

**POLICY
REPORT
CARD**

2018/19



ontario
chamber of
commerce

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LETTER TO THE CHAMBER NETWORK

As Ontario's largest business advocate, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) has long been recognized as a leading voice in advancing economic development across the province. This year finds our collective voice to be stronger than ever, allowing the OCC to successfully translate your support into historic policy impact.

Looking back at the past twelve months, we are most proud of the results of our *Vote Prosperity* campaign, which provided all parties with a strategy to leverage Ontario's advantages and strengthen our global competitiveness. Following the provincial election, we wrote 'blueprint' letters to each provincial Cabinet Minister, outlining the priorities to execute over the next four years. These letters have not only led to improved engagement with every Ministry, but also concrete and meaningful policy wins. While there are multiple factors that shape public policy in Ontario, we feel the collective voice of the Ontario Chamber Network can take credit for the subsequent policy actions, including:

- **Labour reform.** The OCC and Chamber Network persistently advocated for the repeal of Bill 148, the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2018* which introduced imbalanced labour reforms too quickly, at too high a cost to both employers and workers. Armed with evidence-based policy recommendations, we laid the groundwork for the Ontario government to introduce a near-full repeal of Bill 148.
- **Skills and workforce development.** Through our policy and advocacy efforts on Ontario's skills mismatch, we repeatedly urged the provincial government to revise Ontario's journey-person-to-apprenticeship ratios and dissolve the Ontario College of Trades. Both recommendations were adopted in Bill 47, the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018*.
- **Expanding natural gas access.** We have consistently called on the Ontario government to expand natural gas access to make life more affordable in rural Ontario. The Ontario government announced it will develop a program which will encourage distributors to partner with communities to deliver projects that will expand access to natural gas.
- **Open tendering for the public sector.** We have repeatedly called on provincial government to amend the *Labour Relations Act, 1995* to allow for a more open and fair tendering procurement process. In April 2019, the government of Ontario responded by passing a bill which explicitly deems public bodies, including municipalities and school boards, as "non-construction employers."

The past year also saw considerable trade uncertainty, including a challenging negotiation of the Canada-United States-Mexico Free Trade Agreement and the imposition of retaliatory tariffs. In spite of this difficult climate, the OCC signed nine joint statements with US state chambers of commerce to bring greater awareness to the importance of North American free trade, while our Chamber Network worked tirelessly in support of impacted industries such as steel and aluminum. This period culminated with an unforgettable conversation between US Ambassador Kelly Craft and Canadian Ambassador David MacNaughton at the Ontario Economic Summit.

The OCC and its members were in the spotlight this year, working hard to achieve change we have long fought for. We continued to have a strong media presence, with coverage in both print and broadcast media, cementing our place as the leading advocate for business in Ontario. However, much work remains to be done. As our 2019 Ontario Economic Report notes, Ontario's growth is forecasted to slow as the province confronts capacity limits, a likely increase in interest rates, and a reduction in government spending. Although business confidence in 2019 has rebounded from a historic low in 2018, several major policy issues loom large, including

challenges relating to the cost of doing business, addressing regional economic disparities, and navigating Ontario's on-going skills mismatch.

Looking ahead, we will continue to provide thoughtful analysis and strong advocacy to government and the media, building on the momentum of 2018. As the provincial government re-examines its approach to debt and deficit spending, regional governance, transportation and infrastructure, now, more than ever, there is a need for the OCC's non-partisan, evidenced-based policy solutions.

But these solutions would not be as effective or impactful if it weren't for the contributions of the Ontario Chamber Network – your insight, experience, connections, and voice make our work stronger and give it the widest possible reach. I want to offer you my genuine thanks for your on-going support of the OCC and commitment to the chamber movement. Together we can do – and have done – incredible things.

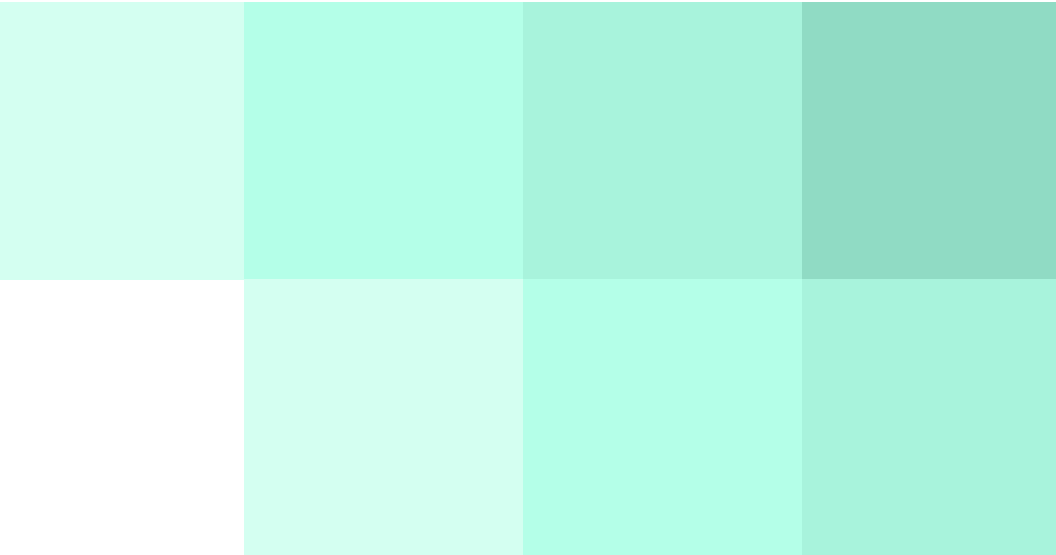
In 2019 and beyond, the entire OCC team looks forward to working with you all as we help build a stronger Ontario.

Ashley Challinor



Vice President, Policy

Ontario Chamber of Commerce





ADVOCACY WINS

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



○ SPOTLIGHT ON SKILLS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

APPRENTICESHIP RATIOS SET AT 1:1

Ask: Through our policy resolution process and policy work on addressing the skills mismatch, the OCC has repeatedly urged the provincial government to revise Ontario's journeyperson-to-apprenticeship ratios, one of the most constricting ratio systems in Canada. The high level at which ratios are currently set make it difficult for employers to meet high levels of demand for skilled tradespeople, as they struggle to recruit sufficient journeypersons to hire additional apprentices. This has resulted in young tradespeople struggling to work the hours necessary to complete their training, limiting the number of certified tradespeople produced each year.

- ✓ **Win:** As part of Bill 47, the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018*, the Ontario government announced that it would lower Ontario's journeyperson-to-apprenticeship ratios to 1:1 across all trades. This move will make it easier for apprentices to become certified and for businesses to address skills shortages and complete projects. This will be especially important for smaller urban and rural communities, where the pool of journeypersons is typically much smaller.

DISSOLUTION OF THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Ask: Since its establishment in 2009, the Ontario College of Trades has become overly focused on enforcement and regulation, limiting its ability to serve the public interest of attracting and training new tradespeople. In our blueprint letters to the new cabinet ministers in July 2018, the OCC urged the government to make substantial reforms or dismantle the College and return responsibility for trades regulation to the Province.

- ✓ **Win:** As part of Bill 47, the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018*, the Ontario government announced that it would dissolve the College and upload its responsibilities to the Ministry of Labour. Dissolving the College is an important step in modernizing and streamlining Ontario's apprenticeship system and developing a stronger, more competitive workforce.

○ SPOTLIGHT ON ENERGY

EXPANSION OF NATURAL GAS ACCESS THROUGHOUT RURAL AND NORTHERN ONTARIO

Ask: The OCC has consistently called on the Ontario government to expand natural gas access to make life more affordable in rural Ontario. This call was most recently echoed in our July 2018 blueprint letters to cabinet ministers, which specified the importance of enabling private sector participation in enhancing natural gas distribution in order to generate substantial government savings.

- ✓ **Win:** In September 2018, the Ontario government announced its intention to develop a new natural gas program. When implemented, this program will encourage private distributors to partner with communities to develop projects that expand access natural gas throughout rural and northern Ontario.

CONTINUED OPERATIONS OF THE PICKERING NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Ask: In our 2018 report, *Pickering Continued Operations: An Impact Analysis on Ontario's Economy*, written in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA), the OCC found that continued operation of the Pickering Nuclear Station until



2024 would have a positive impact on Ontario's economy while advancing its climate change goals and the long-term stability of its energy system.

- ✓ **Win:** In August 2018, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) announced its decision to grant a 10-year operating license to the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. The station will continue to operate until the end of 2024, followed by safe storage activities between 2024 and 2028

REPEAL OF THE GREEN ENERGY ACT, 2009

Ask: The OCC has long recognized the adverse effects that rising electricity prices have had on Ontario's business competitiveness, in part caused by expensive renewable energy projects approved under the *Green Energy Act, 2009* without appropriate analysis of economic impact. In multiple resolutions passed by our Chamber Network, as well as in our submission for the 2017 Long-Term Energy Plan, *Leading the Charge*, we urged the Ontario government to put a greater emphasis on affordability in its procurement of energy.

- ✓ **Win:** In September 2018, the Ontario government introduced legislation to repeal the *Green Energy Act, 2009*. When implemented, the new program will give government the authority to stop approvals for energy projects where the need for electricity has not been demonstrated and the costs to taxpayers are deemed too high.

○ SPOTLIGHT ON BUDGET ASKS

A RESPONSIBLE PATH TO FISCAL BALANCE

Ask: In our 2019 pre-Budget submission and our recent report, *Accounting for Ontario's Debt*, the OCC called on the Government of Ontario to introduce a robust plan for returning the Province to balanced budgets via a 'spend smarter' approach rather than an austerity approach.

