

**POLICY
REPORT
CARD**
2020/21



ontario
chamber of
commerce

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LETTER TO THE CHAMBER NETWORK

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) has long been recognized as Ontario's largest business advocate and the indispensable voice of business in this province. This year, above all, has firmly underscored the value of our policy and advocacy work, as our network of local chambers of commerce and boards of trade pulled together to support businesses navigating uncharted territory throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

Within days of the initial government lockdown, the OCC launched a series of *free and informative webinars* and an *online resource hub* that included a Pandemic Preparedness Toolkit for Business, a government news tracker, information about business and employee supports, mental health resources, and a contact form for members to communicate their concerns. Together with the national Chamber Network and RBC, we launched Canada United, a nationwide "buy local" campaign and relief fund that generated over 875 million media and social impressions, 550+ media stories, and raised over \$14 million for the program to support local businesses.

Meanwhile, our policy pipeline has continued evolving in tandem with the crisis. Our *2021 Ontario Economic Report* highlighted the impacts of COVID-19 on different regions, sectors, and demographics, with insights into the key policy challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. This was the OCC's first fully interactive report, allowing readers to engage with the results in a dynamic format.

We also launched a *COVID-19 policy brief series*, with timely pieces throughout the year about the fiscal landscape and policy options, collaboration in a crisis, small businesses, the she-covery, virtual care, and Ontario's food supply chain. Our policy brief on virtual care – *Realizing the Full Potential of Virtual Care in Ontario* – offered recommendations developed through our Health Policy Council to help make virtual care more accessible, equitable, integrated, and widely adopted throughout Ontario's health care system. *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19* explored the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on women in Ontario and proposed solutions around workforce development, leadership, child care, entrepreneurship, and flexible work.

In June, we published *In Data We Trust: Unlocking the Value of Data in Ontario*, recognizing the importance of data assets in our modern economy and within the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to several advocacy wins as provincial and federal governments worked to develop strategies around privacy, cybersecurity, health data, and artificial intelligence.

Further, since the onset of the pandemic, the OCC has sent more than 60 letters to policymakers to inform regional collaboration on health and safety guidelines, support for sectors disproportionately impacted by the crisis, coordination around reopening, commercial rent assistance, and *more*.

The OCC's policy and advocacy activities, coupled with the unmatched strength and reach of the Chamber Network, has manifested in significant improvements to government policies and programs. Among others, our recent advocacy wins include:

- **COVID-19 Response:** The Governments of Ontario and Canada have responded to our recommendations by continuously adjusting its business support programs throughout the pandemic. Some recommendations that have come to fruition include: expanded financial relief for small businesses and the tourism industry; a more accessible commercial rent relief program; a new COVID-19 testing pilot program for international travellers at Pearson Airport; Good Samaritan liability protection for organizations that make an honest effort to follow COVID-19 laws and guidelines; and more.

- **Broadband:** As the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated the importance of reliable internet connectivity, the OCC urged the Government of Ontario to augment funding and coordinate with the private sector to reduce barriers to private investment. In response, the Province committed to making a historic investment of \$4 billion over six years to expand broadband and cellular access across the province and introduced legislation to make it easier for providers to attach broadband wires to hydro utility poles.
- **Workforce development:** The OCC has continued to underscore that demand-driven skills training will be essential to economic recovery and long-term productivity. Subsequently, the Province announced \$614 million over the next two years to provide targeted employment and training supports. This includes investments in programs to support workers disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, a micro-credential strategy, Ontario's Skilled Trades Strategy, and a new Ontario Jobs Training Tax Credit.
- **Electricity:** The OCC has also advocated for a series of measures to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on electricity rates for commercial and industrial ratepayers. In Budget 2020, we were pleased to see a major comprehensive plan to reduce Global Adjustment costs for commercial and industrial ratepayers. Earlier this year, the government acted on our recommendations by implementing an optional freeze of peak demand factors in the Industrial Conservation Initiative and electricity rebates for businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, our standing *Policy and Advocacy Councils* have continued to inform the OCC's activities around health, workforce development, cannabis, energy, and infrastructure. In 2021, we also launched the COVID-19 *Ontario Vaccination Support Council*, a diverse group of organizations working to support public health units on vaccine deployment with the ultimate goal of ending the pandemic as quickly as possible.

Beyond influencing government, the OCC has participated in more media interviews, written more op-eds, and given more presentations than ever before to help shape and influence public debate. Since the beginning of the crisis, the OCC has over doubled our media coverage, compared to the same period last year, with 7,653 media stories in local, provincial, and federal outlets.

As the Ontario government prepares to reopen our economy and lay the groundwork for a strong recovery, the need for non-partisan, independent policy work has never been greater. But our advocacy would not be so effective if not for the contributions of the Ontario Chamber Network – your insight, experience, connections, and voice make our work stronger and maximize our reach. The importance of our network has only been further emphasized by the current crisis.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the OCC and commitment to the chamber movement. Together we can do – and have done – incredible things. The entire OCC team looks forward to working with you all as we help build Ontario on the path to recovery.

Thank you,

The OCC Policy and Public Affairs Teams

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.



ADVOCACY WINS

The Ontario Chamber Network has had almost 50 ‘advocacy wins’ since the beginning of the pandemic, resulting in critical policy changes for business during the crisis.

The following advocacy wins occurred between the release of our 2020 Policy Report Card (in September) and early April 2021.

REDUCING COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ELECTRICITY RATES

Ask: Industrial and commercial electricity prices in Ontario are currently higher than in most other jurisdictions in North America, putting local businesses at a competitive disadvantage. The pandemic has exacerbated this challenge, as system costs have grown and many companies are struggling with cash flows and liquidity issues. The OCC has advocated for reduced rates on numerous occasions, including this [letter](#) and our [2020 Pre-Budget Submission](#).

- ✓ **Win:** In Budget 2020, the Government of Ontario announced it would lower electricity costs for commercial and industrial ratepayers by directly funding a large portion of Global Adjustment (GA) costs to remove them from electricity bills. This will result in estimated electricity cost savings of 16 percent for Class A customers and 14 percent for Class B customers. This move will make commercial and industrial electricity rates more competitive and allow businesses to focus on investing in recovery and growth. As the Budget notes, bringing average rates below the average in the United States will make Ontario a more attractive choice for business investment.

RESKILLING SUPPORT AND A MICRO-CREDENTIAL STRATEGY

Ask: Retraining and upskilling the workforce is critical to help businesses prepare for post-pandemic economic recovery, which will demand new skills and exacerbate the skills gaps already present in Ontario’s economy. As part of the solution, the OCC [recommended](#) investments in reskilling programs and the development of a micro-credential framework to support short-term programs that meet local and sectoral needs.

- ✓ **Win:** Budget 2020 includes \$100 million in funding for skills training programs directed towards Ontarians disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and \$59.5 million over three years towards a micro-credential strategy. These investments will help accelerate re-employment during economic recovery and allow employers to respond to changing labour market needs with more demand-driven programming.

BUSINESS EDUCATION TAX REFORM

Ask: The Business Education Tax (BET) rate varies throughout the province, depending on the municipality or region. In 2007, the government announced they would reduce and harmonize rates, but this effort was halted in 2012. The OCC urged the Province to resume these efforts, including in our [2018 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission](#).

- ✓ **Win:** In Budget 2020, the Government of Ontario standardized and reduced all BET rates to 0.88 percent. According to government estimates, this will result in a tax break for 94 percent of Ontario businesses.



TOURISM INDUSTRY SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

Ask: The COVID-19 crisis has had a disproportionate impact on Ontario's tourism industry. In a *letter* to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the OCC offered a few recommendations to support the sector, including direct financial aid and grants.

- ✓ **Win:** In Budget 2020, the Ontario government committed \$100 million over two years for the Community Building Fund to support tourism, culture, and sport organizations experiencing financial pressures due to the pandemic.

ALCOHOL DELIVERY

Ask: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Ontario made several temporary changes to regulation, such as allowing licensed restaurants and bars to include alcohol with food as part of a takeout or delivery order. The OCC urged the government to make this measure permanent on multiple occasions, including in our *2020 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission*.

- ✓ **Win:** In December 2020, the Government of Ontario *announced* it was making the sale of alcohol with food takeout and delivery orders permanent, along with other reforms to support the hospitality sector.

ALLOWING THE SALE OF SPIRITS AT FARMERS' MARKETS

Ask: The OCC's *2019 report, Refreshing the Sale of Beverage Alcohol*, provided the Province with a series of recommendations to help modernize the sale of beverage alcohol in Ontario while improving consumer choice and convenience. Among these recommendations was a request that the AGCO provide Ontario spirits and craft beer producers with a retail license to sell their products at farmers' markets. Between 2014 and 2016, the AGCO administered a two-year pilot program that permitted the sale of VQA wine and cider at farmers' markets. The pilot program was ultimately allowed to continue, but spirits and craft beer were not available for sale through this distribution channel.

- ✓ **Win:** In December 2020, the Government of Ontario announced that licensed manufacturers of 100 percent Ontario wine and eligible spirits (that operate an authorized on-site retail store) will be able to apply to the AGCO for an occasional extension of their retail store to sell their products at farmers' markets. While eliminating this disparity for spirits producers at farmers' markets is welcome news, the Province should continue to take a comprehensive, rather than piecemeal, approach when it comes to reforms related to the beverage alcohol industry as craft beer is still not available at farmers' markets.

GOOD SAMARITAN LIABILITY PROTECTION DURING COVID-19

Ask: The COVID-19 crisis prompted organizations across Ontario to pivot quickly to provide goods and services that would support the response the pandemic. However, the urgency of the crisis meant there was little time for them to assess potential legal risks. In April 2020, the OCC *called on* the Government of Ontario to protect 'Good Samaritan' firms from litigation that may imperil their businesses in an already challenging economic environment.



- ✓ **Win:** In November 2020, the Government of Ontario passed the *Supporting Ontario's Recovery Act, 2020*. The Act will provide liability protection for workers, volunteers, and organizations that make an honest effort to follow public health guidelines and laws relating to exposure to COVID-19. At the same time, it will maintain the right of Ontarians to take legal action against those who willfully, or with gross negligence, endanger others.

IMPROVING BROADBAND AND CELLULAR ACCESS IN ONTARIO

Ask: While broadband expansion has long been a priority for the OCC and its members, the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated its urgency as reliable internet connectivity has been a prerequisite to accessing everything from e-learning and healthcare, to working from home and selling products online. In April 2020, the OCC wrote a *letter* calling on the Government of Ontario to improve connectivity across the province by fast-tracking the \$150 million in provincial funding that was committed to a broadband and cellular infrastructure program, working with the federal government to speed up and augment existing investment programs, and collaborating with municipalities to boost Wi-Fi hotspots.

- ✓ **Win:** In 2020, the Government of Ontario committed to making a historic *investment* of nearly \$1 billion over six years to improve and expand broadband and cellular access across the province. The government's plan focuses on delivering regional and shovel-ready projects, expanding access to underserved communities through a new program called Improving Connectivity in Ontario (ICON), maximizing existing programs and government assets, and reducing regulatory barriers to infrastructure expansion.

