COCA supported the Ontario Mining Association's submission to the MLTSD opposing proposed reductions to the occupational exposure limits for silica and Sulphur dioxide. [Read the Submission](#)
- We maintained a list of glitches in the Construction Act which have become apparent through our industry's experience with this new statute
- We kept members apprised of the industry's experience with the new payment regime and disputes with ODACC
- We questioned the Minister of Transportation, Caroline Mulroney about her ministry's practice of contracting out of the provisions of the Construction Act, a statute which she played a role in implementing when she previously served as Attorney General. [Read the letter](#)
- COCA is surveying the industry to determine the scope of concern about Ontario-Quebec construction mobility

Other Activities & Initiatives

- COCA convened its Annual General Meeting of the membership on February 25th to elect its Board of Directors and Executive Officers for 2021-22 and to review the association's successful financial performance from the previous year. Romeo Milano of Safetech Environmental, who represents the Toronto Construction Association on the COCA Board, was installed as COCA's new Chair.

Kevin Brown of King Contractors of Niagara Ltd. and of the Niagara Construction Association was elected to the Executive Committee as Vice Chair. [View the Executive Committee](#)

- We published our annual Year in Review magazine in February highlighting the activities and successes of your provincial federation in 2020. [Read the Year in Review](#)
- We launched our anti-racism program with the expectation that it will be embraced and adopted by all our member associations and their contractor members to advance the cause of eliminating racism from our industry. [View COCA's Anti-Racism Toolkit.](#)
- We kept members apprised of changes to construction worksite health and safety protocols as soon as they were made
- We promoted the construction industry's strong record of keeping worksites and workers safe during the pandemic; workplace transmissions on construction sites were minimal
- Whenever the government changed course, we ensured that members understood which types of construction could continue to operate and which types had to close
- We encouraged COCA member associations to meet with their local MPPs and to bring to their attention COCA's priority issues
- We facilitated discussions among member associations that are training providers for the WSIB's Health and Safety Excellence Program and the WSIB about errors and omissions insurance
- We have continued to publish monthly newsletters and GR reports to update you on our activities and successes and happenings in our network. [View recent Newsletters](#)
- Because we were unable to travel around the province to meet with members on their home turf at their board meetings, annual meetings, golf tournaments and other events, we reached out to Directors and COOs in a proactive way by telephone

Conclusion

I hope these highlights of your provincial federations activities and accomplishments over the past six months have served to make your association, your members, and the industry in your region more successful. After all, it is on behalf of the membership that this work is performed.

COCA Members Stronger Together

Acoustical Association of Ontario
Architectural Glass & Metal Contractors Association
Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario
Barrie Construction Association
Canadian Farm Builders Association
Canadian Institute of Steel Construction
Construction Association of Thunder Bay
Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario
Grand Valley Construction Association
Hamilton-Halton Construction Association
Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario
London and District Construction Association
Niagara Construction Association
Northeastern Ontario Construction Association
Ontario Association of Demolition Contractors
Ontario Erectors Association
Ontario Industrial Roofing Contractors Association

Ontario Masonry Contractors Association
Ontario Painting Contractors Association
Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association
Ontario Structural Steel Fabricators Association
Peterborough Construction Association
Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada
Reinforcing Steel Institute of Ontario
Sarnia Construction Association
Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association
Toronto Construction Association
Utility Contractors' Association of Ontario
Windsor Construction Association

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