We are pleased to see that Budget 2019 reflects a number of recommendations from our submission, including:

Wins:

- ✓ Laying out a plan to return to a balanced Budget by 2023-4;
- ✓ Committing \$315 million over the next five years to expand broadband and cellular infrastructure across the province and promising to release a broadband and cellular strategy in 2019;
- ✓ Reviewing transportation in Northern Ontario, including options for passenger rail services across the region;
- ✓ Maintaining the current mining tax rates for remote, non-remote, and diamond mining operations;
- ✓ Preserving provincial tax exemptions on employer health and dental plans; and
- ✓ Addressing tax non-compliance.



OTHER

PRIVATE CANNABIS RETAIL MODEL

Ask: The OCC has advocated for a private-sector, licensing-based, and locally-oriented approach for the distribution of cannabis since commitments for legalization were made by the federal government in 2016. This call was echoed in our letter on cannabis legalization in Ontario and our blueprint letters to provincial cabinet ministers, where we emphasized the need for policies that are designed to eliminate the underground economy, limit points of access, empower communities, invest in addiction prevention and treatment, and ensure products are subject to best-practice health regulation.

- ✓ **Win:** In September 2018, the Ontario government introduced the *Cannabis Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018*, outlining a tightly-regulated private cannabis retail model. When implemented, this model will help to eliminate the underground cannabis economy and to protect public health and safety.

REDUCTION IN INSURANCE PREMIUM RATES FOR EMPLOYERS

Ask: The OCC and its members support the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)'s goal of building healthy and safe workplaces. We have also long advocated for the reduction of WSIB premiums and the elimination of the unfunded liability.

- ✓ **Win:** In September 2018, the WSIB announced that premium rates for employers would be sharply reduced due to the elimination of their Insurance Fund's unfunded liability. The money that employers will save as a result of this premium reduction will allow them to spend more on job creation, new technologies, and safer workplaces.

REPEAL OF BILL 148

Ask: Bill 148, the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017*, introduced imbalanced labour reforms too quickly, at too high a cost to both employers and workers. The combination of a dramatic increase in minimum wage, restrictive scheduling provisions, and several other changes to employment standards had the perverse effect of discouraging investment and eliminating jobs, thereby diminishing economic opportunities in Ontario. Since the Bill was first introduced, the OCC and its Chamber Network have persistently advocated for its repeal to restore fairness and reduce the significant financial and administrative burdens it imposed on businesses.

- ✓ **Win:** In October 2018, the Ontario government introduced Bill 47, the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018*, which included a near-full repeal of Bill 148. The new law will pause minimum wage at \$14 and tie future increases to a calculation based on the rate of inflation. It will also return to the previous calculation of public holiday pay and union certification policies, amend scheduling provisions and personal emergency leave requirements, and remove equal pay for equal work.

EXPANSION OF AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE PILOT

Ask: In our 2018 report, *Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs (Part I)*, the OCC encouraged Ontario to capitalize on its first-mover status in autonomous vehicle (AV) readiness. We urged all levels of government to work together with industry to attract future investments, innovation, and jobs, as well as ensure Ontario is the first province to reap the benefits associated with this technology.



- ✓ **Win:** The Government of Ontario committed to expanding Ontario's AV pilot program as part of Bill 66, the *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018* – a welcome step towards eventually formalizing the program. The government reaffirmed its intention to support AV technology in February 2019 with its auto sector strategy (*Driving Prosperity: The Future of Ontario's Automotive Sector*) with commitments to enhance Ontario's Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN) and enable the private sector to develop a province-wide network of AV-supporting infrastructure.

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR AUTO DEALERS

Ask: The current process required to register motor vehicles in Ontario adds unnecessary costs and delays to our auto sector. At our 2018 Annual General Meeting, the Ontario Chamber Network voted to pass a resolution that urged the Ontario government to cut red tape by allowing auto dealers to register vehicles online from their dealerships.

- ✓ **Win:** In 2018, the Ontario government introduced Bill 50, the *Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2018*. If passed, it will amend the *Highway Traffic Act, 1990* to allow certain auto dealers to license vehicles directly. The new vehicle sales process will help Ontario dealers save time and money, while enabling them to better serve their customers.

OPEN TENDERING FOR THE BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR

Ask: In the OCC's blueprint letter to the Minister of Labour, we advocated for amendments to the *Labour Relations Act, 1995* (LRA) that would ensure a more open and fair tendering and procurement process. Specifically, we have called on the Ontario government to immediately amend the LRA to clarify that municipalities and school boards are not construction employers.

- ✓ **Win:** In April 2019, the Ontario government passed Bill 66, the *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018*. Among other things, this will amend the LRA to explicitly deem public bodies, including municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities, as "non-construction employers." For too long, municipalities and public entities have been burdened by a closed procurement process that hindered economic development and innovation. By permitting open tendering, the government is developing a system that fosters economic growth through greater competition among suppliers and helps municipalities maximize their infrastructure investments.



ADVOCACY IN THE NEWS

Making headlines – at the local, provincial, and national level – is a cornerstone of our advocacy strategy. Our media relations approach ensures we remain a leading voice in the public policy conversations that matter to Ontario’s business community.



Highlights of 2018/19

The OCC and the Ontario Chamber Network were covered in print, digital, and broadcast media on a variety of issues over the past year. We continued to have a strong media presence this year cementing our place as the leading advocate for business in Ontario.

2,620+ MEDIA HITS

376 MILLION + POTENTIAL REACH

Source: Figures are based on Meltwater media monitoring from April 1, 2018 to April 25, 2019.

- **Frequent coverage in Canada's major national newspapers**
Including the Globe and Mail, National Post, Toronto Star, Toronto Sun, Huffington Post, Canadian Press, iPolitics, National Post, and Macleans.
- **Regular appearances on radio and television**
Including Omni, CBC Radio, the Business News Network (BNN), TVO's *The Agenda*, Global News, CTV News, CP24, and local talk radio stations across Ontario.
- **Frequent coverage in Ontario's major daily locals**
Including the Windsor Star, Hamilton Spectator, Sudbury Star, Barrie Today and the Sault Star.



Key Highlights

- The combination of our *Vote Prosperity* election campaign and ‘blueprint’ letters outlining key priorities for each provincial cabinet minister following the election garnered substantial media attention. Many of these recommendations have already been adopted.
- In addition to our policy reports, submissions, and letters, the OCC and the Ontario Chamber Network were frequently in the media for our advocacy leading up to the passing of Bill 47, *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018*, with our representatives providing significant analysis and commentary on the unintended yet predictable consequences employment and labour law reforms on Ontario business.
- At the Ontario Economic Summit, the unforgettable in-conversation with Ambassador Craft and MacNaughton as well as Premier Ford unveiling his “open for business” signs received unparalleled media coverage across the CBC, Huffington Post, The Toronto Star, Global News, City TV, and the Canadian Press.
- Our Ontario Business Achievement Awards were exclusively covered by TLN and Media set Italia for several weeks following the gala, celebrating Ontario business and highlighting the Lifetime Achievement Award winners, Donald Ziraldo and Karl Kaiser, who pioneered the province’s wine renaissance.
- Mid February, we released our third annual Ontario Economic Report aimed at shaping and informing future policy. This report was featured in an exclusive on BNN and will feed into our narrative for the year ahead.
- Our debt report provided context on what the province’s debt means for the economy of today and tomorrow ahead of the government’s first budget – the insights from the report received significant coverage across top-tier national media outlets.
- Our Chamber Network also worked tirelessly in their communities on key priorities such as expanding broadband as well as in support of key sectors such as steel and aluminum featured in local media across the province.
- Our report, *Supporting Ontario’s Budding Cannabis Industry*, received unprecedented media coverage on Ontario’s competitive cannabis advantage with coverage across international, national, provincial and local outlets in BNN Bloomberg, BlogTO, City TV, CBC News, CBC All in a day, Toronto Sun, Reuters, 680 News, Yahoo News, The Rick Gibbons Show, and The Kelly Cutrara Show.



USMCA | July 2019

- “ The benefits of free trade are clear. But that message must be clearly and strongly reinforced in all three countries if we are to continue to benefit.”
– **Rocco, Rossi, President & CEO, OCC, Edmonton Journal (OCC op-ed on July 29, 2019)**

BILL 148/BILL 47 | October 2018

- “ The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has warned 82 per cent of businesses can't find workers with the appropriate qualifications because of a shortage and a mismatch between the skills workers have and those that employers need.”
– **Toronto Star (October 26, 2018)**

- “ Businesses across the province have long felt the impact of labour shortages in the skilled trades, but were further challenged this year with new regulatory and cost burdens imposed by Bill 148, hampering their ability to create jobs. Our position had been clear from the beginning: Bill 148 was too much, too fast.”
– **Rocco, Rossi, President & CEO, OCC, Ottawa Sun (OCC op-ed on November 3, 2019)**

NEW EDUCATION PLAN | March 2019

- “ Michelle Eaton, vice president of communications for the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, said her group has been calling on the government to emphasize the skilled trades for some time now. 'About 40% of jobs in the next decade will be in the skilled trades but only about 26% of young people are going to be pursuing careers in the skilled trades.'”
– **The Ottawa Sun (March 17, 2019)**

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT | March 2019

- “ There is a certain feeling of neglect. There are many regions that are unable to perform to the level of their potential because of a lack of investment from government. Infrastructure being the top of that list.”
– **Ashley Challinor, Vice President of Policy, The Agenda (Panel on March 20, 2019)**



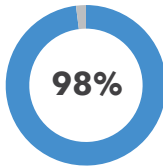
OCC ADVOCACY AT QUEEN'S PARK

Gaining the attention of Ontario's political leaders is the primary goal of our advocacy strategy. Through our government relations work, the voice of the Ontario Chamber Network is heard across Queen's Park, including within the walls of the legislature.