“**Expanding broadband access: “Ontario business is deeply concerned about the disproportionate impacts the COVID-19 crisis is having on communities that lack internet connectivity. Broadband is a basic infrastructure requirement in today's economy, but the ongoing pandemic has made it even more essential to public health and economic resilience.”**

– Rocco Rossi, OCC's President and CEO in *The Hill Times* (June 8, 2020)

LEVERAGING PROCUREMENT TO PROMOTE ONTARIO-MADE INNOVATION

Ask: As the largest customer in our economy, government can use procurement to help innovative firms scale. This is more cost-effective than grants or tax incentives, and it simultaneously enables modernization within government. As Ontario prepares for a period of economic recovery, the OCC recommended taking a more innovation-oriented approach to procurement (for example, by adopting challenge-based procurement systems). This recommendation was included in the OCC's *2020 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission* and 2020 report, *In Data We Trust: Unlocking the Value of Data in Ontario*.

- ✓ **Win:** In November 2020, the Government of Ontario released the objectives of its new procurement agency, *Supply Ontario*. Its mandate includes: “driving innovation of emerging technologies” and “connecting small businesses and entrepreneurs to government and its consumers by acting as a first purchaser for emerging technologies and paving pathways to the marketplace to drive innovation in Ontario.”



MINIMIZING NEW RED TAPE

Ask: In December 2018, the OCC *wrote a letter* to the Government of Ontario outlining business priorities for red tape reduction. We emphasized the importance of harmonizing regulation with national and international standards, requiring that new regulations be assessed for duplication or conflict, establishing digital compliance processes where possible, and taking an outcomes-based approach to regulation.

- ✓ **Win:** In July 2020, the Government of Ontario enacted the *Modernizing Ontario for People and Businesses Act, 2020* (through Bill 197, the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020*). Once in force, this Act will limit additional red tape by creating obligations for all of Ontario's ministries to follow when creating new legislation, regulations, policies, and forms. Principles include adopting national or international standards rather than creating new standards, streamlining compliance requirements on small businesses, ensuring processes are electronic where possible, and taking a risk-based approach to compliance.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ask: Regional economic development is a top priority for the OCC and its members. Our 2019 report – *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies* – discusses the various challenges and opportunities for economies in rural Ontario, and recommends leveraging public-private partnerships to invest in infrastructure, community revitalization, and talent retention.

- ✓ **Win:** In September 2020, the Government of Ontario opened a new targeted intake under Ontario's Rural Economic Development (RED) program. The new cost-shared funding of nearly \$1 million will support not-for-profit organizations with projects to help rural communities diversify their economies, retain skilled workers, and create jobs.

SECOND WAVE INVESTMENTS IN SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE

Ask: The temporary closure of schools and child care centres during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to unemployment and productivity losses among working parents, especially mothers. The OCC called on government to respond to a second wave by investing in increased physical distancing of students and additional support for remote learning. These recommendations are outlined in our September 2020 report, *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario*.

- ✓ **Win:** In October 2020, the Government of Ontario announced an additional investment of \$35 million to support increased physical distancing and remote learning in Peel, Ottawa, Toronto, and York Region as those communities confront higher rates of transmission. This funding builds on Ontario's \$1.3-billion Back-to-School Plan.

STREAMLINING THE LANDLORD-TENANT DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Ask: In 2017, the Ontario Chamber Network passed a resolution calling on the Ontario government to amend the *Residential Tenancies Act* to make it more equitable for residents and landlords. The resolution made specific recommendations to reduce delays in the dispute resolution process, with the aim of encouraging greater investment in housing.



- ✓ **Win:** In July 2020, the Government of Ontario passed the *Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, 2020*. Among other things, the Act will streamline the Landlord and Tenant Board process to make it easier to resolve disputes by allowing for mediation and making it easier to reach negotiated settlements.

COVID-19 TESTING PILOT PROGRAM AT PEARSON AIRPORT

Ask: In November 2020, the OCC's *letter* to the Premier urged the Ontario government to support the Greater Toronto Airports Authority in introducing COVID-19 testing upon arrival at Toronto Pearson International Airport. At the time, there was no arrivals testing process, but travelers bound for Canada were required to quarantine for a 14-day period. Introducing arrivals testing at Pearson would not only align with the steps that other jurisdictions have taken, but also provide an added measure to help protect communities from COVID-positive travellers already destined to Ontario.

- ✓ **Win:** On January 6, 2021, the Government of Ontario *announced* that it will launch a new, voluntary and free COVID-19 testing pilot program for international travellers at Pearson Airport. The pilot will be available to eligible international travellers who are returning to Ontario and aims to help identify and prevent the spread of the virus. While this was a welcome first step, the OCC encourages governments across Canada to implement a similar testing regime for arriving passengers. COVID-19 testing will be a necessary part of air travel for the foreseeable future and a science-based approach to travel will be critical to helping lift or reduce quarantine requirements.

MILTON LOGISTICS HUB

Ask: As demand for goods and passenger rail service grows across Ontario, new sites for intermodal transportation facilities will be necessary. To that end, the OCC has repeatedly expressed our support for a proposal by CN Rail to build and operate a \$250 million, state-of-the-art intermodal terminal in Milton. The proposed Milton Logistics Hub aims to meet the increasing demand for goods in the GTHA, facilitate goods movement throughout the region, and improve trade linkages across North America (see our 2018 report, *Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs*).

- ✓ **Win:** In January 2021, the Government of Canada approved the Milton Logistics Hub. This project will provide much-needed transportation capacity within Canada's innovation corridor, environmental benefits, and support over 1,000 jobs.

“The urgent need for the facility, coupled with CN's focus on environmental responsibility, is why the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Chamber, and boards of trade, ports, and businesses across the country have strongly endorsed the project.”

- Rocco Rossi, OCC's President and CEO op-ed In the Financial Post (November 3, 2020)



FEDERAL TASK FORCE ON WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY

Ask: Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the OCC has called on government to develop strategies that address the economic impacts on working women. Our report – *The She-Coverry Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario* – contains a series of recommendations around leadership and accountability, child care, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and flexible work. As a first step, we urge governments to include women in decision-making bodies around economic recovery and develop strategies, policies, and programs to tackle specific challenges such as child care, workforce development, and flexible work.

- ✓ **Win:** In March 2021, the Government of Canada launched a new Task Force on Women in the Economy. This group will harness the best ideas from a diverse group of experts from different sectors of the economy to advise the government on women's economic recovery in the wake of the pandemic. The Task Force is a promising first step that brings together women with expertise in business, health, not-for-profit, child care, labour, and academia.

EXTENDING TEMPORARY BILLING CODES FOR VIRTUAL CARE

Ask: In the OCC's December 2020 *report* entitled, *Realizing the Full Potential of Virtual Care in Ontario*, the OCC examined how the pandemic, coupled with the implementation of temporary billing codes, accelerated the adoption of virtual care. The temporary billing codes the Province implemented until March 14, 2021 allowed physicians to bill the Government of Ontario for phone and video visits with patients. Since the temporary codes the Province implemented during the SARS outbreak expired after that crisis was contained, the OCC recommended that the Government of Ontario modify the existing fee code system to ensure virtual care becomes a permanent part of our health care system – once and for all.

- ✓ **Win:** On March 8, 2021, the Ministry of Health's Ontario Health Insurance Plan Division issued a *bulletin* to all health care providers. The bulletin explains that the province reached an agreement with the Ontario Medical Association and will extend four existing temporary billing codes for phone and video visits until September 30, 2021. The OCC is pleased that the billing codes have been extended since they will allow Ontarians to continue accessing care at a time when in-person visits have been less feasible. However, as the OCC's report explains, given the uncertainties around when a vaccine will be available, patients will continue to rely on virtual visits for the foreseeable future and, as such, a more permanent solution is still needed.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

Ask: The OCC has long championed the need for more hands-on training opportunities in Ontario and particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our *letter to the Province on retraining* and our *2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission* underscored the need for demand-driven training programs delivered through strong partnerships. Economic recovery will demand new skills and exacerbate the skills gaps already present in Ontario's economy.

- ✓ **Win:** In March 2021, the Ontario government announced an investment of \$39.5 million to help create up to 8,000 paid research internships and upskilling opportunities for postsecondary students, postdoctoral fellows, and recent graduates through Mitacs. These experiential learning opportunities will help prepare Ontario's workforce for post-pandemic growth.



RAPID COVID-19 TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE

Ask: Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the OCC has repeatedly urged government to prioritize rapid testing and contact tracing to help minimize the impacts of public health restrictions on employers and workers. This recommendation was recently highlighted in our *2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission*, where we also emphasized the need for guidance to support increased use of rapid testing.

- ✓ **Win:** In March 2021, the Province announced it would be making it easier for businesses to test for COVID-19 in the workplace by expanding its deployment of rapid antigen testing to post-secondary institutions, first responders, trucking and transportation, wastewater management, and other sectors. The program was piloted in both the Cambridge and Kitchener Waterloo Chambers of Commerce and will be used as a model in distributing rapid tests to small businesses in communities across the province. The government has also released guidance to support employees who choose to participate in testing outside of the public health care system.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR RESKILLING

Ask: As Ontario recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, reskilling will be essential to the re-employment of workers that have been displaced, particularly for those that been disproportionately impacted by the crisis (including women, racialized Ontarians, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and other groups). This issue was highlighted in the OCC's *2021 Ontario pre-budget submission*, our *letter to the Province on retraining*, and *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19*, where we call for nimble reskilling opportunities (including micro-credential programs) and financial support to ensure programs are accessible and inclusive.

- ✓ **Win:** In March 2021, the Ontario government expanded the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to include nearly 600 micro-credential programs. Through this initiative, the province is ensuring loans and grants will be available to more learners looking to rapidly upskill and reskill for the in-demand jobs of today and tomorrow. This is a promising first step. The OCC urges the Province to further strengthen access to reskilling programs offering more flexible formats, convenient locations or digital offerings, and support with child care for mothers interested in reskilling.



ADVOCACY IN THE NEWS, ONLINE, AND AT QUEEN'S PARK

The OCC's Public Affairs team continue to advocate on behalf of the business community at Queen's Park making sure our voice is amplified in the media and online.



ADVOCACY IN THE NEWS, ONLINE, AND AT QUEEN'S PARK

The past year has been unprecedented with chambers of commerce and boards of trade working and advocating tirelessly to support businesses in communities across the province during the COVID-19 crisis.

We have certainly cemented our place as the indispensable partner of business in Ontario through our unparalleled communications, social media, and advocacy: this has included proactive media and government engagement on key business and policy issues to see our members through the crisis.

We have continually engaged all levels of government on critical issues the business community continues to face throughout the crisis through town halls, virtual events (such as the OCC Advocacy Series where our network met with almost 30 elected officials from all parties), roundtables, councils, meetings, briefings, and more. Government has listened and the Ontario Chamber Network has had almost 50 'advocacy wins' since the beginning of the pandemic, resulting in critical policy changes for business during the crisis.

“Mr. Speaker, it’s not enough just to stop the virus. Rocco Rossi, president and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, put it best: “The economy and the health of Ontarians are interdependent, and both must be addressed together.”

– Hon. Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation (Hansard, October 27, 2020)

Through our online advocacy and media coverage, we have collectively advocated for critical supports, measures, and resources to help our members during the pandemic as well as responded to government messages of the day with the perspective and voice of the business community. This vast coverage across social channels and in print, digital, and broadcast media through local, provincial, and national news channels has resulted in making us even more relevant, bolstering our voice to business, media, and government.

“ Responding to lockdown restrictions: “We’re delighted to see that small retailers can open at reduced capacity... however, we do need more clarity and more notice.... businesses build inventories and they can’t afford to be left hanging this many months into the crisis. Where is the increased capacity for testing, tracking, and tracing? What new measures have changed so this doesn’t become Groundhog Day with us back in another lockdown?”

