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ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION ACT REVIEW

At the Annual General Meeting of the Toronto Construction Association held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, Attorney General Doug Downey announced that the Government has engaged construction lawyer Duncan Glaholt to conduct a review of the Construction Act.

Glaholt is arguably the foremost authority on construction law in Canada, considered the unofficial Dean of construction law who literally wrote THE BOOK on construction law. He has been recognized with virtually every award available to construction lawyers in the country. In our opinion, the government could not have selected a better reviewer.

Glaholt's appointment is the result of persistent lobbying by COCA and others that began with a meeting with AG Downey and COCA representatives Romeo Milano, Ted Dreyer and Glenn Ackerley in November 2022. In that meeting, Attorney General Downey asked for a report summarizing all the bugs and glitches that have become apparent in the time since the former Construction Lien Act was overhauled and renamed the Construction Act. After that meeting, Ackerley consulted widely with stakeholders and took six months to draft a comprehensive report of some 200 pages that makes more than 80 recommendations to improve the workings of the statute. That report was submitted to the Attorney General's Office in early July of 2023. Since that time, Akerley has been working with the AG's Office to move things forward.

The meeting with AG Downey in November 2022 was supported by meetings with officials in the Premier's Office, with key Ministers, Opposition leaders and AG Critics and by COCA's Lobby Day in October 2023.

Although details of the review are scant, it's our understanding it will have two phases before Glaholt makes his recommendations to the Attorney General: 1) a problem identification phase in which Glaholt will review all available documentation and perhaps have informal discussions with selected individuals; 2) a consultation phase in which selected stakeholders will be invited to make submissions and/or meet with the reviewer. COCA expects to be fully engaged in the process.



RESOLVE DISPUTES FASTER!

Payment delays and disputes can cost your business a LOT of time and money.
Ontario has added Prompt payment and Adjudication to the Construction Act.

COCA ELECTS NEW OFFICERS FOR 2024



At its first meeting, immediately following the Annual General Meeting on February 28, 2024 at which it was elected, COCA's new Board of Directors met to elect its Executive Committee and Officers. The following individuals were elected to the following positions:

- Chair – Ted Dreyer
- Past Chair – Romeo Milano
- First Vice Chair – Dan Lancia
- Second Vice Chair – Mike Reasbeck
- Third Vice Chair – Anita Stacey
- Treasurer – Roger Hubbard
- At Large – Harold Lindstrom
- At Large – Margaret Taylor
- At Large Ron Johnson
- At Large – Paul Gunning

Non-Voting Officers

- President – Ian Cunningham
- Secretary – Martin Benson

Special thanks to Steve Dietrich who served as Chair for three years and then as Past Chair for an additional three years and to Romeo Milano for his three years of service as Chair. Both Steve and Romeo in their own ways provided truly superior leadership to your provincial federation.

COCA also confirmed its Board of Directors for 2023/2024 at the meeting. The following new members were elected to the Board:

- Anita Stacey, President of Cowden Woods, representing the Barrie Construction Association
- Ryan Kneisz, Owner of Ontario Constructor Services, representing the Hamilton-Halton Construction Association
- Kelly Frechette, Co-owner & Operator at Board Boss Drywall, representing the Niagara Construction Association
- Tony Morganelli, replacing the recently retired Darryl Stewart at the Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association

GETTING IT DONE ACT - MOSTLY A NOTHING BURGER

Bill 164 is a Government omnibus Bill that creates or amends six unrelated statutes:

- Environmental Assessment Act
- Highway Traffic Act
- Official Plan Adjustments Act 2023
- Photo Card Act 2008
- Protecting Against Carbon Taxes Act 2024
- Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act

Here are some of the things the Bill, if passed will accomplish:

- Bans tolls on provincial highways and the Don Valley Expressway and Gardner Expressway
- Makes the freeze on driver's licenses and Ontario Photo cards permanent
- Makes the license plate renewal process automatic
- Requires a referendum be held before implementing a new carbon tax
- Makes the Hazel McCallion Transit Line extensions a priority

Most agree, it's all smoke and mirrors populism.