Since the beginning of the 42nd Parliament of Ontario in June of 2018, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce was mentioned 70 unique times in Hansard, the record of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Of each of these mentions, 98 percent were of a positive sentiment. Additionally, on March 25th, the day of the OCC's Advocacy Day at Queen's Park, 32 Members of Provincial Parliament introduced the OCC and their local chambers of commerce or boards of trade. This demonstrates the collective power of the Ontario Chamber Network and our strong influence within Queen's Park among both government and opposition.

The OCC will continue to prioritize proactive government relations efforts with all Members to ensure the voice of the Ontario Chamber Network is continuously heard and that we are collectively furthering business prosperity throughout the province.



**98% POSITIVE MENTIONS
IN HANSARD: THE RECORD
OF THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**

Key Highlights

“ Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to move on in the last seven or eight minutes that I have, before my parliamentary assistant will take over for the last half an hour. I want to talk about the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and something that they posted on their website. Of course, the Ontario chamber is a strong voice for those employers across Ontario. They advocate on behalf of those employers to get government moving in the direction that will create private sector growth and job growth in the province. I always value, myself, over the years—since I've been here for seven years—what the chamber of commerce says.”

—Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Infrastructure and MPP for Lambton – Kent - Middlesex, October 3

“ The chamber of commerce said, ‘Combined, these are ... steps towards a more competitive and prosperous economy. Ontario is strongest when industry and government work together, and we look forward to working with the government....’

Speaker, it's obvious: Ontario is open for business.”

—Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Finance and MPP for Nipissing, November 22

“ As a matter of fact, there was a number of us that were just over at Hart House at the University of Toronto meeting with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Those who are representatives of the chamber of commerce, be it the executive directors or the CEOs or the presidents of their local chambers, are thrilled with the action that we took very early on by repealing the sections of Bill 148 that were killing jobs and making it difficult for the economy.”

—Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and MPP for Bay of Quinte, March 25

“ During committee, we heard from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce that, ‘The OCC supports Bill 36 and the government of Ontario's commitment to developing a private retail model for the responsible sale of cannabis in licensed retailers....’



And, ‘that safety and social responsibility must be the first overwhelming priorities ... taking into account ... about the underground economy, health and safety.’

I’m pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 36 achieves this for the people of Ontario.”
—**Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Attorney General and MPP for York - Simcoe, October 18**

“ There’s a member of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. He’s a notable person by the name of Mr. Rocco Rossi. We’ve all heard of him, no doubt have met him, the CEO and president of the Ontario chamber. So for members opposite listening, don’t listen to me. Perhaps they challenge my authority on this subject. But speak to a person who works every day representing tens of thousands—over 60,000—businesses in this province. Listen to his words. Let his words inform your decisions on how you’re going to vote on this bill.”
—**Stephen Lecce, MPP for King - Vaughan, October 3**

“ In their 2018 Ontario Economic Report, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce found that in 2017, 41% of businesses lacked confidence in the economy. In 2018, that number jumped to 48%. I repeat: In 2018, 48% of businesses simply lost confidence in our economy.

After touring the province and speaking to our business owners, our job creators and our workers, the problem was crystal clear: Ontario, under the previous government, had become good, if not great, at scaring businesses and investors away. Ontario’s environment of overregulation, uncompetitive taxes, high electricity prices and restrictive labour regulations has made it one of the least attractive places to do business.”
—**Michael Parsa, MPP for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, February 19**

“ What we heard at the economic summit hosted by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce was that being consistent and being reliable in your policies and not ripping up contracts and insisting that companies must go to court just to validate the contracts that the government has already signed with them—this is actually not in the best interests of the economy. So what this PC government has essentially established is that they are willing to create new rules for themselves as a government as it relates to contract law in Ontario—because it still exists.”
—**Catherine Fife, MPP for Waterloo, October 29**

“ This Conservative government is making the problem worse by saying that even if the government acts in bad faith, there will be legislative roadblocks for a company to protect itself. My Conservative father would be disappointed to know that this is how this new government plans to conduct business. Even the Ontario Chamber of Commerce is raising concerns. The director of policy was quoted in QP Briefing as saying, ‘The sanctity of contracts is fundamental. The government unilaterally cancelling contracts is harmful to business investment in Ontario.’

You know that we have a serious issue with business confidence when even the Ontario Chamber of Commerce is saying that breaking contracts with impunity is bad for business, that it is hurting investor confidence in Ontario. So I ask this government to take this opportunity to honour our contracts and to proceed in a way that maintains the reputation of this province as a safe place to make investments, create jobs and generate prosperity.”
—**Mike Schreiner, MPP for Guelph and Leader of the Green Party of Ontario, July 23**



PUBLICATIONS

Credible research and analysis is at the centre of our advocacy efforts. In addition to comprehensive policy reports, we respond to emerging issues through letters and submissions to government decision-makers that are based on principled thinking and crafted through direct consultation with our membership.



Letter to Toronto Mayor on Development Opportunities at Downsview | *April 2018*

A letter was sent to Toronto Mayor John Tory identifying the opportunities that Bombardier's relocation from Downsview would present to the neighbourhood. The letter notes that through rezoning, the City of Toronto could create a neighbourhood of mixed-use development such as housing, offices and hotels. The correspondence highlights that Bombardier's intended decision to move operations within the region has opened up Downsview for valuable new development, while maintaining the important base of employment provided by Bombardier operations.



Letter of Support for Ridesharing Services | *April 2018*

In our correspondence to Metrolinx President and Chief Executive Officer, Phil Verster, the OCC advocated for piloting the use of ridesharing services to facilitate better connectivity to GO stations and transit hubs. With the ever-increasing daily ridership for GO passengers, solutions beyond building additional parking lots are necessary: using innovative models such as ridesharing services is one way to improve connectivity for passengers.



Bill 3, Pay Transparency Act Submission | *April 2018*

In our submission on Bill 3, we asked that any attempt to introduce pay transparency regulations be done through a review and update of the *Pay Equity Act, 1990*. The Province should focus on improving employer awareness and accountability through further empowerment of the *Pay Equity Office*, while avoiding inflicting duplicative and burdensome reporting obligations on employers.

Bill 3, Pay Transparency Act Submission in the news

“Ashley Challinor, the vice-president of policy at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, said the organization recognizes the gender wage gap as a challenge and is looking forward to giving feedback.”

— City News (March 3, 2019)



Ontario Energy Board (OEB) Modernization Submission | *May 2018*

In December 2017, the Minister of Energy announced the creation of the OEB Modernization Review Panel to explore how the mandate, role, and structure of the OEB could be modernized to assist it in responding to a rapidly changing energy sector. In our submission, the OCC made four recommendations with respect to the independence and transparency of the OEB's governance framework, arguing that this independence is critical to fulfilling the Board's mandate of consumer protection and rate mitigation.



Bruce Power Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) Submission | *May 2018*

This submission demonstrates the OCC's support for Bruce Power's 10-year license application for its Power Reactor Operating License (PROL) for the Bruce Nuclear Generating Stations A and B located near Tiverton, Ontario. We highlight the economic contributions of the nuclear industry to Ontario, and the strong commitment of Bruce Power to the environment and safety. We also provided remarks at the CNSC committee meeting on May 31, 2018 in Kincardine.



Deputy Minister Transition Letters | *May 2018*

A newly-elected PC government brings a new vision for this province with key officials in new roles. The ability of the OCC to clearly and effectively articulate its messages depends, in part, on our relationships with all stakeholders within government. To support the fostering of these relationships, the OCC authored individual letters to each of the Deputy Ministers in the Ontario Public Service for inclusion in their transition binders.



Blueprint Letters to Ontario Cabinet Ministers | *July 2018*

As Ontario's legislative session resumed with a newly-elected government, the OCC wrote to each cabinet minister outlining a blueprint to execute over the next four years to make Ontario "open for business." The blueprint contains both policy asks where immediate action is required to support business, as well as foundational recommendations for long-term prosperity.

Themes that emerged in the blueprint letters include:

- **Fiscal balance:** Fundamental to economic growth is ensuring that the Government of Ontario's own fiscal house is in order;
- **Business competitiveness:** The most powerful tool in making this province competitive is reducing red tape; we ask that the government prioritize lowering the administrative burden on businesses and ensuring that regulation is streamlined and effective;
- **Investment growth:** Investing in Ontario through strategic spending is essential to fostering job creation and building healthy and productive communities across the province; and
- **Government accountability:** Poor implementation of government initiatives in the past has led to resource waste, mismanagement, and disruptions for both businesses and residents.

Following the release of these letters, the OCC met with provincial ministries to discuss priorities, build relationships and establish mechanisms for ongoing collaboration.

Blueprint Letters to Ontario Cabinet Ministers in the news

"The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, has written a letter to each provincial cabinet minister about what the Chamber believes can be done to encourage and help businesses in Ontario prosper."

— CBC News (July 17, 2018)



Letter of Support for an Increase in Ontario's Allocation of Economic Immigrants | *August 2018*

In a letter to federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, the Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen, the OCC expressed support for an increase in Ontario's annual allocation of economic immigrants under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP). Although Ontario's allocation was increased to 6,600 in 2018 from 6,000 in 2017, businesses in Ontario have expressed concern that this limit remains insufficient to meet the province's labour market needs.



Planning for Prosperity: The Business Perspective | *September 2018*

As part of the Government of Ontario's line-by-line review of its programs and services, the Treasury Board Secretariat launched a public consultation to give Ontarians an opportunity to suggest ways to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of provincial services. To that end, the OCC compiled a set of 15 recommendations from the perspective of business.



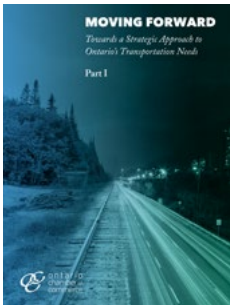
Letter of Support for Pearson Transit Hub | *October 2018*

In a letter to then Minister of Transportation, the Honourable John Yakabuski, the OCC offered its support for the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA)'s proposal to build a major transit hub at Toronto's Pearson International Airport. The planned facility would reduce traffic congestion by connecting transit lines across the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area and provide direct access to Canada's largest airport. Its presence would boost economic productivity across the region, help Ontario businesses attract talent, connect residents with better jobs and services, and enable more efficient movement of goods to and from the region.