– Rocco Rossi, OCC’s President and CEO on BNN Bloomberg with Greg Bonnell (February 10, 2021)

As the indispensable partner of business, we will continue to advocate on behalf of the business community at Queen’s Park as we look towards a safe reopening and paving the path to recovery.



IN THE NEWS & ONLINE

The OCC's advocacy is strengthened by chambers of commerce and boards of trade who amplify our collective message via social media and to local media in communities across the province.

7,653 media hits

1 billion+ potential reach

2.5x media coverage

240% increase in new website users

3.2 million more impressions on twitter

2x impressions on Facebook and LinkedIn

Source: Figures are based on Meltwater and Sprout Social media and social media monitoring from February 2020 to April 2021.

*Compared to the same period in 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.

“The President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce said a wage subsidy is the most efficient way to quickly ramp up business again once the health crisis is over, as it keeps employees connected to their employer rather than forcing them to apply for EI. Rocco Rossi said a wage subsidy also gets money into employees' pockets faster than EI because they remain on payroll.”

- Toronto Star (March 27, 2020)

- Regular appearances on radio and television including Omni, CBC Radio, the Business News Network (BNN), TVO's The Agenda, Global News, CTV News, CP24, Newstalk 1010, 680 News, and local talk radio stations across Ontario.



“It’s not just a women’s issue but an economic issue that will be critical to our economy recovery as we go forward. We should all be worried about the low labour force participation rates for women right now.”

- Michelle Eaton, OCC’s VP of Public Affairs on BNN Bloomberg (September 11, 2020)

- Frequent coverage in Ontario’s major daily locals including the Timmins Daily Press, Sault Online, Windsor Star, Hamilton Spectator, Sudbury Star, and Barrie Today.

“The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is joining a chorus of advocates calling for more support to bolster the province’s food supply chain.”

- Growing a More Resilient Food Chain in Ontario Report in Bradford Today

AT QUEEN’S PARK

Through our government relations and media relations, the voice of the Ontario Chamber Network is heard loud and clear across all political parties at Queens Park.



Since the first session of the 43rd Parliament of Ontario in December of 2019, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce was mentioned 44 unique times in Hansard, of each of these mentions, 99 percent were of a positive sentiment.

Additionally, in March 2021, during the OCC’s virtual Advocacy Series at Queen’s Park, almost 30 Members of Provincial Parliament engaged with the OCC and local chambers of commerce or boards of trade on key issues around a safe reopening of the province and paving the path to recovery.

Our collective power of the Ontario Chamber Network truly impacts change at Queen’s Park among both government and opposition. The OCC continues to prioritize proactive government engagement efforts with all members on key advocacy issues to ensure the voice of the Ontario Chamber Network is continuously heard as we work together to get through the crisis.

“While rent deferral policies may be useful in the short term — as the goal is to keep businesses in place so they can re-open after months of no revenue — a large rent deferral bill will force a business to close their doors for good.”

- Rocco Rossi, OCC’s President and CEO in the Financial Post (April 16, 2020)



KEY ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

- Quickly pivoted at the beginning of the crisis to communicate critical crisis information and government information to our network and membership through the OCC's COVID-19 website and weekly newsletter.

“It may feel like a lifetime ago that Ontario declared a state of emergency, but it has been only two months. There is still much to do to adjust legislation to support both employers and employees during this unprecedented time and prevent unintended consequences from imperiling businesses, jobs and livelihoods. We hope the government amends the ESA as swiftly as possible.”

– Rocco Rossi, OCC's President and CEO in the Toronto Sun (May 29, 2020)

- In August 2020, we launched the nation-wide Canada United campaign which we coordinated with our partners from coast to coast, encouraging Canadians to “show local some love.” The Canada United Small Business Relief Fund provided grants up to \$5000 for eligible small businesses. In October, the federal government announced an investment of \$12 million to the Canada United Small Business Relief Fund.

“RBC brings together the national network of Chamber of Commerce, Canadian business associations and over 50 leading corporation to rally support for local businesses through Canada United”

– Canada United in Bloomberg (July 22, 2020)

- Supported an inclusive economic recovery with the release of the report, *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario*, with widespread media coverage featured in CTV News, BNN Bloomberg, Toronto Star, Global News, City News, CNW, 680 News & an Op-Ed in the The Hamilton Spectator.
- Throughout the pandemic, we hosted engagement events with the federal government and federal political leaders on navigating the COVID-19 crisis including the Hon. Mary Ng, federal Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, the Hon. Mélanie Joly, federal Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Jagmeet Singh, Leader of Canada's NDP, the Hon. Erin O'Toole, Leader of Canada's Official Opposition and the Conservative Party of Canada as well as the Hon. Bill Morneau, Canada's former Minister of Finance.
- At the Ontario Economic Series & Business Diversity Economic Expo, the OCC used its convening power to highlight Ontario's business diversity and provide opportunities for underrepresented groups to showcase their businesses in front of new audience. The Series welcomed international officials as well as greetings from the Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board, the Hon. Mary Ng, federal Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, and Mayor of Toronto, John Tory.



- Our report on virtual care called for urgent policy reforms to allow for the permanent delivery of virtual care and was featured in local and national media outlets, including an op-ed in the Toronto Sun.
- During our Ontario Business Achievement Awards, we recognized #DifferenceMakers including paramedics as well as grocery, health care, and construction workers. The awards aired on TLN on December 27 with greetings from cabinet ministers, Premier Ford, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.
- At the beginning of 2021, the OCC launched the Ontario Vaccination Support Council advocating for vaccine deployment and distribution in the province. The OCC continues to call for an accelerated vaccine rollout and has received widespread coverage on our vaccine advocacy on national, provincial, and local media outlets.
- The first ever fully interactive 2021 Ontario Economic Report (OER) launched in January 2021 was featured in an exclusive on BNN Bloomberg and across national and local media outlets.
- Our agriculture and food report released in April 2021 advocates for a more resilient food supply chain and received national coverage in the Toronto Sun, iPolitics, local radio, across the CBC, local media outlets, and an op-ed in Policy Options magazine.
- In March, the OCC kicked off its OCC Advocacy Series with an event with Premier Ford, the Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance, and the Hon. Jill Dunlop, Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues on critical issues for the business community ahead of the 2021 Budget.
- Our Chamber Network has also worked tirelessly in their communities on key priorities such as increased supports for small business and those from hardest hit sectors. These issues were brought to the forefront at the OCC's Advocacy Series, where we engaged with almost 30 elected officials on a safe reopening and paving a path to recovery.
- Our advocacy work continues to deliver critical value as we assess the rapidly changing business environment and its effects on our members. We have had almost 50 advocacy wins since the beginning of the pandemic, many of which were included in the 2021 Budget, resulting in critical policy changes for business during the crisis.

“ Temporary paid sick leave: “Ensuring people during a pandemic can afford to stay home is both morally the right thing to do and its’ economically sound as well. When a worker protects themselves, they are protecting their colleagues, their employer, safeguarding the business, and the community by extension. Our position is that business, particularly small businesses, simply cannot afford the additional financial responsibility to fund sick leave at this time which is why we support the notion of a temporary paid sick program that is paid for by the government.”

– Daniel Safayeni, OCC’s Vice President of Policy on TVO’s The Agenda with Steve Paikin (April 13, 2021)



POLICY AND ADVOCACY COUNCILS

The OCC has six councils
advocating on key issues
that matter to the business
community.



POLICY AND ADVOCACY COUNCILS

The OCC currently chairs six councils that regularly inform our policy and advocacy activities on key issues that matter to the business community.



ONTARIO VACCINATION SUPPORT COUNCIL

In early 2021, the OCC partnered with Facebook Canada and Bruce Power to establish the Ontario Vaccination Support Council. Membership includes close to 100 businesses, organizations, and the Ontario Chamber Network. The Council leverages the businesses and organizations involved, representing hundreds of thousands of employees from across the Province, to provide volunteer support for Ontario's historic COVID-19 vaccination effort.

“Expediting Vaccine Rollout: **“This is absolutely critical... vaccines are critical to rollout, it has been frustratedly slow... the sooner we inoculate the population, the sooner we can reopen the economy”**

– Rocco Rossi, OCC's President and CEO on CTV News (January 2021)

2021 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Meetings with Hon. Doug Ford, Hon. Christine Elliott, Hon. Anita Anand, Hon. Vic Fedeli, Hon. Sylvia Jones, General (retired) Rick Hillier, and other government officials.
- Launch of the *Ontario Vaccination Support Council Portal* to connect organizations with local public health units to support efficient vaccine distribution. The portal includes a consolidated directory of capabilities and services within Ontario's business community and Ontario Chamber Network that can be utilized by government, hospitals and public health in the distribution of vaccinations.
- Two-way communication between the private sector and public health units so that the organizations, universities, colleges, associations, and labour unions can volunteer time or resources to Ontario's vaccination efforts. This has led to a number of concrete wins, including:
 - » Bruce Power partnered with the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit to roll out three mass immunization hubs in their region using a new cost-effective model dubbed the “Hockey Hub”, that allows for up to 4,500 vaccines a day with minimal clinical staff.
 - » Seneca College, Centennial College, University of Guelph, and Brock University have all partnered with their local health authorities to set up community vaccination clinics.
 - » The Cornwall & Area Chamber of Commerce, Ontario Power Generation and Choice Tax Cornwall have all partnered to provide complimentary rides to and from vaccination centers.
 - » Facebook Canada has partnered with the Government of Canada to launch a number of initiatives to help reinforce the government's public education campaign specifically aimed at addressing vaccine hesitancy, literacy, and awareness.



HEALTH POLICY COUNCIL

Launched in April 2020, the OCC's Health Policy Council is composed of a diverse cross-section of our members who come together to exchange ideas, inform OCC priorities, and provide government with timely recommendations. Although the Council was in development prior to the COVID-19 crisis, now more than ever, the participating members' direction will be critical to support the health care system today and lead recovery tomorrow.

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Letters to the Government of Ontario on health policy reforms that should be made permanent, interoperable data sharing, and the vaccine roll-out and distribution in Ontario.
- Collaboration on a COVID-19 policy brief entitled, *Realizing the Full Potential of Virtual Care in Ontario*. Robust engagement with government and external stakeholders as part of the policy brief launch, including Medtech Canada, Life Sciences Ontario, and Diabetes Canada.
- Advocacy win: In March 2021, the Ministry of Health's Ontario Health Insurance Plan Division issued a bulletin to all health care providers explaining that the Province reached an agreement with the Ontario Medical Association and will extend four existing temporary billing codes for phone and video visits until September 30, 2021.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Better understanding and addressing Ontario's skills mismatch and workforce development issues has been a longstanding priority for the OCC and its members. The onset of COVID-19 has had an undeniable impact on Ontario's labour force, accelerating certain trends that were already underway and exacerbating issues that predated the pandemic. Last year the Council mobilized quickly to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, urging government to support skilling and reskilling initiatives for companies impacted by the crisis, informing a number of government consultations, and contributing to both our federal and provincial pre-budget submissions.

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Funding for skills training programs directed towards Ontarians disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- New micro-credential strategy and expansion of the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to include nearly 600 micro-credential programs.



- Paid research internships and upskilling opportunities for postsecondary students, postdoctoral fellows, and recent graduates through Mitacs.
- Temporary Ontario Jobs Training Tax Credit for 2021 to support workforce development amidst a rapidly changing labour market.
- Provincial and federal task forces to support inclusive economic growth for women and diverse communities.