LATEST ABACUS POLL HAS PCS LEAD

Here are the highlights of a survey of a representative sample of 1,000 eligible Ontario voters between February 15th and 21st conducted by Abacus Data:

- If a provincial election was held at the time the survey was taken 41% would vote PC, 27% Liberal, 19% NDP, 8% Green and 5% Other
- 44% approve of the performance of the Ford government while 28% disapprove
- 30% have a positive impression of Doug Ford, 20 neutral, 47 negative, 2% don't know for an approval rating of -17
- 27% have a positive impression of Liberal Leader Bonnie Crombie, 28% neutral, 29% negative, 16% don't know for an approval rating of -2
- 23% have a positive impression of NDP Leader Marit Siles, 30% neutral, 25% negative, 21% don know for an approval rating of -2
- 19% have a positive impression of Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner, 37% neutral, 21% negative, 24% don't know for an approval rating of -2

For the full story and analysis click on the following link:

[Doug Ford and Ontario PCs ahead by 14 as NDP falls behind Liberals. - Abacus Data](#)

LABOUR MARKET SOFTENS IN LAST HALF OF 2023 – FAO REPORT

Here is the Summary copied from the Financial Accountability Office's 2023 Labour Market Report that was published on February 28th:

Ontario's labour market moderated in 2023 following two years of record job gains

- After recording record gains in 2021 and 2022, the pace of Ontario's job creation moderated in 2023 with employment rising by 183,200 jobs (or 2.4 per cent). The annual unemployment rate in the province inched up from 5.6 per cent in 2022 to 5.7 per cent in 2023.
- Although Ontario's working age population (age 15 and over) increased at the fastest pace on record at 2.3 per cent in 2023, the rise in the province's labour force was even larger (2.5 per cent). As a result, the labour market participation rate^[1] edged up to 65.5 per cent, the highest rate since 2015.

Most groups of workers saw job gains

- Core-aged workers (25-54) experienced employment growth of 2.7 per cent in 2023, with job gains for females modestly faster than for males. The employment rate (84.1 per cent) and labour force participation rate (88.3 per cent) of core-aged workers reached record highs in 2023.
- Among all broad age groups, young workers saw the slowest pace of job growth in 2023 at 1.8 per cent, as employment of male youth increased by 4.7 per cent, partially offset by a 1.2 per cent decline in female youth employment.
- Public sector employment increased at a slower pace than in the private sector in 2023 (1.6 per cent versus 3.3 per cent), after recording faster job gains in the previous two

years.

- The number of self-employed Ontarians declined by 9,800 (-0.9 per cent) in 2023, marking the third drop in the past four years. Self-employed workers accounted for 13.6 per cent of total employment, the lowest share since 1991, and reflecting rapid increases in paid employment in permanent positions.
- Fourteen of the 16 major industries in Ontario saw an increase in employment in 2023. Health care and social assistance recorded the largest increase in employment (37,600 or 4.0 per cent), while wholesale and retail trade saw a decrease in employment (-24,300 or -2.1 per cent).
- Job vacancies trended lower in 2023, declining 24.9 per cent compared to the previous year, with declines in all industries except utilities.
- All but two census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in Ontario saw an increase in employment in 2023. Windsor had the fastest pace of job creation (8.2 per cent), while Hamilton (-1.1 per cent) and Oshawa (-1.0 per cent) experienced job losses.
- Wage growth in Ontario outpaced inflation in 2023 for most groups of workers

Following two years of wage growth lagging inflation, the average hourly wage of Ontarians increased 5.1 per cent to \$34.63 in 2023, above the 3.8 per cent average annual consumer price index (CPI) inflation rate. Wages in 12 out of 16 industry groups and 18 out of 34 occupation groups grew above inflation.

For the full report and the data for the construction industry, click on the following link: <https://fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/labour-market-2024>