Letter with Recommendations for Ontario's New Environment Plan | *November 2018*

After hosting our Sustainable Innovation Conference, the OCC wrote a letter to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks with recommendations to strike the right balance between protecting our environment and supporting a prosperous economy. The letter identified four areas of priority: designing smarter regulations, investing strategically in sustainable innovation, supporting community resilience, and fostering collaboration. Our recommendations were well received and helped inform the government's made-in-Ontario environment plan.



Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs (Part I) | *December 2018*

The OCC released a major transportation report in December 2018. The report contains 13 recommendations to the provincial and federal governments, calling for the development of a long-term transportation plan for Ontario that addresses transit governance, rail, and autonomous vehicle technology.

Moving Forward in the news

"In a new report, the Sudbury chamber, along with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, called for a host of transportation improvements in the province, including the return of passenger rail to Northern Ontario."

– Sudbury Star (December 4, 2018)



Letter on Red Tape Priorities for Ontario | *December 2018*

In a letter to Deputy Minister for Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction, Giles Gherson, the OCC recommended that the Province prioritize the following in its ongoing regulatory reforms: harmonizing regulations, modernizing compliance systems, taking an outcomes-based approach, and promoting a new red tape narrative. Specific recommendations were based on insights from regular consultations with our members and the Red Tape Roundtable the OCC hosted in November.



Ontario Economic Summit 2019: Summary from Breakout Sessions | *December 2018*

At the 2018 Ontario Economic Summit (OES) on the “Workforce of Tomorrow,” McKinsey & Company facilitated a break-out session that engaged OES participants in open-ended discussions about the workforce development challenges facing Ontario. We worked with McKinsey & Company to put together a summary document on important takeaways from the summit. This document reflects some of the key themes which emerged from the discussions, as well as potential opportunities for the OCC to explore further.



2019 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission | *January 2019*

This year’s provincial pre-budget submission contained 13 tangible recommendations to build a stronger Ontario and create a business climate which encourages growth. Our submission called on the government to tax competitively, enhance fiscal capacity for municipalities, address Ontario’s infrastructure deficit, and adopt sustainable spending models. Specific recommendations included creating a variable small business deduction, gradually increasing the heads and beds levy, leveraging the private sector to expand broadband access, and using value-based procurement to more effectively spend tax money. The OCC’s Vice President of Communications and Government Relations, Michelle Eaton, presented the submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.



2019 Provincial pre-Budget submission in the news

“The Ontario Chamber of Commerce also urges the provincial government to adopt sustainable spending models. It recommends the use of value-based procurement, implementing user-pay models and means testing for certain government services and leveraging technology to increase public sector cost efficiency. Direct business support is also imperative, the document notes.”

– The Sault Star (January 17, 2019)

“The chamber says there are ‘tremendous opportunities’ for businesses if the Ontario government lets them play a role in the health-care system.”

– Huffington Post (January 16, 2019)

“With more than 400,000 regulations on Ontario’s books – more than double those in British Columbia – Rossi said it’s important that red tape be cut to free up entrepreneurs to focus on and grow their business.”

– The Sault Star (January 31, 2019)



Submission in Response to Ontario’s New Environment Plan | *January 2019*

Following the Province’s release of its proposed environment plan in November 2018, the OCC worked closely with members to prepare a submission for the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks. Our submission outlined reactions and recommendations from the business community regarding five sections of the plan: the Ontario Carbon Trust and reverse auction; low-carbon procurement; industry performance standards for large emitters; waste management; and appliance efficiency standards.



Letter on the Review of Ontario's Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA) | February 2019

As part of the provincial government's review of the (ESA), the OCC prepared a submission recommending that the Province formally recognize equivalency between the ESA and the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994* ensure that all species at risk policies and prescriptions are subject to socioeconomic impact analyses, and avoid federal interference via an unworkable Section 11 Conservation Agreement.



Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2019 | February 2019

Our federal pre-budget submission provided eight recommendations under the following four priority areas: reforming Canada's tax system to enhance competitiveness, stewarding our transition to the knowledge economy, nurturing the innovation ecosystem, and providing sustainable public drug coverage.



Ontario Economic Report | February 2019

As the landmark research platform for the OCC, the Ontario Economic Report (OER) presents a new perspective on the economic health of our province. Through the Business Confidence Survey, the Business Prosperity Index, and the Economic Outlook, this document highlights data that will lead to a candid conversation about how to support economic growth in Ontario.

This year, our third annual OER revealed that businesses are gaining confidence in the economic outlook of both the province and their own organizations. At the same time, challenges relating to access to talent, embracing technological innovations, and the cost of doing business – including regulation, taxation, and input prices – remain major sources of concern. The report also identified concerns with regional disparity, as employment growth largely concentrated in the Greater Golden Horseshoe since 2003 and certain parts of the province continue to be particularly vulnerable to technological and demographic disruption.



Ontario Economic Report in the news

“Let’s not forget that we have also been masking the fact it’s been a tale of two Ontarios. From 2003 to 2018, as we have experienced really quite tremendous growth in the greater golden horseshoe, Northern Ontario lost 5 percent of employment - central Ontario quite weak. So, there are opportunities and important steps that government has to look to if we’re truly going to have distributed economic growth in the province.”

– Rocco Rossi, President & CEO, OCC, BNN (exclusive interview on February 19, 2019)

“The report offers a unique perspective on the experience of businesses of all sizes across the province. Through the Business Confidence Survey, the Business Prosperity Index and the Economic Outlook, this report presents a candid look at private sector sentiment and opportunities for economic growth for the year ahead.”

– Sudbury Star (February 20, 2019)



Submission on the *People’s Health Care Act, 2019* | *March 2019*

In response to the introduction of the Bill 74, the *People’s Health Care Act, 2019*, the OCC submitted commentary that recognized the positive steps taken vis-à-vis integrated care and digitization, while highlighting the need for further action to effect system-level transformation. Our recommendations fell within three key areas: shifting Ontario towards a value-based health care system; delivering innovative, digital health care by better integrating the work of Ontario’s health science sector into the public health care system; and modernizing procurement and supply chain processes.



Submission on *Waste and Litter* | *April 2019*

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks released a discussion paper on waste and litter in March 2019. The OCC then held consultations with businesses from various sectors, including manufacturing, waste management, and retail, to better understand the impact of the government’s proposals. Our submission commented on four areas: the transition to producer responsibility, managing food waste, the approvals process for waste management activities, and circular procurement.



Accounting for Ontario's Debt | April 2019

In the lead up to the release of Ontario's provincial budget, the OCC released *Accounting for Ontario's Debt*, a report emphasizing the need for adequate economic and geopolitical context and understanding when making decisions affecting Ontario's debt. In lending due consideration to Ontario's significant size and considerable responsibilities as a sub-sovereign, the report examines how Ontario might best manage debt and deficit spending to ensure a prosperous future for Ontario's businesses, and its many generations to come.

Accounting for Ontario's Debt in the news

"Every tax dollar levied imposes a larger, negative impact on the economy," says the chamber report. "Raising taxes or implementing austerity measures to reduce Ontario's debt burden may, therefore, have the unintended effect of squandering current opportunity to grow Ontario's economy."

– CBC News (April 7, 2019)

"Ontario Chamber of Commerce's take on debt reduction: 'An aggressive debt repayment schedule that dismisses valued investment opportunities in favour of repaying inexpensive debt can place an unwarranted burden on businesses and hinder their ability to compete and grow, which ironically inhibits the economy's ability to supply revenue to the government.'"

– Toronto Sun (April 7, 2019)

"In discussing the best course of action on how to account for Ontario's debt, both government and the public must engage in a frank conversation where we earnestly consider the consequences of various actions. One thing is certain: Government decisions in Budget 2019 regarding Ontario's debt will have profound effects on industry and communities now and into the future.'

– Rocco, Rossi, President & CEO, OCC, Globe and Mail (OCC op-ed on April 9, 2019)



Supporting Ontario's Budding Cannabis Industry *| April 2019*

In April 2019, the OCC released a report that examines how the federal and provincial governments can support Ontario's budding cannabis industry while ensuring responsible adult consumption of recreational cannabis. Produced in consultation with OCC members, the report delivers 18 tangible recommendations that cover six timely themes: the path forward for private retail in Ontario; the supply shortage; edible cannabis products; the need for investment in public education; recreational cannabis in the workplace; and the importance of developing a skilled workforce for the cannabis industry.

Supporting Ontario's Budding Cannabis Industry in the news

"Open up the application process for pot shops in Ontario and award new retail licences on a merit basis, let people purchase cannabis directly online from licensed producers and develop a common excise stamp to more efficiently ship products across the country. Those are just some of the 18 recommendations from a sweeping Ontario Chamber of Commerce report that evaluates how the first six months of recreational cannabis legalization have fared in Canada."

– BNN Bloomberg (exclusive on April 18, 2019)

"Ontario is in a prime position to cash in on the green gold rush, according to a report released on Thursday by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce."

– BlogTO (April 18, 2019)

"The Ontario Chamber of Commerce on Thursday made several recommendations that address issues affecting the province's booming marijuana industry, including having a common excise stamp to help cannabis makers ship their products smoothly."

– Reuters (April 18, 2019)

"If there's not a competitive legal market in Ontario, people are going to turn to the black market, and that's lost revenue, lost jobs, lost opportunity for business."

– Michelle Eaton, Vice President of Communications and Government Relations, OCC, CBC (April 18, 2019)



EVENTS

The OCC is proud to host numerous advocacy, consultative, and educational events throughout the year. Additionally, we present a line-up of signature events that celebrate business in Ontario, connect our members with government decision-makers, and demonstrate our thought leadership to major stakeholders.