ENERGY POLICY COUNCIL

Launched in January 2020, the OCC's Energy Policy Council is a cross-section of energy sector stakeholders that regularly informs our policy and advocacy efforts on a variety of energy issues. This initiative is supported with insights and technical expertise from Sussex Strategy Group's Energy and Environment Practice.

“Reducing commercial and industrial electricity rates will make Ontario businesses more competitive and enable them to invest in recovery and growth.”

– OCC's President and CEO Rocco Rossi in CBC News (November 7, 2020)

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Several advocacy wins, including: a permanent reduction in electricity rates for industrial and commercial ratepayers (Ontario's Comprehensive Electricity Plan); an expansion of conservation and demand management programs; and an optional freeze of the Industrial Conservation Initiative during COVID-19.
- Meetings with the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development, and Mines and Independent Electricity System Operator.
- Letters to the Government of Ontario on COVID-19 emergency measures for electricity ratepayers, longer-term electricity reforms, and recommendations for economic recovery.



INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY COUNCIL

The OCC recognizes that infrastructure – particularly transportation, digital, and climate-resilient infrastructure – are top priorities for our members. In May 2019, a permanent Infrastructure Policy Council was launched to guide continual policy and advocacy action on this issue, and ensure the Province makes the necessary investments to keep Ontario competitive.



2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Meetings with Ontario's Ministry of Infrastructure and Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB)
- Advocacy wins, including: the Government of Ontario's release of *Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy* which includes plans to invest in critical infrastructure and access roads; an agreement between Government and Marten Falls and Webequie First Nations to advance the planning and development of a proposed Northern Road Link; and historic investments in broadband and cellular service expansion.
- Letters to the Government of Ontario on continued operation of Line 5, US Customs and Border Protection Facility at Billy Bishop Airport, Bill 43, the *Freeing Highways 412 and 418 Act*, accelerated internet connectivity, post-COVID-19 economic recovery and ICI construction, and petitions concerning Telecom Order CRTC 2019-288.



ONTARIO CANNABIS POLICY COUNCIL

Following the release of the OCC's report, Supporting Ontario's Budding Cannabis Industry, the OCC launched the Ontario Cannabis Policy Council (OCPC) in September 2019. The Council is co-chaired by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Fire & Flower Inc. The Council's primary focus is advocating for the recreational cannabis industry's growth across the province. The Council is the first of its kind in Ontario composed of industry leaders and experts, tackling the key issues impacting Ontario's cannabis industry.



“Ontario stands to miss out on about \$180 million in economic activity if the province's 100-odd privately-run cannabis stores aren't allowed to provide delivery or curbside pickup services, according to estimates from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.”

– Ontario Cannabis Policy Council in BNN Bloomberg (July 21, 2020)

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Ontario Cannabis Policy Council's statements, op-eds and submissions have raised the profile on important issues confronting the sector. The OCPC's work has been featured in over 275 media stories in print, digital, radio and TV across Canada with an estimated viewership of 151 million people.
- The OCPC has led campaigns on the importance of private sector involvement in the industry and making e-commerce permanent, in addition to partaking in nationally focused campaigns. The Council has also engaged all levels of government and has met with all the agencies, regulatory bodies and government ministries touching this file in Ontario.
- The Council has fought hard to influence and impact public policy. Most recently, this resulted in all legal retailers being granted the ability to do curbside and delivery amidst the pandemic.

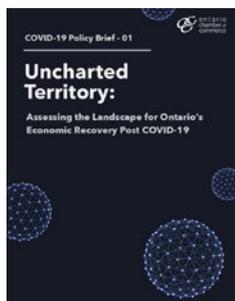


PUBLICATIONS

Credible research and analysis are at the centre of our advocacy efforts strengthened by the power of the chamber network. In addition to comprehensive policy reports, we, along with our local chambers and boards of trade, 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.

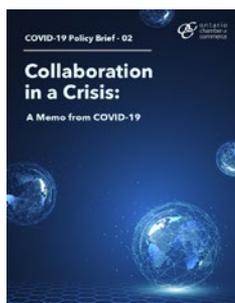


POLICY BRIEFS & REPORTS



Uncharted Territory: Assessing the Landscape of Ontario's Economic Recovery Post COVID-19 | April 2020

Many of Ontario's businesses spent the better part of the past bull market investing in illiquid capital to strengthen their competitive edges in global markets. Accordingly, entered the pandemic without the operational flexibility or capacity to maintain themselves through COVID-19 abatement measures. The inability of businesses to cope with the pressure marks the beginning of what could be a swift deterioration of invaluable economic structures, irreparably harming Ontario's future. If such structures, including supply chains, markets, private investment, and credit facilities are to survive the pandemic intact, all three orders of government must collaborate on a comprehensive plan that encompasses monetary policy, economic policy, and health policy. This report examined the policy tools capable of providing critical economic relief, and the risks of failing to act appropriately.



Collaboration in a Crisis: A Memo from COVID-19 | May 2020

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, there have been countless examples of collaboration within Ontario and across borders, from sharing information to pooling resources to mitigate the economic and social fallout. This policy brief examined the role collaboration has played early on in the crisis, what the pandemic reveals about the kinds of systems that enable collaboration, and our thoughts on the lessons we should take away from it.



In Data We Trust: Unlocking the Value of Data in Ontario | June 2020

Data has become one of the most valuable resources in our economy, revolutionizing traditional business models across finance, health care, manufacturing, and many other sectors. In many ways, COVID-19 has accelerated this transformation, as the need for digitization and the integration of health data became more critical than ever. In June, the OCC published a major policy report exploring the opportunities and threats the data-driven economy presents for Ontario and reflecting on lessons from COVID-19. The report contained organizational best practices and policy recommendations focused on five areas: privacy, cybersecurity, data sharing, and artificial intelligence.



Small Business, Big Impact: How SMEs are Pivoting During COVID-19 | June 2020

Recognizing that SMEs are the backbone of the economy, the OCC launched a policy brief that outlined the societal and economic contributions that SMEs make in Ontario and the challenges that emerged due to COVID-19. The brief further examined how 28 different small businesses successfully navigated this health turned economic crisis.

“We understand the hardships small businesses are enduring while COVID-19 abatement measures are in place. Many have pivoted, and will be integral to recovery and growth post-pandemic.”

– SME Report in *Canadian Insider* (October 15, 2020)



The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario | September 2020

The economic crisis precipitated by COVID-19 has been disproportionately experienced by women, and especially by racialized, low-income, newcomer, and other intersectional groups of women. The policy brief examined the gendered labour market impacts of the pandemic and offered policy solutions to support women’s economic recovery by confronting immediate and longer-term challenges. Our recommendations focused on leadership and accountability, childcare, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and flexible work arrangements.

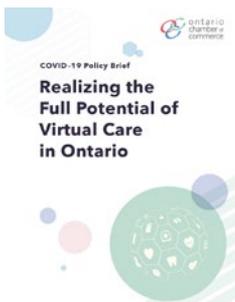
“It’s time to move beyond platitudes (...) More and more evidence emerged showing that diversity strengthens innovation and economic resiliency, in addition to having innate moral and social value.”

– Claudia Dessanti, OCC’s Senior Policy Analyst, Ontario Chamber of Commerce in the *Hamilton Spectator* (September 8, 2020)



Small and Medium-sized Employers (SMEs): Skills Gaps and Future Skills | October 2020

This report was launched as a collaboration between the OCC, the Ted Rogers School of Management’s Diversity Institute, Public Policy Forum, and the Future Skills Centre as part of the Skills Next project. The paper provided background on the role of SMEs in the Canadian economy and their labour and skills shortage issues, a review of human resource practices in SMEs, an examination of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and skills in SMEs, and areas for further research.

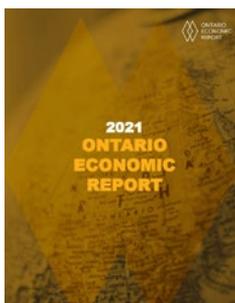


Realizing the Full Potential of Virtual Care in Ontario | *December 2020*

Developed in partnership with the Health Policy Council, this report explores how the prominence and popularity of virtual care has increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We argue that the Province needs to consider urgent policy reform, such as the creation of new billing codes, to allow for the permanent delivery of virtual care.

“Ontario’s health care system faces numerous pressures and patients are increasingly looking to access quality care using technology. Policymakers must continue to introduce and improve solutions like virtual care. Doing so could help relieve some of these pressures and ensure patients can access the care and services they need, no matter their circumstances.”

– Rocco Rossi, OCC’s President and CEO & Catrina Kronfli, OCC’s Senior Policy Analyst op-ed in the *Toronto Sun* (December 23, 2020)

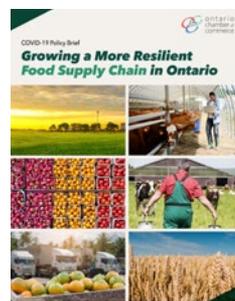


2021 Ontario Economic Report | *January 2021*

This year, the OCC released its annual Ontario Economic Report (OER) with a virtual launch event with more than 600 registered attendees. The data in this year’s OER reflected on the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses and consumers, and the uneven nature of the crisis on certain segments of the economy. It is the OCC’s first fully interactive report and allowed readers to engage with the results in a dynamic format.

“The pandemic also had a significant impact on employment growth and retention among Ontario businesses, the report found. Employment growth dropped across Ontario last year, but is expected to make a steady recovery in 2021.”

– The OER in *iPolitics*



Growing a More Resilient Food Supply Chain in Ontario | *April 2021*

Canada’s food supply chain experienced numerous pressures during COVID-19 – ranging from panic buying to temporary shortages at some grocery stores to the shift to e-commerce. This policy brief examines issues that emerged for the food supply chain during the last 12 months as well as longstanding ones that were exacerbated by the pandemic. While the COVID-19 crisis caused the food supply chain to bend, the chain did not break. Canada’s food system stabilized relatively quickly and continued to provide



consumers with uninterrupted access to food. This brief encourages policymakers to prioritize six issues to ensure the agri-food sector is better positioned to withstand future disruptions, as well as support local producers and ensure an equitable recovery.

“COVID-19 brought our agri-food system and supply chains to the forefront. We can all remember food flying off the shelves due to stockpiling and panic buying at the outset of the pandemic. Ultimately, while the pandemic caused parts of Ontario’s food supply chain to bend, the chain itself did not break.”

