



## ADVOCACY WINS 2015/2016

The OCC's powerful advocacy, backed by the strength of its Chamber Network and corporate partners, achieves impactful policy wins for Ontario businesses.

## ○ **Advocacy Spotlight: Ontario Retirement Pension Plan**

Recognizing the burden of the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP), the OCC called on the government to delay its implementation to provide more time for businesses to adjust to the new financial obligations. We also asked that the government provide greater clarity and broader classification for “comparability” to include some Defined Contribution plans. All the while, the OCC was working toward our stated, preferred option to support retirement security which was a national Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) enhancement instead of a stand-alone ORPP.

Our collective advocacy achieved the following:

- ✓ **Win:** In June 2016, Finance Minister Charles Sousa announced that the Government of Ontario would be abandoning the ORPP in favour of an enhanced CPP, avoiding increased regulatory fragmentation and thus administrative burden – mitigating significant consequences for Ontario’s business community.
- ✓ **Win:** In February 2016, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that her government was delaying the first phase of ORPP contributions from January 1, 2017 until 2018.
- ✓ **Win:** The government expanded the definition, meaning that employers who already provide certain DC pension plans for their employees will be exempt from contributing to the new ORPP.

## ○ **Advocacy Spotlight: Electricity Pricing**

The OCC called on the Ontario government, in our July 2015 report *Empowering Ontario: Constraining Costs and Staying Competitive in the Electricity Market*, to provide greater transparency in energy pricing.

- ✓ **Win:** The updated Ontario Energy Report, released in March 2016, included an industrial price chart that provides a clearer cost picture for Class A businesses.
- ✓ **Win:** In the September 2016 Throne Speech, the government announced that the Industrial Conservation Initiative will be expanded so that any company that consumes more than 1MW will be eligible. Accordingly, an additional 1000 companies in Ontario are now eligible to save 14% on their bill, a noticeable increase from the 300 companies currently enrolled in the program.

## ✓ **Additional Advocacy Wins**

**OCC Ask:** Over the course of our five-year Emerging Stronger series and in our pre-budget submissions, the OCC has regularly called for a reduction in the regulatory burden on Ontario businesses.

✓ **Win:** In the Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, the government announced a series of steps to address the cumulative burden facing Ontario business:

- The Red Tape Challenge, a strategy encouraging Ontarians to submit comments to a Regulatory Modernization Committee regarding regulations that impact them;
- A Regulatory Centre of Excellence, which identifies and champions best practices from around the world;
- A Government Modernization Fund to address the cost of modernizing outmoded regulatory processes;
- A removal of the Debt Retirement Charge on commercial, industrial and other non-residential electricity users on April 1st, 2018, nine months earlier than expected;
- A pledge to reduce the time taken to review air and noise approvals by at least 50 percent within the next two years, allaying concerns surrounding environmental compliance; and,
- A promise to maintain the industrial exception in the Professional Engineers Act.

**OCC Ask:** On July 19th, the OCC sent a letter to Premier Kathleen Wynne asking the provincial government to commit infrastructure dollars to developing and expanding broadband infrastructure across rural and remote Ontario.

✓ **Win:** On Tuesday, July 26th, the Ontario government announced their plans to invest \$90 million dollars to bring high-speed Internet access to over 300 communities in Ontario.

**OCC Ask:** The OCC called for matching federal and provincial commitments for infrastructure investment in the mining sector in our report, *Beneath the Surface: Uncovering the Economic Potential of Ontario's Ring of Fire*.

✓ **Win:** The Ontario Government announced it was committing \$1 billion to the mining sector irrespective of federal funding.

**OCC Ask:** In the OCC's federal pre-budget submission, we urged the federal government to move beyond its Connecting Canadians initiative and invest in critical broadband infrastructure.

✓ **Win:** The federal government announced in its most recent budget that it is investing \$500 million over five years in a new program to increase high-speed broadband service in rural and remote communities.

**OCC Ask:** In our August 2015, report *Harnessing the Power of the Sharing Economy*, the OCC called on the provincial government to analyze income reporting levels in order to better understand the motivating factors behind providers' decisions to report or not report income, and establish and clarify appropriate rules moving forward (e.g. minimum income thresholds).

- ✓ **Win:** On February 19, 2016, the Ontario government announced a pilot project with Airbnb to help educate the home-sharing service's hosts on how to report their income and other key regulatory aspects of their service industry.

**OCC Ask:** Recognizing that the proposed Preliminary Rate Framework from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board could increase the premium rates paid by employers and, subsequently, the cost of doing business in the province, the OCC provided the WSIB with a written submission outlining 10 recommendations that the WSIB and the Government of Ontario should adopt to mitigate the impact of the proposed reforms.

- ✓ **Win:** In December 2015, the WSIB released an updated Rate Framework that incorporates a number of suggestions and recommendations from the OCC, including 6 of the 7 recommendations directed to the WSIB in our September 2015 submission:
  - Provide a public and detailed analysis of how the proposed rate framework changes will impact employers
  - Introduce a surcharge mechanism to ensure that employers with effective health and safety programs don't pay the cost of poor performing employers within their class
  - Expand the proposed class structure
  - Reconsider implementing the predominant class model
  - Retain the Second Injury and Enhancement Fund (SIEF)
  - Implement a weighted cost claims 'window'
  - Eliminate the Fatal Claims Adjustment Policy
- ✓ **Win:** In September 2016, WSIB Chair Elizabeth Witmer announced a percent reduction on the average premium rates for 2017, the first rate reduction since 2001.

**OCC Ask:** In our 2014 report *How Bad is it?*, the OCC called on the Ontario government to move down the path to fiscal sustainability by maximizing the value of its assets.

- ✓ **Win:** The government of Ontario included an asset optimization target in its 2015 budget and renewed its commitment in this year's budget.