Annual General Meeting | *April 2018*

The Ontario Chamber Network's 2018 Annual General Meeting (AGM) brings together the entire network to debate policy, hear from political and thought leaders, and learn from the experiences of their network peers. The AGM is one of our most important initiatives, as the policy resolutions put forward by the network help shape the policy agenda of the OCC and drive our advocacy work.

In 2018 this year, the AGM took place in Hamilton with the theme "Preparing for Prosperity," and the network passed 40 new resolutions.

Shocking the System: Energy Policy Micro-Series | *May and June 2018*

The OCC held three energy sector advocacy roundtables to address different components of the energy narrative: socioeconomic impacts, security and sustainability, and Ontario's energy future. For stakeholders, these events were a chance to inform the broader business community of their perspectives and help reframe the energy narrative in Ontario. It also provided an opportunity to showcase the innovative opportunities that already exist and that are in development to reduce overall energy costs.

Transportation Consultation Event | *July 2018*

To inform our transportation report, *Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs (Part I)*, the OCC held a major consultation session in July. The event brought together stakeholders from across the province to discuss creative solutions to transportation deficits, government's role in transportation planning, multi-modal terminals, and rail transit.

Health and Life Science Sector Conference | *September 2018*

The OCC's health and life science conference brought together an active group of participants to frame Ontario's health and life science sector as a competitive advantage aligned with government priorities. Using this framing, we will effectively leverage our assets to support the sector's ongoing advocacy with government. The conference hashtag #HLSS2018 engaged attendees online and trended on Twitter throughout the afternoon.

An Evening with the Deputy Ministers | *October 2018*

The OCC and its members have long recognized the important role that the Ontario Public Service holds in shaping the policies that contribute to a competitive business environment. An Evening with the Deputy Ministers affords business and community leaders the unique opportunity to connect directly to top influencers in the Ontario government, the deputy ministers.

Ontario Economic Summit | *October 2018*

In 2018, we held our Ontario Economic Summit (OES). The theme of the summit was, "The Workforce of Tomorrow: Confronting Disruption as Ontario Transitions to a Learning-Based Economy." OES 2018 brought together key decision-makers from business, government, academia, and the non-profit sector. We were pleased to welcome Premier Ford, key Cabinet Ministers, the Leader of the Official Opposition Andrea Horwath, and senior members of the Ontario NDP Caucus. The unforgettable in-conversation with Ambassador Craft and MacNaughton received unparalleled media coverage across the CBC, Huffington Post, The Toronto Star, Global News, City TV, and the Canadian Press.



Ontario Economic Summit in the News

- “David MacNaughton, Canada’s ambassador to the U.S., told the same Ontario Chamber of Commerce event that he hopes the U.S. tariffs will be lifted shortly, now that the new trade agreement is settled.”
—**City News (October 31, 2018)**

Sustainable Innovation Conference | *November 2018*

The OCC’s Sustainable Innovation Conference was attended by industry, government, and academia. The event featured remarks by the Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks. Participants showcased sustainability initiatives within the private sector and discussed how government and businesses can work together to build a more resilient and sustainable economy for Ontario. The insights shared at the conference will continue to inform our work on the environment and climate change.

Red Tape Roundtable | *November 2018*

Deputy Minister for Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction, Giles Gherson, joined a broad range of business executives at a Red Tape Roundtable to help define priorities for Ontario’s red tape agenda. The event focused on identifying opportunities for regulatory reform that would strengthen business competitiveness and economic prosperity in Ontario.

Ontario Business Achievement Awards | *November 2018*

Each year, large, medium, and small businesses come together for the OCC’s annual Ontario Business Achievement Awards (OBAAAs). For over 30 years, businesses have been awarded awards for their achievements in sustainability, innovation, skills and training, service excellence, market expansion, and exporting. This year’s OBAAAs at the Liberty Grand in Toronto were a huge success. We presented our very first Lifetime Achievement Award, honouring Don Ziraldo and his late partner Karl Kaiser, for pioneering Ontario’s wine renaissance. We also held a successful charity auction with proceeds going to Wounded Warriors to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Italian campaign and the sacrifices made by thousands of Ontarians.

Ontario Business Achievement Awards in the News

- “This year’s business awards celebration will mark the 36th anniversary of the event, which is presented by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.”
— **Canadian Press (October 31, 2018)**
- “It’s a justification that what we are doing is truly is innovative and as exciting as we believe it is. I feel truly honoured and humbled to get this award, it’s making us as a company more excited for what lies ahead”
— **Dave Cossi, Stathletes, Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award winner, TLN and Media Set Italia (November 21, 2018)**
- “The pair (Donald Ziraldo and Karl Kaiser) (...) have been honoured with the first Lifetime Achievement Award ever presented by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.”
— **Niagara This Week (November 26, 2018)**



An Evening with the Chiefs of Staff | *December 2018*

The OCC's evening with Ontario's Chiefs of Staff was well attended by senior government representatives and leaders of the business community. The evening provided the OCC's Premier members a unique opportunity to have a free-flowing dialogue in an intimate setting with Ontario's senior decision-makers on the province's most pressing public policy issues.

2019 Ontario Economic Report Launch | *February 2019*

In February 2019, the OCC released the third annual Ontario Economic Report (OER). The report presents the collective voice of our membership through the Business Confidence Survey, the Business Prosperity Index and the Ontario Economic Outlook. The report finds despite a more optimistic outlook for 2019, decreasing levels of organizational and economic confidence over the years have impacted business' willingness to invest, take risks, and adopt technological advancements. The OER focused on building economic opportunity for by addressing two interrelated issues: Ontario's skills mismatch and regional economic disparities. The sold-out launch event, hosted by KPMG, featured a panel discussion which elaborated on some of the issues highlighted in the OER.

Advocacy Day | *March 2019*

On March 25, the OCC hosted over 100 representatives from Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade across Ontario for its fourth annual Queen's Park Advocacy Day. With the provincial government approaching the one-year mark of its mandate, Advocacy Day created a forum to share ideas on how to foster a competitive business climate and strong, prosperous communities. Participants attended Queen's Park question period and participated in town hall meetings with government and opposition MPPs. The agenda included small group consultations with senior government officials, discussing issues such as infrastructure, education, energy, the environment, housing, and more.

Advocacy Day in the News

“ The full-day event will include attendance at Queen's Park question period, town hall meetings with government and opposition MPPs, small group consultations with senior government officials, and a closing reception with MPPs.”

– Lambton Shield (March 18, 2019)

International Women's Day Event | *March 2019*

On March 7th, the OCC hosted a special Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC) for International Women's Day with discussions focused on the opportunities and challenges currently facing female entrepreneurs and business leaders in Ontario. In attendance were the Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Ontario's Minister of Training College & Universities, Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Attorney General and Ontario's Minister of Francophone Affairs, and the Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board.



RESOLUTIONS TRACKER

The policy resolutions passed by the Ontario Chamber Network represent the cornerstone of the OCC's policy and advocacy work. Every year, we take stock of how the OCC has seen progress on each resolution.

COMPETITIVENESS

Restoring Ontario's Research Competitiveness with the SR&ED, ORDTC, and OITC Credits

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC advocated for expansion of growth-focused R&D tax credits throughout the year, including in our blueprint letter to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and our 2019 pre-Budget submission to the federal government. Ontario Budget 2019 promised to review the OITC and other R&D tax incentives.

Improving the Process for Establishing Regulations that Impact Business

- ✓ **Action:** Our blueprint letters to the incoming provincial government highlighted the need for regulatory reform as a cross-ministerial priority. The OCC met with the newly appointed Deputy Minister for Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction in a number of forums, including at our own red tape roundtable in November 2018. The government has committed to a 25 percent reduction in the regulatory burden on businesses by 2022.

Access to Development Charge Information for Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018 and early 2019, the OCC engaged with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in its consultations on land use planning reforms. In our discussions, we indicated that allowing easy access to development charge information would provide the public with a tool to compare local competitiveness and help municipalities make informed decisions.

Expanding Ontario's Export Capacity by Harmonizing Agri-Food Cross-Border Trade Regulations

- ✓ **Action:** As part of our advocacy on regulatory reform, we urged the provincial and federal governments to harmonize domestic regulations with international standards. The OCC has also worked to facilitate stronger partnerships with key US states with strong economic ties to Ontario and signing joint statements with chambers of commerce in nine states.

Mitigating the Risks of Cap and Trade on Business

- ✓ **Action:** After repeatedly raising the business community's concerns with the costs of cap and trade, the provincial government cancelled the program in October 2018.

Keep Ontario Competitive by Taking a Measured Approach to Changes to Ontario's Labour Laws

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's active campaign against Bill 148 successfully led to the near-full repeal of the legislation in November 2018.

Support Ontario's Steel Industry and its Supply Chain Clusters

- ✓ **Action:** In May 2018, the OCC released a statement strongly opposing the steel and aluminum tariffs imposed by the US government and urged the provincial and federal governments to work together to defend Ontario's interests. The OCC has also raised the issue of tariffs with representatives from US consulates and supported the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's advocacy on trade. Meanwhile, we have encouraged the Ontario government to implement funding mechanisms that support industry investment in technology and innovation, while continuing to improve access to skilled trades in the province. In January 2019, the OCC met with steel industry representatives in Sault Ste. Marie to discuss the sector's policy priorities.

Regulating the Sharing Economy for a Competitive Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** Our blueprint letter to the Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sport encouraged the Province to remove inconsistencies and regulatory burdens that discourage communities from taking advantage of the sharing economy. Our transportation report – *Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs (Part I)* – encouraged the Ontario government to examine how ridesharing can be used to help solve the first- and last-mile challenge. We also advocated for piloting the use of ridesharing services to facilitate better connectivity to GO stations and transit hubs in a letter to Metrolinx in April 2018.