- Rocco Rossi OCC’s President and CEO in the Toronto Sun (April 12, 2021)

LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT

- Extending Deadline for Submissions: COVID-19 | [March 2020](#)
- Temporary Amendments to the ESA and OHS Act During the COVID-19 Pandemic | [March 2020](#)
- Working with Municipalities to Support Business during the COVID-19 Pandemic | [March 2020](#)
- Supports for Small Business During the COVID-19 Pandemic | [March 2020](#)
- Releasing Cash Flows for Business During the COVID-19 Pandemic | [March 2020](#)
- Supporting Renters During the Covid-19 Pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Supporting the Food Supply Chain During COVID19 | [April 2020](#)
- Supporting Ontario’s agri-food and agricultural sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Support for manufacturers during the COVID-19 pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Further support for small business during the COVID-19 pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Accelerating Internet connectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Support for Canada’s Airports During COVID-19 Pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Supporting Ontario’s most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Support regarding inclusion of self-employed workers in the Canada Emergency Response Benefit | [April 2020](#)
- Amendment to allow for delivery and curbside pickup for recreational retailers | [April 2020](#)
- Support for Ontario’s Tourism Industry During the COVID-19 Pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Further Temporary Amendments to the ESA During COVID19 Pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Electricity Rate Relief for Businesses During the COVID-19 Pandemic | [April 2020](#)



- Supporting Ontario's Beverage Alcohol Industry During COVID-19 | [April 2020](#)
- Industry consultation and a central body with decision-making authority for construction projects in Ontario | [April 2020](#)
- 'Good Samaritan' liability legislation related to the COVID-19 pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Providing rent relief for commercial landlords and tenants | [April 2020](#)
- Ontario Chamber Dedicated to Ontario's Economic Recovery | [April 2020](#)
- Essential Services Support during the COVID-19 Pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Access to capital during the COVID-19 pandemic | [April 2020](#)
- Immediate Need to Fix the CECRA Rent Subsidy Program | [May 2020](#)
- Multi-Association Rent Letter to Premier Ford | [May 2020](#)
- Ontario's Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery and ICI Construction | [May 2020](#)
- Economic Recovery Program to help rural and northern SMEs recover from COVID-19 | [May 2020](#)
- Federal access to capital during the reopening and recovery phases of COVID-19 | [May 2020](#)
- Provincial access to capital during the reopening and recovery phases of COVID-19 | [May 2020](#)
- Health Policy Reforms During the COVID-19 Pandemic | [May 2020](#)
- Retraining Ontario's workforce to recover from COVID-19 | [May 2020](#)
- Federal - A coordinated approach to reopening Canada's economy | [May 2020](#)
- Provincial - A coordinated approach to reopening Canada's economy | [May 2020](#)
- Providing Rent Relief to Commercial Tenants | [May 2020](#)
- New Health and Safety Guidelines for Employers | [May 2020](#)
- Study of the recommendations relating to the Economic and Fiscal Update Act, 2020 and the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on certain sectors of the economy | [June 2020](#)
- Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Consultation | [June 2020](#)
- Patio liquor licenses in Ontario | [June 2020](#)
- Energy Policy and Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis in Ontario | [June 2020](#)
- Digital health interoperability | [July 2020](#)
- Amendment to allow for delivery and curbside pick-up for recreational retailers | [July 2020](#)
- The ongoing recovery of our restaurants and food service industry across Canada | [July 2020](#)
- Encouraging municipal collaboration on health and safety guidelines during COVID-19 | [July 2020](#)
- Industrial Electricity Rates Letter CME – OCC – AMPCO | [September 2020](#)
- Bill 43, the Freeing Highways 412 and 418 Act | [October 2020](#)



- Restaurants, Bars, Alcohol Industry and Food Delivery | *October 2020*
- Strengthening privacy protections in Ontario | *October 2020*
- Keeping Ontario Business Workers and Citizens Safe | *November 2020*
- Letter of Support for COVID-19 Testing upon Arrival at Toronto Pearson International Airport | *November 2020*
- Implementing title protection for qualified Occupational Health and Safety Professionals in Ontario | *November 2020*
- Investing in the development of a new US Customs and Border Protection Facility (USCBP) at Billy Bishop Airport | *December 2020*
- Continued Operation of Enbridge’s Line 5 (Governor of Michigan) | *December 2020*
- Utility Remuneration and Responding to Distributed Energy Resources | *February 2021*
- Chamber Network calls for coordinated approach to reopening Ontario’s economy | *February 2021*
- Support for the continued operation of Line 5 (Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States) | *March 2021*
- Ontario Small Business Support Grant and the tourism sector | *March 2021*
- Ontario needs gas-fired electricity generation | *March 2021*
- Vaccine roll-out and distribution in Ontario | *March 2021*
- Congratulatory letter to Dr. Homer Tien | *April 2021*

“**Third Wave:** “An expedited vaccine roll-out prioritizing essential workers who cannot work from home is critical to preventing these stops and starts that are so damaging for business. With the Ontario Business Support Grant coming to a close, we call for continued supports that will see businesses through the third wave of the crisis.”

– Rory Ring, CEO, Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce in the Sault Online (April 8, 2021)

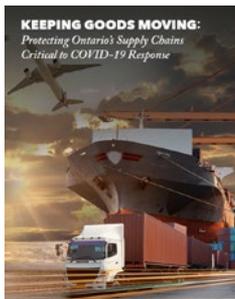
SUBMISSIONS & OTHER PUBLICATIONS

**COVID-19
Pandemic
Preparedness
Toolkit
for Ontario Businesses**



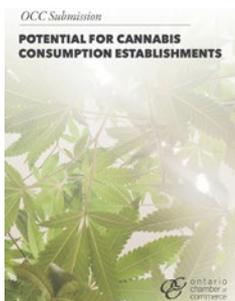
COVID-19 Pandemic Preparedness Toolkit for Ontario Businesses | *March 2020*

In response to COVID-19, the OCC partnered with Hicks Morley to release a timely and practical toolkit with guidelines and resources that Ontario businesses could use to plan and prepare for any human-resources or operational-related disruptions – ensuring the continued essential operations of their organizations while also protecting public health.



Keepings Goods Moving: Protecting Ontario's Supply Chains Critical to COVID-19 Response | *March 2020*

The OCC and Greater Toronto Airports Authority released a one-pager following a roundtable held with Minister Fedeli and key partners from Ontario's supply chain. The document outlined takeaways from the roundtable and challenges facing Canada's complex supply chain. The document has been used in our ongoing advocacy with government as we continue to work together to protect Ontario's supply chain during the COVID-19 response and path to recovery.



Submission: Potential for Cannabis Consumption Establishments and/or Special Occasion Permits | *March 2020*

Members of the OCC's Ontario Cannabis Policy Council participated in an AGCO consultation on whether the government should consider facilitating the sale of cannabis for consumption in establishments like lounges and cafes or if the government should consider special occasion permits for cannabis to be sold and consumed at festivals and events.

“The Ontario Chamber of Commerce echoed that, adding that in the near future more people will want to consume cannabis in public, social spaces, just like alcohol is consumed.”

– CBC News (July 20, 2020)



Memo: Reopening Canada's Economy | *May 2020*

Together with the Canadian and Provincial chambers of commerce, as well as boards of trade, the OCC released a memo advising governments across the country to better coordinate efforts to address new challenges facing Canadians during COVID-19 and into recovery. Six critical elements to reopening were outlined: availability of personal protective equipment, smart quarantine policies, protection for the most vulnerable, mass testing, contact tracing, and workforce management systems. Public-private cooperation was strongly encouraged to help implement scale testing, contact tracing, and workforce management systems.



OCC Submission: June 19, 2020

**OCC TOURISM SECTOR
SUBMISSION TO STANDING
COMMITTEE**



Submission: Impact of the Pandemic on the Tourism Sector | *June 2020*

The OCC submitted feedback to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on the impact the pandemic has had on the province’s tourism industry. The submission began by outlining the important role that the tourism industry plays, both as an economic driver and supporter of Ontario’s diverse regions and communities. Drawing on the expertise of the OCC’s ad-hoc Tourism and Culture Working Group, the submission focused on seven priority areas to help prevent permanent closures and job losses, as well as support the sector’s long-term growth.

OCC Submission: July 23, 2020

**DIGITAL HEALTH
INTEROPERABILITY**



Submission: Digital Health Interoperability | *July 2020*

The OCC responded to the Government of Ontario’s consultation on digital health interoperability (proposed amendments to O. Reg. 329/04 and draft Digital Health Information Exchange Policy). Our submission included recommendations around clarifying access to health data, aligning standards with existing organizations and other provinces, and ensuring continued stakeholder engagement.

OCC Submission: October 13, 2020

**STRENGTHENING PRIVACY
PROTECTIONS IN ONTARIO**



Submission: Strengthening Privacy Protections in Ontario | *October 2020*

In response to the Government of Ontario’s consultation on privacy, the OCC worked with members to develop a submission emphasizing three points. First, the Province should avoid creating privacy laws pertaining to the private sector and instead urge the federal government to expeditiously move forward with its review of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. Second, Ontario should continue to transition towards a more digital, integrated health care system by harmonizing data standards and rolling out interoperable technologies. Third, government should experiment with data trusts and work with stakeholders to develop clear policy parameters around their implementation.

2020
Provincial Pre-Budget Submission



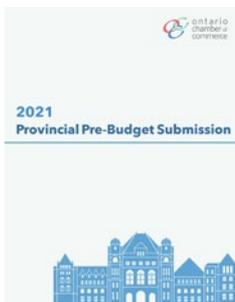
2020 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission | *November 2020*

This fall, the OCC revised its 2020 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission to reflect the new circumstances precipitated by the pandemic. Our submission focused on policies that drive economic growth, which will enable the province to generate economic activity and tax revenues while gradually bringing down the debt-to-GDP ratio. It contains 23 recommendations across four categories: fiscal policy, regulation, the future of employment, and innovation and entrepreneurship.



“Government will need to walk a tightrope between ensuring their fiscal house is in order while maintaining a competitive economy that encourages business investment and economic growth. Partnering with Ontario businesses will be key.”

– Rocco Rossi, OCC’s President and CEO op-ed in *The Toronto Sun* (November 3, 2020)



2021 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission | *February 2021*

The OCC’s 2021 provincial pre-Budget submission contained 17 recommendations aimed at mitigating the economic fallout of the pandemic and laying the groundwork for a strong economic recovery. In particular, the submission underscored the need for policymakers and businesses alike to support the sectors and demographics that have been hardest hit by the pandemic, build the infrastructure and workforce of the future, and modernize government.



2021 Federal Pre-budget Submission | *February 2021*

The OCC’s federal pre-budget submission contained 20 recommendations focused on resilience, growth, and modernization. In particular, the submission included recommendations around tax reform, red tape reduction, small business recovery, health transfer payments, broadband investments, and decarbonization.



Joint Association Statement on Bill C-11 to Update Federal Privacy Legislation | *March 2021*

Together with 32 external stakeholders, the OCC urged Canada’s Parliament to prioritize Bill C-11. The statement highlighted the reality that Canadians are increasingly accessing digital services to support their work, social activities, e-commerce, and for accessing government services. Prioritizing Bill C-11 would help modernize Canada’s federal privacy legislation to achieve national standards for ensuring the adequate protection of consumer data and that Canadian businesses remain competitive.



EVENTS

The OCC was proud to host numerous policy and signature events throughout the past year – all in the virtual world. Our webinars centred around advocacy, consultation, and information sharing. Additionally, our lineup of signature events celebrated business in Ontario, connected our members with government decision-makers, and demonstrated our thought leadership to major stakeholders.



COVID-19 WEBINAR SERIES

With the onset of the pandemic, the OCC quickly pivoted to *virtual events* with the support of our series partners: Canada Life, the Chambers Plan, Bruce Power, Hydro One, and Waste Connections of Canada. These events have continued to provide our Chamber Network and corporate members with timely discussions focused on critical issues facing the business community.

Making Sense of the Federal and Provincial Business Support Programs | *April 2020*

Immigration and Mobility Impacts to Business Due to COVID-19 | *April 2020*

Mitigating your Cybersecurity Risk During COVID-19 | *April 2020*

Cross-Border Transportation During COVID-19 | *April 2020*

Understanding and Accessing the Business Credit Availability Program & Capital Loans During COVID-19 | *April 2020*

As governments rolled out a series of emergency programs to support businesses during the crisis, the OCC hosted a timely discussion to help businesses make informed decisions. During this webinar, experts from three of Canada's top financial institutions – Meridian, MNP and RBC – shared the most up-to-date information on accessing Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) programs and capital loans.