Positioning Ontario to be a Global Leader in Smart City Development

- ✓ **Action:** In 2019, the OCC will explore smart cities and other technology-driven solutions as part of its focus on regional economic development. As part of this initiative, we will collaborate with the Toronto Region Board of Trade and other local chambers engaged in smart city development.

Investing in Tourism Promotion

- ✓ **Action:** In our blueprint letter in July 2018, we called on the Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sport to implement a strategic plan for the tourism sector and, in October, the Province announced that it would begin consultations. Our 2019 provincial pre-Budget submission further recommended that the government modify the Municipal Accommodation Tax to protect tourism industry competitiveness.

Ensure the Competitiveness of Farm Businesses in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's blueprint letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs recommended a number of opportunities to support the competitiveness of Ontario's agri-food sector, such as improving access to risk management tools and incentivizing investment in innovation. Budget 2019 committed to supporting the sector by cutting red tape, investing in key programs such as the Risk Management Program, and fighting for supply managed commodities on the world stage.

Ensure the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Creates an Equitable Trade Environment for Ontario's Auto Sector

- ✓ **Action:** Canada signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in March 2018. The agreement includes commitments on standards and regulations to address non-tariff measures that prevent Canadian companies from realizing their full export potential, as well as liberal rules of origin for motor vehicles with Australia and Malaysia to ensure Canadian manufacturers can benefit from preferential tariff treatment in these markets. The Province took further action to support Ontario's automotive sector in February 2019 with the release of a new strategy, *Driving Prosperity: The Future of Ontario's Automotive Sector*.

Identify the Cost-Drivers Behind Electricity Prices

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the OCC continued to advocate for transparency in electricity pricing, making it a priority in our blueprint letter to the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines in July and our submission to the Treasury Board Secretariat in September (*Planning for Prosperity: The Business Perspective*). We also hosted a series of energy sector

advocacy roundtables in the spring to address different components of the energy narrative: socioeconomic impacts, security and sustainability, and Ontario's energy future.

Support Commercialization for New Technologies

- ✓ **Action:** After long-standing OCC advocacy on an improved commercialization environment for Ontario inventors and businesses, Budget 2019 committed to modernizing business support programs to support on commercialization and other key outcomes, and to create a provincial intellectual property framework so Ontario can maximize commercialization opportunities in the post-secondary sector.

Supporting Ontario to Become a Leader in Global Mining Innovation

- ✓ **Action:** In both our blueprint letter and meeting with the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, we emphasized the importance of re-igniting Ontario's leadership in mining innovation. We recommended increasing government-to-funding ratios for innovation and commercialization projects and supporting innovation projects that go beyond academic research. In 2019, we will continue to advocate for mining innovation through our report on regional economic development.

Bending the Cost Curve of Ontario's Electricity Prices

- ✓ **Action:** Strategies to address electricity costs were discussed in our 2018 blueprint letter and meetings with the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. We also hosted a series of energy sector advocacy roundtables in the spring to address different components of the energy narrative: socioeconomic impacts, security and sustainability, and Ontario's energy future.

Expanding Ontario's Trade Capacity through Maximizing Export Market Opportunities in Japan

- ✓ **Action:** We have worked with many consulates to diversify Ontario's trade opportunities but more work remains to be done with respect to Japan.

Creating Northern Ontario Economic Hubs, Technology Clusters and the Innovation Ecosystem

- ✓ **Action:** In our blueprint letter and meeting with the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, we called on the Province to invest in Northern Ontario's innovation ecosystem. At the Ontario Economic Summit in October 2018, we brought stakeholders together to discuss strategies to develop a skilled workforce equipped to participate in the transition to advanced manufacturing, resource development, and other innovative sectors. In 2019, our project on regional economic development will continue to explore and recommend policies that integrate technology and drive cluster development in Northern Ontario.

Reducing Permitting Delays in Mining Exploration

- ✓ **Action:** Throughout the year, we met and corresponded with the Deputy Minister of Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction on multiple occasions to recommend opportunities for streamlining environmental assessments and harmonizing regulations across departments and levels of government. The provincial government committed to a 25 percent reduction in the regulatory burden on businesses by 2022. The OCC will continue to advocate for the mining sector's regulatory priorities in this process.

In the Spirit of Business

- ✓ **Action:** In 2019, the OCC will release a mini-report on the alcohol beverage industry in consultation with relevant stakeholders, with tangible policy recommendations to government.

Addressing the Challenges of Ontario's Largest Economic Sector: Small Business

- ✓ **Action:** The new government has emphasized small businesses in its red tape reduction agenda. Our blueprint letters to incoming Cabinet ministers in July 2018 called on the government to prioritize the needs of small businesses by, among other things, building a 'one-window' concierge service to help them navigate regulation and expanding experiential learning opportunities available to them. Our 2019 provincial pre-Budget submission recommended a variable small business tax deduction to help overcome Ontario's scale-up challenge.

Helping Industries and Communities Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the OCC actively called on the government to strike a balance between environmental protection and economic competitiveness. After repeatedly raising the business community's concerns with the costs of cap and trade, the provincial government cancelled the program in October. The Province's new environment plan and subsequent policy proposals align with many of the recommendations we made in our fall submission to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, including support for private sector sustainable innovation and flexible, sector-based industrial performance standards for large emitters.

Reducing Energy Costs in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** Moving to a more competitive capacity market was one of the main discussion topics in the OCC's "Shocking the System" advocacy roundtables in 2018. The IESO released its High-Level Design draft for a proposed incremental capacity auction in March 2019 which, if implemented, will develop a market-based mechanism to secure capacity at lower costs.

Lowering Ontario's Energy Costs for a More Competitive Province

- ✓ **Action:** In December 2018, the Province passed Bill 34, the *Green Energy Repeal Act, 2018* to repeal the *Green Energy Act, 2009*. Further, through Bill 87, the *Fixing the Hydro Mess Act, 2019*, the government is proposing to increase the transparency of electricity bills by showing the Global Adjustment as a separate line item. The OCC is working closely with the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines to recommend mechanisms that allow Ontario businesses to purchase surplus electricity and other steps to reduce electricity costs.

Making the Ontario Energy Board Hearing Process More Accessible

- ✓ **Action:** In May 2018, the OCC sent a submission to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) Modernization Review Panel with recommendations to improve the independence and transparency of the OEB. This included a recommendation to change the cost recovery and rewards process for intervenors. Following changes to OEB governance announced in March 2019, the OCC will continue to call on the government to make the hearing process more accessible to stakeholders.

Improving Canada's Trade Policy for Greater Business Prosperity in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** Our blueprint letter to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade urged the government to develop a strategic plan to improve Ontario's export performance, with benchmarks and an increased scope of incentives and grants to help SMEs engage in trade. The OCC is also focused on developing trade-supporting programming for its members.

Using the Private and Not-for-Profit Sectors to Deliver Public Services

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC recommended new approaches to procurement, contract management, and service delivery to improve public sector efficiency in our 2019 pre-Budget submission, *Planning for Prosperity* submission to the Treasury Board, and blueprint letters to Cabinet ministers. In 2019, we will expand our policy work in this area with a report on commissioning, procurement, and alternative service delivery in Ontario.

Advance Ontario's Bioeconomy

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's Health and Life Science Sector Conference in September 2018 brought together stakeholders from across Ontario to frame the sector as a competitive advantage aligned with government priorities.

Putting Wood to Work for Ontarians

- ✓ **Action:** The Ontario government has committed to releasing a provincial forestry strategy in 2019. The OCC highlighted the need for a sector strategy, as well as socioeconomic impact analyses, in our blueprint letter to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry in July 2018 and our submission on the review of the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*, in February 2019.

Improving Digital Services and Identity for Ontario Businesses

- ✓ **Action:** Over the past year, the OCC advocated for digital services in our letter to the Deputy Minister for Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction on red tape priorities, *Planning for Prosperity* submission, and blueprint letter to the Minister of Finance. The Province has taken a number of promising steps, including working with other provinces to create a common corporate registry through the Regulatory Reconciliation and Cooperation Table under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and examining opportunities for digitization through its red tape agenda.

Address Ontario-Quebec Economic Mobility

- ✓ **Action:** OCC staff participated in various stakeholder roundtables and government consultations throughout the year to advocate for interprovincial trade and labour mobility.

Make Carbon Pricing Revenue Neutral

- ✓ **Action:** After Ontario cancelled its cap and trade program in October 2018, the OCC continued to call on the government to ensure that any policy which replaces it is revenue neutral and protects the competitiveness of businesses in energy intensive, trade exposed industries. The output-based performance standard regimes introduced by both the federal and provincial governments include such provisions.

Protect the Viability of Energy-Intensive Trade Exposed Companies that have Reduced Carbon Emissions in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** After Ontario cancelled its cap and trade program in October 2018, the OCC continued to call on the government to ensure that any policy which replaces it is revenue neutral and protects the competitiveness of businesses in energy intensive, trade exposed industries. The output-based performance standard regimes introduced by both the federal and provincial governments include such provisions.

Perform a Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Global Adjustment and Time-of-Use Billing Programs to Restore Energy Competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** Energy competitiveness was a central focus in our blueprint letter and in-person meetings with the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, our “Shocking the System” roundtables, and *Planning for Prosperity* submission. The Province repealed the *Green Energy Act, 2009* and is continuing to explore measures to reduce electricity costs.

Scale Back the “One-Size Fits All” Scheduling Provision of Bill 148

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC’s active campaign against Bill 148 successfully led to the near-full repeal of the legislation in November 2018.

Correct Calculations for Statutory Holiday Pay

- ✓ **Action:** In spring 2018, the Ontario government announced it would return to the previous public holiday pay formula.

Mitigating the Impact of Bill 148

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC’s active campaign against Bill 148 successfully led to the near-full repeal of the legislation in November 2018.

FISCAL/ TAXATION

Educating Ontario Businesses and Establishing an Offset Strategy for the ORPP

- ✓ **Action:** In 2016, Ontario abandoned the ORPP in favour of an enhanced CPP, avoiding an increased regulatory and administrative burden on businesses.

Getting Ontario Back to Fiscal Balance

- ✓ **Action:** The Ontario government has committed to reducing the deficit and restoring fiscal balance. The OCC has provided tangible recommendations to support this work throughout the year, including in our 2019 pre-Budget submission, *Accounting for Ontario’s Debt* report, and blueprint letter to the Minister of Finance. Budget 2019 laid out a plan to return to a balanced budget by 2023-4.

Strengthening and Modernizing Workplace Defined Benefit Pension Plans

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the Ontario government implemented a new framework for defined benefit (DB) pension plans by adopting a going-concern approach. This shift will yield huge cost savings for businesses that sponsor DB pension plans.

Maintaining Provincial Tax Exemptions on Employer Health and Dental Plans

- ✓ **Action:** Budget 2019 maintained provincial tax exemptions on employer health and dental plans, as recommended in our pre-Budget submission.

Reforming Ontario Auto Rate Regulation for Competitive Insurance

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC advocated for auto insurance reform at our fall 2018 red tape roundtable and in our letter to the Deputy Minister for Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction on red tape priorities. Budget 2019 committed to substantial reforms for the auto insurance sector, with a view to reduce fraud, reform medical assessment, make legal supports easier to access, allow insurers and consumers to utilize electronic communications channels, introduce electronic proof of auto insurance, introduce new business models, and make it easier for insurance companies to offer discounts.

Protect Public Sector Services by Monitoring the Public Sector's Total Compensation Premium

- ✓ **Action:** In its 2019 Budget, the government promised to implement a new approach to managing compensation within the public sector as part of its broader plan to improve the fiscal sustainability of its programs and services.

Increasing Transparency in Crown Corporation Divestment

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC provided the Ontario government with feedback from the perspective of business to support its ongoing review of Crown agencies.

Protect Canadian Business by Keeping the De Minimis Threshold Low

- ✓ **Action:** If passed, the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) will increase Canada's de minimis threshold from \$20 to \$150 for duties and \$40 for sales taxes.

Collecting 'Share' Revenue

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will address this resolution in our 2019 federal election document.

Ontario's Debt Reduction Strategy

- ✓ **Action:** The Ontario government has committed to reducing the deficit and restoring fiscal balance. The OCC has provided tangible recommendations to support this work throughout the year, including in our 2019 pre-Budget submission, *Accounting for Ontario's Debt* report, and blueprint letter to the Minister of Finance. Budget 2019 laid out a plan to return to a balanced budget by 2023-4.

Essential Service Designation for Provincially Funded Transit Services

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the Government of Ontario modernized the interest arbitration system for the firefighting sector as part of Bill 57, the *Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, 2018*. The OCC's pre-Budget submission had called on the government to undertake similar reforms with police services. The OCC will advocate for essential service designation for provincially funded transit after a decision is reached on uploading the TTC in 2019.



Unrealized “Heads and Beds Levy” Hurts Ontario’s Economic Competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC asked the Province to increase the heads and beds levy in our 2019 pre-Budget submission, as well as our blueprint letters to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Maintain Ontario Mining Tax Rates

- ✓ **Action:** In our 2019 pre-Budget submission and our meeting with the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, we emphasized the importance of Ontario’s mining sector and the need to maintain competitive taxation rates.

Addressing US Tax Cuts and Maintaining Ontario Business Competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the federal and Ontario governments committed to allowing accelerated depreciation. In its Fall Economic Statement, the provincial government also announced it would increase the amount of payroll that is exempt from the Employer Health Tax and reverse the planned elimination or reduction of the small business deduction for some businesses. The OCC will continue to hold the government to its commitment to a 25 percent reduction in the regulatory burden on businesses by 2022.

Cannabis Excise Tax

- ✓ **Action:** As a result of OCC advocacy, the Ontario government committed to helping municipalities offset the costs associated with the legalization and distribution of cannabis in Ontario by providing them with \$40 million over two years and 50 percent of Ontario’s portion of the federal excise duty if the surplus exceeds \$100 million.

Review Transfers of Responsibilities Between the Provincial and Municipal Governments to Improve Efficiency, Service Delivery, and Cost

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will endeavour to take appropriate action on this issue in the future.

Protect Tourism Industry Competitiveness Within the Municipal Accommodation Tax

- ✓ **Action:** In our 2019 provincial pre-Budget submission and in various blueprint letters to Cabinet ministers, the OCC called on the government to cap the Municipal Accommodation Tax at four percent and allow businesses that pay the tax to participate in the oversight and distribution of the tourism-focused portion of revenues.

INFRASTRUCTURE /TRANSPORTATION

Bridge the Broadband Gap

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC was active in advocating for broadband expansion this year, including it as a priority in our 2019 pre-Budget submission, multiple blueprint letters to Cabinet ministers, and various meetings with the new government. Budget 2019 committed \$315 million over the next five years to expand broadband and cellular infrastructure across the province. The Province also committed to releasing a broadband and cellular strategy in 2019. The OCC will continue to advocate for a cost-effective approach to bridging broadband gaps through our project on regional economic development in 2019.

Addressing Ontario's Infrastructure Deficit through Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP)

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC advocated for alternative financing and procurement reform in numerous submissions, including our 2019 pre-Budget submission, blueprint letters to Cabinet ministers, and *Planning for Prosperity*. In 2019, we will expand our policy work in this area with a report on commissioning, procurement, and alternative service delivery in Ontario.

Expanding Natural Gas Service in Rural Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** Following consistent calls to expand natural gas access in Ontario, the Ontario government passed Bill 32, the *Access to Natural Gas Act, 2018* in December 2018. The new program will encourage private distributors to partner with communities to develop projects that expand access natural gas throughout rural and northern Ontario.

Modernizing the Connecting Links Funding Program

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's 2019 federal election document will recommend exploring joint opportunities with the Province to improve funding for the Connecting Links program.

Link Investment in Core Infrastructure to Productivity Performance and Enhancement

- ✓ **Action:** Building on our 2017 infrastructure report, *Building Better: Setting Up the Next Ontario Infrastructure Plan for Success*, the OCC continued to advocate for asset management planning, alternative financing and procurement, and outcomes-based infrastructure investment in our blueprint letter and meetings with the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Empower all Municipalities to Build and Maintain Essential Infrastructure

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC called on the Province to support municipal investments in infrastructure through asset management planning and long-term funding in our blueprint letter and meetings with the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Addressing the Impact of Climate Change on Transportation Infrastructure in Ontario's Far North

- ✓ **Action:** In our blueprint letters and meetings with the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, the OCC urged the government to work with Northern communities to determine the full impact of climate change on their transportation infrastructure and develop appropriate solutions.

Addressing the Niagara to GTA Transportation Corridor

- ✓ **Action:** In December 2018, the Province announced the addition of two-way weekday GO Train service between Toronto and Niagara Falls. The Ministry of Transportation is developing a new long-range transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The plan is being developed in consultation with businesses and other stakeholders and will consider all modes of transportation. A draft will be released in early 2019 and the OCC will provide feedback to ensure the business community's priorities are addressed.

Support for Metrolinx Big Move and 'Next Wave' Priority Projects

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's 2018 transportation report – *Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs (Part I)* – urged the Ontario government to support Metrolinx and unlock its potential to improve integration between regional transit services in the GTHA.

Regional Transportation Fare Integration

- ✓ **Action:** In our 2018 transportation report, we emphasized the importance of integrating the regions served by Metrolinx into one seamless transit network with a universal fare system and co-ordinated routes and schedules.

Goods and People Movement Long-Range, Multimodal, Integrated Transportation Plan

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2018 transportation report called on the Ontario government to develop a 30 to 50-year Long-Range Transportation Plan with pathways for integration with municipal official plans and regional growth plans, a financing plan for consistent improvement and maintenance projects, and other specific recommendations outlined in this resolution.

Develop a Provincial Long-Term Broadband Strategy

- ✓ **Action:** Budget 2019 committed \$315 million over the next five years to expand broadband and cellular infrastructure across the province. The Ontario government has also committed to releasing a proposed broadband and cellular strategy in 2019. The OCC will provide feedback to ensure the strategy is consistent with the interests of the business community.

Providing Transportation for Small Communities to Help Small Businesses Move and Employ People.

- ✓ **Action:** In order to address the transportation needs of small communities, the OCC's 2018 transportation report recommended that the Province support municipal governments to develop innovative solutions and engage in public-private partnerships.

Land Use Planning, Housing Affordability, and Talent Attraction

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC engaged in a number of consultations to inform the Housing Supply Action Plan that the Province will release in the spring of 2019. In our letter to the Deputy Minister for Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction and our blueprint letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we recommended regulatory reforms to increase the supply of housing in Ontario.

Maximizing Growth in Built Areas

- ✓ **Action:** In consultations with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on land use planning, the OCC advised the government on balancing intensification and heritage preservation and adopting innovative solutions to maximize growth in built areas.

Amend the Ontario *Labour Relations Act, 1995*, to Enable Fair and Open Tendering for Public Infrastructure Projects

- ✓ **Action:** In April 2019, the Ontario government enabled fair and open tendering for public sector projects by passing Bill 66, the *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2019*, which

amended the *Labour Relations Act, 1995*, to explicitly deem public bodies, including municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities, as “non-construction employers.”

Reinvest in Our Communities - Ontario Version of the Michigan Community Revitalization Program

- ✓ **Action:** In meetings with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the OCC discussed opportunities for community revitalization.

SKILLS

Address the Growing Labour Force Disconnect by Creating a Stronger Business/Commerce Curriculum:

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the Ministry of Education consulted with the public on ways to improve Ontario’s education system, including financial literacy. The OCC addressed the need for a financial literacy curriculum in our blueprint letter and meeting with the Ministry of Education, as well as a special blog post in November 2018. In March 2019, the Province announced a new education plan which included mandatory elementary- and secondary-level courses on financial literacy.