How Big Data is Being Used to Combat COVID-19 | *April 2020*

Information Security and Data Privacy in the Age of COVID-19 | *April 2020*

Clarifying COVID-19 Relief Programs for Business | *May 2020*

Canada's Supply Chain in the COVID-19 Crisis: The CN Perspective | *May 2020*

The Road to Recovery: Town Hall with Premier Ford and Minister Fedeli | *May 2020*

In this session, the OCC sat down with the Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, and the Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. The Premier and Minister discussed and responded to questions about public health efforts, relief programs, and the road to economic recovery.

Reopening Ontario's Economy | *May 2020*

Canada Together: Town Hall with the Hon. Mélanie Joly | *May 2020*

Ontario's Tourism and Hospitality Sector | *May 2020*



Effective Governance: A Solid Foundation is More Important Now Than Ever |

May 2020

Building Canada Stronger: In-Conversation with Former Premiers: Clark, Charest, Lord | June 2020

Over the summer, we hosted a conversation about political leadership in the time of crisis with three former Premiers: the Honourable Jean Charest, the Honourable Christy Clark, and the Honourable Bernard Lord. The discussion explored lessons in leadership from the pandemic and how Ontario/ Canada can build on the spirit of collaboration and resilience exhibited during the pandemic to further strengthen our economies in the post-COVID world.

Webinar with the Hon. Mary Ng | June 2020

Recovery in the Food Processing Industry | June 2020

5G Digital Transformation in the New Economy | June 2020

Small Business Seminar with OCC & RBC: A Shifting Economy & How SMEs are Pivoting During COVID-19 | June 2020

Recognizing that small businesses were pivoting during the pandemic, the OCC partnered with RBC to host a webinar with five SMEs featured in our COVID-19 policy brief entitled, *Small Business, Big Impact*. Panelists shared how the pandemic impacted their operations and strategies they employed to successfully adapt during this difficult time. This webinar was also part of the OCC's #DifferenceMakers campaign, which put a spotlight on SMEs across the Ontario Chamber Network who were giving back to their communities and those on the frontlines of the pandemic.

Conversation with OPG CEO Ken Hartwick: Nuclear Energy as a Key Engine of Ontario's Future | July 2020

Taking Action Against Anti-Black Racism in Corporate Canada | July 2020

In Conversation with Ontario's Mayors: Municipalities in a Post-COVID World | July 2020

How COVID-19 has Impacted Ontario's Health Care System | July 2020

Soon after the launch of the OCC's Health Policy Council, this webinar examined community and home care with panelists from Medavie Health Services, Maple, and George Brown College. The discussion covered a range of pressing issues that emerged with COVID-19, including long-term care, the demand for personal support workers, and shift to virtual care.



Healthcare Outside the Hospital Setting: How COVID-19 has Changed Home and Community Care | *July 2020*

The State of Women's Entrepreneurship in Canada & Panel Discussion | *August 2020*

She Leads, Ontario Prospers: Overcoming the She-Cession | *September 2020*

The OCC partnered with Ontario Power Generation and the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub to release *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19 in Ontario*. The report launch event featured a presentation and interactive discussion with the Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, and the Hon. Jill Dunlop, Associate Minister of Children's Issues.

Oil, Natural Gas, and Economic Recovery | *October 2020*

Small Business: Too Big to Ignore - Breaking the Skills and Digital Divide | *October 2020*

In advance of Small Business Week, the OCC in partnership with the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ) released *Small and Medium-Sized Employers (SMEs): Skills Gaps and Future Skills*. This report is a Skills Next project and a collaboration between the OCC, Ryerson University's Diversity Institute, Public Policy Forum, and Future Skills Centre. The launch included a panel with four business leaders discussing the impact the pandemic has had on SMEs, skills, and digital access.

Envisioning the Future of Aerospace in Ontario | *November 2020*

(Re)building a More Prosperous Canada: In-Conversation with Minister Fortier | *December 2020*

In-Conversation with the Hon. Erin O'Toole | *February 2021*

Canada-US Relations Moving Forward | *February 2021*

Canada and the United States share an extensive history of cooperation, interdependent trade and supply chains, and the longest international border in the world. The inauguration of President Joe Biden on January 20th signals a new era for Canada-US relations. With support from Enbridge, we hosted a discussion with experts from both sides of the border to discuss implications for the COVID-19 crisis, infrastructure, trade, and other areas of policy.

LNG: A Pan-Canadian Opportunity for Economic Recovery | *March 2021*

The Pandemic and the Impact on Working Arrangements | *March 2021*



Rebuilding for an Inclusive Recovery | *March 2021*

In-Conversation with the Premier of Ontario, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Children and Women's Issues | *March 2021*

Growing a More Resilient Food Supply Chain in Ontario | *April 2020*

Recognizing the impact COVID-19 has had on our food supply chain, the OCC partnered with Beef Farmers of Ontario, Durham College, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture on a timely policy brief entitled, *Growing a More Resilient Food Supply Chain in Ontario*. As part of the launch, this webinar allowed our partners to present their unique case studies, share how COVID-19 has impacted farmers, small businesses, and consumers, and examine the steps policymakers can take to strengthen Ontario's agri-food sector.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

2020 Policy Resolution Debate | *September 2020*

The Ontario Chamber Network's annual policy resolution debate took place virtually over Zoom this year. Resolutions put forward by the network help shape the policy agenda of the OCC and drive our advocacy work. In 2020, we passed 35 new policy resolutions.

Ontario Economic Series | *September – November 2020*

In light of the pandemic, the OCC redesigned our annual Ontario Economic Summit as a virtual series. The 2020 Ontario Economic Series was a unique opportunity for networking and learning throughout the Fall, in which prominent academics, politicians, journalists, and thinkers debated the critical topics of the emerging post-COVID world. Sessions included:

- A discussion with Chief Economist of the World Bank, Dr. Joseph Stiglitz, on the future of globalization and Canada's place in the world;
- A panel with the heads of three major Canadian pension plans on the future of institutional investing;
- A conversation with political strategist and former Chair of the Democratic National Committee, Donna Brazile, analyzing the results of the US presidential election; and
- A Business Diversity Economic Expo focused on diversifying supply chains & celebrating inclusivity.



Ontario Business Achievement Awards | *September – December 2020*

During the Ontario Business Achievement Awards, the OCC recognized #DifferenceMakers including paramedics as well as grocery, health care, and construction workers making a difference in their communities during the pandemic. The OCC presented LiUNA's Joseph Mancinelli with the Lifetime Achievement Award and Bruce Power's Mike Rencheck with the 2020 CEO of the Year Award. The awards aired on TLN on December 27 with greetings from cabinet ministers, Premier Ford, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

“ **CEO of the Year Award: “Mike Rencheck’s leadership in guiding Bruce Power and supporting local communities through the COVID-19 pandemic has earned the company’s President and CEO with the Ontario Business Achievement Awards’ (OBAA) CEO of the Year honour for 2020.”**

– Sudbury Star (October 30, 2020)

Ontario Economic Report Launch | *January 2021*

To mark the launch of the fifth annual the Ontario Economic Report (OER), the OCC hosted a webinar that provided attendees with key highlights from the latest member survey. This year's OER shed light on the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had on small businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as specific regions, sectors, and demographics. The event also included remarks from the Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, and Mark Poweska, President and CEO of Hydro One. The OER was made possible with support from Hydro One.

Advocacy Series | *March 2021*

The OCC pivoted its in-person Advocacy Day at Queen's Park to a virtual Advocacy Series in March 2021. Just days ahead of Ontario's 2021 Budget, the OCC kicked off its OCC Advocacy Series with a fireside chat with the Premier of Ontario, Assoc. Minister of Children & Women's Issues Jill Dunlop, and Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy.

Chambers participated in almost 30 meetings with elected officials, meeting with cabinet ministers (Transportation, Finance & Treasury Board, Economic Development Job Creation and Trade, Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, Energy, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs, Labour, Training & Skills Development, Health, Children and Women's Issues, and Colleges and Universities), key members of the NDP & Liberal Caucuses, and the Green Party of Ontario. The focus of the meetings were priorities for the network and how government and business can work together during the crisis on paving the path to recovery.



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

Advance Ontario's Bioeconomy

- ✓ **Action:** In our 2020 federal pre-Budget submission, the OCC recommends that the Government of Canada work with both public and private stakeholders to develop a national bioeconomy strategy.

Canadian Nuclear Innovation

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC continued to support nuclear innovation this year, including via ongoing engagement through our Energy Policy Council, the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council, and the Green Ribbon Panel. Most recently, our 2021 federal pre-Budget submission included recommendations around accelerated cost depreciation for nuclear projects and a pan-Canadian small modular reactor (SMR) strategy.

Putting Wood to Work for Ontarians

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the Government of Ontario released Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy, which includes a plan to remove barriers to accessing wood. Our 2019 report, *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*, also called on government to release socioeconomic impact analyses of all new regulations.

Improving Digital Services and Identity for Ontario Businesses

- ✓ **Action:** The Government of Ontario continues to move forward with digitization through its Building Smarter Government Initiatives (see [Ontario.ca/smart](https://ontario.ca/smart)). This year, the OCC looks forward to working with the Province to implement Digital Identity by the end of 2021. Ontario allows insurers to offer an electronic option for proof of auto insurance as of 2019.

Address Ontario-Quebec Economic Mobility

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2021 Ontario pre-Budget submission encourages the Province to be bold on interprovincial trade and labour mobility, and specifically consider entering into a bilateral agreement with Quebec to recognize each other's meat inspection systems as equivalent. The OCC has also previously signed an MOU with the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ) that outlines eight areas to strengthen trade and economic cooperation between Quebec and Ontario.

Make Carbon Pricing Revenue Neutral

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has continued to call on the federal and provincial governments to design revenue-neutral carbon pricing policies that protect the competitiveness of businesses in energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries. The output-based performance standards introduced by both the federal and provincial governments include such provisions. The OCC also co-authored a resolution, which passed at the 2019 Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM, calling on the federal government to direct carbon tax revenues towards efforts that directly facilitate businesses' transition to a low-carbon economy.

Protect the Viability of Energy-Intensive Trade Exposed companies that have reduced carbon emission in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has continued to call on the federal and provincial governments to design revenue-neutral carbon pricing policies that protect the competitiveness of businesses in energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries. The output-based performance standards introduced by both governments include such provisions. The OCC also co-authored a resolution, which passed at the 2019 Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM, calling on the federal government to direct carbon tax revenues towards efforts that directly facilitate businesses' transition to a low-carbon economy.

Perform a Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Global Adjustment and Time-of-Use Billing programs to restore energy competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the OCC continued to advocate for electricity rate competitiveness through the Energy Policy Council, through submissions and direct meetings with government. Our joint letter and subsequent advocacy with CME and AMPCO emphasize the need to reduce Global Adjustment charges and adopt more competitive industrial rate structures. We are also providing feedback to inform the Ontario Energy Board's electricity pricing reforms for Class B customers.

Balanced Species at Risk Policy Needed to Provide Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- ✓ **Action:** In 2019, the OCC prepared a submission recommending that the Province formally recognize equivalency between the Endangered Species Act and Crown Forest Sustainability Act and ensure all species at risk policies and prescriptions are subject to socioeconomic impact analyses.