Improve Workforce Competitiveness for Rural Communities and Small Urban Centres by Creating a Flexible Apprenticeship Program

- ✓ **Action:** The Province took steps to improve the apprenticeship system through Bill 47 by dissolving the Ontario College of Trades and lowering the journey-person-to-apprenticeship ratios to 1:1 across all trades. The OCC’s Ontario Economic Summit focused on the skills challenge and we will continue to advocate for improved access to talent across the province in 2019.

Moving the Ontario Colleges of Trades from Regulator to Promoter

- ✓ **Action:** The Province dissolved the Ontario College of Trades in 2018 by passing Bill 47. The OCC will continue to advocate for improved skills development in 2019.

Addressing Local Labour Market Needs through the Ontario Provincial Nominee Program

- ✓ **Action:** In addition to expanding the Ontario Provincial Nominee Program (OINP) in 2017, the federal government announced a new immigration pilot for rural and northern communities in 2019 to help address local labour market needs. In our blueprint letters to Cabinet ministers and a letter to the federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, the OCC advocated for a further increase in Ontario’s annual allocation of economic immigrants. Budget 2019 introduced a number of changes to OINP to create a technology-focused stream to attract skilled employees, expand the occupations eligible for the Employment Job Offer to reflect in-demand skills, and expand the Entrepreneur Stream. Further, the government committed to establishing a pilot initiative with select communities to explore innovative approaches to bring highly-skilled immigrants to smaller communities.

Implementing an Innovative Approach for the Regulation of Skilled Trades

- ✓ **Action:** The Province dissolved the Ontario College of Trades in 2018 by passing Bill 47. The OCC will continue to advocate for effective oversight of skilled trades in 2019.

Improving Indigenous Education in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** In our blueprint letter to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, the OCC called on the government to strengthen the implementation of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework. At our 2018 Ontario Economic Summit, we brought together stakeholders to discuss strategies for improving Indigenous education and job training opportunities in Ontario.

Promoting Skilled Trades by Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Secondary School Technical Teachers

- ✓ **Action:** The Province is continuing to prioritize access to talent. In meetings with the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and the Ministry of Education, the OCC recommended a number of strategies for promoting the skilled trades in Ontario.

Implementing a Moratorium on School Closures

- ✓ **Action:** The previous government required all school boards to pause on-going plans to close schools. We have met with the Ministry of Education to stress the social and economic impact of a strong and robust education system to prepare students for an ever-changing workforce.

Providing Post-Secondary Students with the Supports Needed to Gain Employment

- ✓ **Action:** In their 2019 budgets, the federal and provincial governments established or committed to establishing a number of new internships and experiential learning opportunities to connect employers with post-secondary students before graduation. Workforce development continues to be an advocacy priority for the OCC.

Creating Pan-Canadian Training and Certification Standards

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2019 federal election document will call on provincial and federal governments to harmonize the codes and regulations with which certified occupations must comply. We also highlighted this recommendation in meetings with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Strengthening Labour Market Information for Business Competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** In Budget 2019, the Province announced a plan to launch an enhanced labour market information website; however, this proposal is redundant with existing private sector platforms and falls short of the data required to better connect job seekers with employers. Our 2019 federal election document will recommend an intergovernmental strategy to address deficiencies in the quality and sharing of labour market information.

Closing the Skills Gap

- ✓ **Action:** The 2018 Ontario Economic Summit brought together decision-makers from business, government, academia, and the non-profit sector to discuss workforce development policy and strategy as Ontario transitions to a learning-based economy. The OCC will continue to advocate for improved skills development in 2019.

Open Canada Ontario Job Grant Eligibility to Small Business Owners

- ✓ **Action:** This ask was included in our 2019 federal pre-Budget submission. Our 2019 federal election document will encourage the Government of Canada to continue offering the Canada Job Grant and allow access to small business owners.

Improve Workforce Competitiveness by Adopting Select for Success as a Vital Support Service for Small Business Owners in Rural Communities and Small Urban Centres

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018-19, the federal and provincial governments established or committed to establishing a number of employer-based support programs. Ontario Budget 2019 also introduced a pilot program under Ontario's Immigration Nominee Program to help bring highly-skilled immigrants to smaller communities. Workforce development continues to be an advocacy priority for the OCC.

Reform of Ontario Apprenticeships and Retraining

- ✓ **Action:** The Province took steps to improve the apprenticeship system through Bill 47 by dissolving the Ontario College of Trades and lowering the journeyman-to-apprenticeship ratios to 1:1 across all trades.

Closing the Gap on Financial Literacy for Ontario's Youth

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the Ministry of Education consulted with the public on ways to improve Ontario's education system, including financial literacy. The OCC addressed the need for a financial literacy curriculum in our blueprint letter and meeting with the Ministry of Education, as well as a special blog post in November 2018. In March 2019, the Province announced a new education plan, which included mandatory elementary- and secondary-level courses on financial literacy.

SPECIAL ISSUES

Banning Weekend Union Drives

- ✓ **Action:** The Ontario government made several amendments to the *Labour Relations Act, 1995*, in 2018 through Bill 47 and Bill 66. Although it did not prohibit weekend union drives, the government addressed substantial concerns of employers by enabling open tendering and repealing most sections of Bill 148.

Establishing a Cost-Effective Drug Distribution System

- ✓ **Action:** Drug prices and pharmacare are currently evolving issues at the federal level. The OCC will continue to advocate for a systems that serves patients, employers, and health science businesses fairly.

Fixing the Arbitration System for Fire and Police Services in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the Government of Ontario modernized the interest arbitration system for the firefighting as part of Bill 57, the *Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, 2018*. The OCC's 2019 pre-Budget submission called on the government to undertake similar reforms with police services.

Maximize the Economic Benefit of Recreational Marijuana in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** Consistent with our advocacy, the Province introduced a retail model for distribution of cannabis under Bill 36, the *Cannabis Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018*. The OCC's April 2019 report, *Supporting Ontario's Budding Cannabis Industry*, made a series of timely and evidenced-based recommendations on how all levels of government and industry can work together to maximize the economic benefits of recreational cannabis.

Support Provincial Jurisdiction in Air Quality Management

- ✓ **Action:** In its new environment plan, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks announced a series of actions to protect air quality in Ontario, including steps to improve understanding of different sources of air pollution and their impact in order to take appropriate action.

Addressing the Challenges of Health Care in Rural and Northern Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has acted on this resolution within the past two years, hosting an Economic Leadership Series session in Sault Ste. Marie on the issue, and addressing it in our reports, *Adopting our Advantage: Supporting a Thriving Health Science Sector in Ontario* and *Moving Forward: A Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs (Part I)*.

Personal Real Estate Corporations

- ✓ **Action:** The need for regulatory reform within the real estate sector was discussed at our Red Tape Roundtable and in our letter to the Deputy Minister for Red Tape and Regulatory Burden Reduction on red tape priorities.

Ontario's Residential Tenancies Act, 2006

- ✓ **Action:** When OCC staff met with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in early 2019, we recommended amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006*, to remove excessive delays and unnecessary financial burdens on landlords and property managers in Ontario.

Providing More Clarity for Industry's Duty to Consult

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC called on the Ontario government to establish a standard, coordinated framework on the duty to consult with Indigenous communities in our blueprint letters and meetings with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, and the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

Remove Requirement for Canadian Directors on Ontario Corporations

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will endeavour to take appropriate action on this issue in the future.

Finding Balance in the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994

- ✓ **Action:** As part of the provincial government's review of the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA), the OCC prepared a submission recommending that the Province formally recognize equivalency between the ESA and the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* and ensure all species at risk policies and prescriptions are subject to socioeconomic impact analyses.

Fairness for Business in Customer Initiated Transactions

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will endeavour to take appropriate action on this issue in the future.

Workplace Mental Health Strategy

- ✓ **Action:** This year, we continued to promote our mental health toolkit for employers and wrote a blog in January 2019 highlighting the need to address wellness in the workplace. Our blueprint letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care called on the government to engage industry in designing and implementing effective mental health initiatives.

Canadian Nuclear Innovation

- ✓ **Action:** Following OCC advocacy, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission announced its decision to grant a 10-year operating license to the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station in August 2018. This was one of several nuclear recommendations in our blueprint letter to the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. In our fall submission to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, we detailed the broader economic and environmental importance of nuclear power for Ontario. The new Ontario government has affirmed its commitment to nuclear innovation on a number of occasions.

Province of Ontario Wide Load Permit

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the Province reduced red tape for commercial truck drivers by allowing electronic documentation for International Registration Plans. As the government continues to seek ways to make it easier for businesses to move goods throughout Ontario, the OCC will advocate for a one-permit system for wide, high, and heavy loads to navigate our roads.

Expanding Ontario's Leadership on Climate Change Mitigation through Supporting Net-Zero Homebuilding

- ✓ **Action:** The Ontario government canceled the Green Ontario Fund in 2018. At our Sustainable Innovation Conference and subsequent submissions to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, the OCC has continued to emphasize the value in helping businesses and residents improve their energy efficiency through, among other things, net-zero homes and retrofit incentives.

Increasing Democracy in Ontario's Workplaces

- ✓ **Action:** Through Bill 47, the Ontario government returned to previous union certification policies in place before Bill 148.

Bill 2, Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2018

- ✓ **Action:** In 2018, the Ontario government introduced Bill 50, the *Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2018*. If passed, the act will allow certain auto dealers to register vehicles online from their dealerships.

Protect Employers Rights to Screen for Police Records

- ✓ **Action:** A private member's bill proposing to prevent employers' from discriminating in hiring based on criminal records was tabled before the election, and then again afterwards. If this bill gains traction, the OCC will take appropriate action to advocate against it.

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