Improving the Process for Establishing Regulations That Impact Business

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the Government of Ontario enacted the *Modernizing Ontario for People and Businesses Act*, which will limit additional red tape by creating obligations for all of Ontario's ministries to follow when creating new legislation, regulations, policies, and forms.

Support Ontario's Steel Industry and its Supply Chain Clusters

- ✓ **Action:** In February 2021, the OCC met with Michigan and Ontario officials and hosted a webinar on US-Canada relations, both of which addressed trade barriers for Ontario's steel industry. The need to strengthen trade-enabling infrastructure around clusters was underscored in our 2021 OER, 2020 OER, and *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*.

Supporting Ontario to Become a Leader in Global Mining Innovation

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's 2019 report, *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*, called on the Ontario government to support mining sector innovation by further reducing regulatory barriers and investing in commercialization and technology adoption within the sector.

Changes to Alcohol Retail in Ontario Need to Support Local Industry and Jobs in the Wine and Grape Sector

- ✓ **Action:** The recommendations made in this resolution were echoed in the OCC's 2019 report, *Refreshing the Sale of Beverage Alcohol in Ontario*. In 2020-21, the OCC advocated for alcohol sales and equal market access amid the pandemic, as well as r tax-based reforms for the sector at both the federal and provincial levels.

Ensuring Access to Export Markets for SMEs

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has engaged with Export Development Canada and the Insurance Bureau of Canada on this issue.

Fair Business Practices to Ensure Ontario Stays Competitive

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC met with the provincial government about the need to protect investor confidence with fair contract terms and commit to greater transparency around contract cancellations. Our *letter to Minister Fedeli* in 2019 specifically drew attention to our concerns around canceling the Master Framework Agreement contract with The Beer Store, which would send a signal to future investors. Further, the Auditor General has reviewed the costs of canceling green energy contracts in Ontario since this resolution was passed.

Keeping Ontario's Small Business Support Services Strong

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC asked for long-term funding for Ontario's Small Business Enterprise Centres in our report, *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*.

Reducing Permitting Delays in Mining Exploration

- ✓ **Action:** The Government of Ontario has amended the *Mining Act, 1990* to streamline processes to allow clients to merge mining claims and improve business certainty for proponents of the mining industry by requiring the government to acknowledge mine closure plan amendments within 45 days. These measures were introduced through the *Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2019*. Additional measures to reduce red tape for the mining sector were announced in Ontario's 2021 Spring Red Tape Reduction Package.

Support for free market opportunities to address high electricity prices

- ✓ **Action:** The Government of Ontario is working to enable community net metering. The OCC has continued advocating for competitive electricity pricing through our Energy Policy Council and through consultations with the Ontario Energy Board on alternate pricing designs.

Addressing the challenges of Ontario's largest economic sector: Small Business

- ✓ **Action:** The Province has continued to release biannual red tape reduction bills and is currently developing a Small Business Success Strategy. The OCC will also be hosting regulatory innovation roundtables in 2021 as part of recovery work. Red tape issues were highlighted in our 2021 provincial and federal pre-budget submissions, our food supply chain report, and in meetings with government.

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

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the provincial government advanced innovation in Northern Ontario by releasing its forestry strategy and moving forward with the development of a Northern Road Link to support the Ring of Fire. The OCC makes several policy recommendations to help drive technology adoption and cluster development in Northern Ontario in *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*. This year, we continued pressing for targeted regional and sectoral business supports and our Workforce Development Council has advocated for reskilling programs focused on the future economy, including advanced manufacturing.

In the Spirit of Business

- ✓ **Action:** *Refreshing the Sale of Beverage Alcohol in Ontario* contained a series of policy recommendations aimed at modernizing Ontario's beverage alcohol system. In 2020, the Province introduced policies to make spirits available at farmers markets, extend the Small Cidery and Small Distillery Support Program, and expand made-in-Ontario options at the LCBO.

Support Ontario's Forestry Industry by Establishing an Ontario Commercial Loan Guarantee Program

- ✓ • In 2020, the OCC wrote letters to both the federal and provincial governments around financing support for different sectors. Our upcoming policy brief on access to capital will include a recommendation for a provincial loan guarantee program.

Support Ontario's Growing Cannabis Industry

- ✓ **Action:** *Supporting Ontario's Budding Cannabis Industry* contains several recommendations to support growth within the sector. In 2020, our Ontario Cannabis Policy Council met with the Ontario Cannabis Store and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario to discuss workforce development needs and other opportunities for growth, and our 2020 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission urges the Province to allow licensed producers to directly negotiate with recreational cannabis retailers.

Make the Ring of Fire a Provincial Priority

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the provincial government advanced the Ring of Fire by entering into a historic agreement with Marten Falls and Webequie First Nations to develop a proposed Northern Road Link. In 2021, the OCC will work with its mining members to highlight how the sector's competitiveness can support economic recovery and regional development in Northern Ontario.

Establish a Business Energy Audit Program

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, following the OCC's advocacy, the Ontario government released a new conservation and demand management framework with several programs to support businesses through the IESO. Members of the OCC's Energy Policy Council raised the need for an energy audit program in a meeting with Minister Walker.

FISCAL/ TAXATION

Ontario's debt reduction strategy

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC emphasized the need for a smart debt management plan in the leadup and response to the 2021 Budget. Our 2021 and 2021 Pre-Budget Submissions included specific recommendations around procurement, asset recycling, lost revenue from untaxed activities, and more.

Unrealized "Heads and Beds Levy" hurts Ontario's Economic Competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** In 2021, the OCC will release a policy report on the fiscal sustainability of municipalities, which includes a recommendation to increase the heads and beds levy.

Using the private and not-for-profit sectors to deliver public services

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission calls on the government to improve the productivity of its public sector economy by deploying a commissioning approach – where appropriate – to improve the design of service delivery value chains. This year, the OCC has advised government on improving procurement within healthcare and specifically around virtual care.

Maintain Ontario's mining tax rates

- ✓ **Action:** In 2021, the OCC's economic recovery work will advocate for pro-growth policies that broaden the tax base to generate revenue rather than increase tax rates.

Addressing US tax cuts and maintaining Ontario's business competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** This year, the OCC has worked with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce on comprehensive tax reforms. Our 2021 federal pre-budget submission urges Canada to use its tax system to power economic recovery and future growth. The Ontario government's biannual red tape bills have continued to tackle red tape for businesses. The OCC's economic recovery work will focus on business competitiveness and pro-growth policies.

Cannabis Excise Tax

- ✓ **Action:** As a result of OCC advocacy, the Ontario government agreed to help 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 provincial and municipal governments to improve efficiency, service delivery, and cost

- ✓ **Action:** In 2021, the OCC will release a policy report on the fiscal sustainability of municipalities, which calls on the Province to review responsibilities between different levels of government to assess whether residents and taxpayers are better served by these responsibilities residing with the federal, provincial, or municipal governments.

Protect tourism industry competitiveness within the Municipal Accommodation Tax

- ✓ **Action:** In 2021, the OCC will release a policy report on the fiscal sustainability of municipalities, which recommends modernization of the Municipal Accommodation Tax.

Getting Ontario Back to Fiscal Balance

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC emphasized the need for a smart debt management plan in the leadup and response to the 2021 Budget. Our 2021 and 2021 Pre-Budget Submissions included specific recommendations around procurement, asset recycling, lost revenue from untaxed activities, and more.

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

- ✓ **Action:** In Budget 2019, the Ontario 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. The OCC's recovery work will advocate for opportunities to improve the efficiency and outcomes of Ontario's public sector.

Achieving property tax fairness across Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** In 2021, the OCC will release a policy report on the fiscal sustainability of municipalities, which recommends a comprehensive review of Ontario's property tax system and an elimination of non-residential provincial property taxes, among other things.

Regional approach to provincial procurement reform

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's 2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission calls on the government to take a measured approach to centralized procurement. This includes protecting the competitiveness of businesses outside the GTA, which can be done through a more regionalized model.

INFRASTRUCTURE/ TRANSPORTATION

Essential service designation for provincially funded transit services

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

Goods and people movement long-range, multimodal, integrated transportation plan

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC raised this issue at a consultation with the Ontario government. It was also featured in *Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs*. The Province is currently developing region-specific transportation plans.

Develop a provincial long-term broadband strategy

- ✓ **Action:** Federal and provincial governments committed to taking meaningful action on broadband this year. This includes a provincial investment of nearly \$1 billion over six years to expand broadband/cellular infrastructure and legislation to reduce costs associated with attaching wirelines to hydro utility poles. The OCC has continued advocating for acceleration of these investments in our *2021 Ontario Economic Report*, federal and provincial pre-budget submissions, *Realizing the Full Potential of Virtual Care in Ontario*, *Growing a More Resilient Food Supply Chain in Ontario*, and in meetings with government.

Providing transportation for small communities to help small businesses move and employ people

- ✓ **Action:** In March 2020, Ontario announced \$365 million to expand and improve local transportation. Through the Gas Tax program, 111 municipalities will receive funding to upgrade infrastructure, purchase vehicles, add more routes, extend hours of service, and increase accessibility. The OCC has continued raising this issue in meetings with government.

Amend the Ontario Labour Relations Act To Enable Fair And Open Tendering For Public Infrastructure Projects

- ✓ **Action:** In April 2019, Ontario passed the *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act*. Among other things, this will amend the Labour Relations Act to explicitly classify public bodies, including municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities, as non-construction employers. This will enable fair and open tendering for public infrastructure projects.

Encouraging Municipal Government Collaboration to Address Transit Needs and Gaps

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC advocates for policies that enable and encourage regional collaboration in our 2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission, *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*, and our upcoming report on the fiscal sustainability of municipalities.

Enhancing Highway Connectivity

- ✓ **Action:** In August 2019, Ontario's Ministry of Transportation announced that it would be moving forward with the Bradford Bypass. The project is currently undergoing the Preliminary Design process, which is anticipated to be completed in early 2023.

Improve Ontario's Transportation System with Better Quality Roadways

- ✓ **Action:** The 2020 federal and Ontario Budgets announced new investments in climate-resilient infrastructure. Our 2020 Ontario Economic Report included a focus on trade-enabling infrastructure.

Investing in Northern Ontario's Highway Infrastructure

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC highlighted the importance of investing in Northern Ontario's transportation infrastructure in *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies, Moving Forward: Towards a Strategic Approach to Ontario's Transportation Needs*, and meetings with the Ministry of Transportation.

Empower all municipalities to build and maintain essential infrastructure

- ✓ **Action:** In June 2020, the OCC's Infrastructure Policy Council met with Ontario's Minister of Infrastructure to discuss the role of infrastructure in economic recovery and opportunities to strengthen infrastructure programs.

Regional transportation fare integration

- ✓ **Action:** This year, the OCC engaged with local chambers on the issue of fare integration, including the Toronto Region Board of Trade to inform their report on regional transportation.

Support for Metrolinx Big Move and Next Wave Priority Projects

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will explore these projects as part of our work around economic recovery and through our relaunched Infrastructure Policy Council.

An Economic Connection

- ✓ **Action:** Federal and provincial governments committed to taking meaningful action on broadband this year. This includes a provincial investment of nearly \$1 billion over six years to expand broadband/cellular infrastructure and legislation to reduce costs associated with attaching wirelines to hydro utility poles. The OCC has continued advocating for smart investments that target underserved areas of the province in our letters, reports, and meetings with government.

Provincial transportation network connectedness enhancement

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will explore this transportation issue as part of its work around economic recovery and through our relaunched Infrastructure Policy Council.

Reducing traffic congestion on Ontario's highways due to vehicular accidents

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the OCC discussed this resolution with the CAA, and we have continued to advocate for infrastructure needed to alleviate congestion along critical transportation corridors.

HOUSING

Land use planning, housing affordability, and talent attraction

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the Province updated the Provincial Policy Statement to give municipalities greater flexibility over density requirements and help ensure an adequate supply of land on which to build more housing. Additionally, the government passed

the *More Homes, More Choice Act* in 2019, with reforms designed to shorten approvals, incentivize the building of a variety of housing types, and provide certainty in the calculation of development levies.

Maximizing growth in built areas

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has continued to advocate for a balance between intensification and heritage preservation as the Ontario government updates its growth plans and associated regulations. With regard to building accessibility, the Ontario government's Inclusive Community Grants program invested in multiple new projects in 2021, including efforts to make public buildings more accessible in 13 rural communities.

Reinvest in our communities - Ontario version of the Michigan Community Revitalization program

- ✓ **Action:** In 2021, the OCC convened Michigan and Ontario officials to discuss areas of mutual interest. This will lead to ongoing collaboration on a range of issues.

Taking a Principled Approach to Growth and the Planning Process

- ✓ **Action:** In 2019-20, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing updated the Provincial Policy Statement, passed the *More Homes, More Choice Act*, and reviewed various growth plans and regulations around development to help reduce red tape and support principled economic growth in communities across Ontario. The OCC participated in several consultations to inform the outcomes of these reviews.

Ontario's Residential Tenancies Act

- ✓ **Action:** In July 2020, the Ontario government passed the *Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act*, which will reform the *Residential Tenancies Act*. Among other things, these amendments will reduce delays in the dispute resolution process and allow landlords to recover costs when tenants act in bad faith. The Chamber Network also raised the issue in an Advocacy Day meeting with the Ministry of Housing.

Addressing Housing Shortage by Updating the Approvals Process

- ✓ **Action:** Ontario's 2021 Spring Red Tape Reduction Package included plans to establish a digital "one-stop shop" to help navigate Ontario's development approvals and permitting process. The OCC will continue to explore opportunities to modernize development approvals in our upcoming initiatives on regulatory innovation and economic recovery.

Addressing the Low-Income Housing Crisis

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will explore housing challenges in our upcoming work on economic recovery and look for opportunities to partner with other organizations on this issue.

Resolving Ontario's Housing Crisis to Support Economic Growth

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC will explore housing challenges in our upcoming work on economic recovery and look for opportunities to partner with other organizations on this issue.

SKILLS

Creating Pan-Canadian Training and Certification Standards

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission emphasized the need for interprovincial labour mobility and our Workforce Development Council has continued to raise this issue in meetings and consultations with the Ontario government.

Strengthening Labour Market Information for Business Competitiveness

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2021 federal and provincial pre-budget submissions urged both governments to work together to strengthen labour market information, which will be critical to reskilling efforts post-pandemic.

Closing the Skills Gap

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's 2021 provincial pre-budget submission and our Workforce Development Council have continued advocating for experiential learning opportunities and investments in post-secondary training programs. In March 2021, the Ontario government announced an investment of \$39.5 million to help create up to 8,000 paid research internships and upskilling opportunities for postsecondary students, postdoctoral fellows, and recent graduates through Mitacs.

Open Canada Ontario Job Grant Eligibility to Small Business Owners

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's federal and provincial pre-budget submissions this year called on governments to increase the supports available to small businesses and non-profit organizations that have fewer resources available to dedicate to skills development, which will be critical during economic recovery.

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:** Our 2019 federal election document (Business Priorities for the Incoming Federal Government) called on the Government of Canada to promote Select for Success and scale the program to engage a broader number of businesses. Our federal and provincial pre-budget submissions this year continued to call on governments to increase the supports available to small and rural employers that have fewer resources available for skills training.

Reform of Ontario Apprenticeships and Retraining

- ✓ **Action:** The Province took steps to improve the apprenticeship system through the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018* 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 2019, the Government of Ontario announced a new education plan, which included mandatory elementary- and secondary-level courses on financial literacy.

Addressing Local Labour Market Needs through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program

- ✓ **Action:** In 2019, the Governments of Ontario and Canada both introduced regional immigration pilot programs to help address local labour market needs. The OCC has advocated in favour of implementing these programs, evaluating their outcomes, and establishing them as permanent programs if deemed successful. Further, our 2021 federal pre-budget submission calls on the government to increase Ontario's allocation of economic immigrants by expanding the OINP, work with the provinces/territories to streamline requirements and reduce wait times, and expand the NOC categories.

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

- ✓ **Action:** In 2019, the Government of Ontario 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 OCC called for a flexible apprenticeship system to address local workforce development needs in our 2020 provincial pre-Budget submission. Our Workforce Development Council has also raised this issue in meetings and consultations with government.

Addressing Ontario's Skills Gap at the Secondary School Level

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC and its members provided specific recommendations to address this issue at a roundtable with Minister Todd Smith and Jamil Javani in February 2021. In *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19*, the OCC underscores the need to expose school-aged girls to opportunities in the skilled trades.

Keeping the Best Pieces of the Ontario College of Trades in the Wind Down

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has discussed the wind down of the Ontario College of Trades with the provincial government and recommended that the government retain the public registry and create clear pathways for international and interprovincial skilled tradespeople to transition easily into Ontario's workforce.

Strengthen Connectivity Between Businesses and Post-Secondary Institutions

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC's 2021 provincial pre-budget submission underscored the need to develop demand-driven skills programming through strong partnerships between post-secondary institutions and employers.

Improving Indigenous Education in Ontario

- ✓ **Action:** In February 2020, the Government of Ontario announced it would increase annual funding for Indigenous Institutes by \$1.8 million. The OCC called on the Ontario government to provide long-term funding for the Institutes in *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*.

Improve Early Childhood Educational Outcomes Through Expanded Education Opportunities, Targeted Programming, and Innovation in the Classroom

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2020 report – *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19* – urges government to address the shortage of early childhood educators in Ontario. Education will also be explored in our upcoming work on economic recovery.

Improving Skilled Trades in the Secondary Schools

- ✓ **Action:** In Budget 2020, the Ontario government reaffirmed its commitment to modernizing Ontario's skilled trades system. The OCC and its members provided specific recommendations to address the skilled trades shortage in roundtables with government this year. In *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19*, the OCC underscores the need to expose school-aged girls to opportunities in the skilled trades.

Investing in Ontario's International Undergraduate Student Entrepreneurs

- ✓ **Action:** In May 2021, the OCC will release a report on access to capital for small businesses and entrepreneurs. The report will include a recommendation inspired by this resolution.

Maintaining Investment and Innovation in Ontario's Public Education System

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

More systems needed in place to encourage women to pursue a career in skilled trades

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2020 report – *The She-Covery Project: Confronting the Gendered Economic Impacts of COVID-19* – includes several recommendations to encourage and enable women to pursue a career in the skilled trades, from early education about the sector to child care support.

Re-calibrating primary and secondary education to close the skills deficit

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has continued to advocate for demand-driven skills programming that extends from schools to mid-career training in meetings with government and written submissions. In 2020-21, the Ontario government invested \$288 million in its Skilled Trades Strategy, which includes an expansion of the Specialist High Skills Major Program, a new pilot bursary program for hands-on learning in the skilled trades, and an expansion of the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.

SPECIAL ISSUES

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:** In 2021, the OCC will publish a Mental Health Toolkit with resources for employers.

Province of Ontario Wide Load Permit

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC has discussed this issue with its members and will explore it further as part of our regulatory modernization initiative in 2021.

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

- ✓ **Action:** In 2020, the OCC wrote a letter to the Ontario government with input from our Energy Policy Council on opportunities for economic recovery. Our letter underscored the benefits that energy efficiency (including within the housing sector) can provide to mitigate climate change and support high-quality job creation.

Increasing Democracy in Ontario's Workplaces

- ✓ **Action:** Through the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018*, 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*. If passed, it will amend the *Highway Traffic Act* to allow certain auto dealers to license vehicles directly.

Protect Employers Right to Screen for Police Records

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

Scale back the 'one size fits all' scheduling provisions of Bill 148

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

Addressing Employment Standards Act

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

Auto Insurance Reform: Making Premiums Affordable

- ✓ **Action:** In April 2019, the government released Putting Drivers First: A Blueprint for Ontario's Auto Insurance System, which commits to improving Ontario's auto insurance system and making auto insurance more affordable for Ontario drivers. According to Budget 2020, next steps will include modernizing outdated and burdensome requirements; tackling fraudulent activities that drive up auto insurance system costs; and increasing choice for consumers by enabling insurers to offer more coverage options.

Brownfield Act Overhaul

- ✓ **Action:** In December 2019, the government introduced several amendments to Ontario's Brownfield Regulation (O. Reg. 153/04) to facilitate a more flexible approach to obtaining approvals for redevelopment. Additional measures to reduce red tape around brownfield redevelopments were announced in Ontario's 2021 Spring Red Tape Reduction Package.

Forestry Strategy: Fireproofing Communities through Public Forest Access Roads

- ✓ **Action:** The Government of Ontario released a forestry strategy in August 2020 – Sustainable Growth: Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy – which includes commits to protecting critical forest access road infrastructure. Our 2019 report, *The Great Mosaic: Reviving Ontario's Regional Economies*, called on the government to reinstate the original funding level to ensure Forest Access Roads can continue to facilitate economic activity in the North.

Improving Support for Employers

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

Remove Canadian Residency Requirement for Ontario Corporations

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

Accounting for Economic Outcomes in Regional Collaboration Projects

- ✓ **Action:** In our 2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission, the OCC urged the Province to encourage and support regional collaboration by (among other things) allowing municipalities to account for the jobs and other outcomes they have helped generate through regional projects.

Bettering Ontario Workplaces

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC is working with the Government of Ontario on efforts to centralize and streamline business supports as part of their ongoing regulatory modernization.

Healthcare Crisis: Demand Exceeds Supply

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2021 federal pre-budget submission encouraged the government to increase health transfer payments to Ontario. The OCC also hosted a number of health-related meetings and events in 2020-2021 and our Health Policy Council continues to advocate for improvements to Ontario's healthcare system.

Maintaining Rural Emergency Services

- ✓ **Action:** In Budget 2021, the Province announced \$30.2 billion over the next 10 years in hospital infrastructure, which will create more than 3,100 additional hospital beds.

Making Data More User Friendly

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC discussed ways to improve Ontario's open data system directly with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and in our 2020 report, *In Data We Trust: Unlocking the Value of Data in Ontario*.

Making Ontario a Leader in Smart Government

- ✓ **Action:** Our 2021 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission contained the recommendations in this resolution. Meanwhile, the Government of Ontario has continued moving forward with digitization through its Building Smarter Government Initiatives (see Ontario.ca/smart). The OCC looks forward to working with the Province to implement Digital Identity by the end of 2021.

Ontario's Planning for Urban Mobility - Smart Cities and Digital Transformation

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC is relaunching its Infrastructure Policy Council in 2021. The issue of smart transportation will be explored by the Council and as part of the OCC's upcoming work on economic recovery.

Making the Ontario Energy Board Hearing Process More Accessible

- ✓ **Action:** The OCC is participating in a consultation with the Province to improve Ontario's long-term energy planning processes and clarify the roles of Government, the IESO, and the OEB. Our Energy Policy Council is providing feedback on opportunities to improve effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and engagement with stakeholders.

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