

April 15, 2025

Hon. Kinga Surma
Minister of Infrastructure
5th Flr, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Energy and Mines (Responsible for Broadband Expansion)
10th Flr, 77 Grenville St.
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C1

Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria
Minister of Transportation
5th Flr, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z8

RE: Ontario Business Imperative: Building Growth-Enabling Infrastructure

Dear Ministers Surma, Lecce, and Sarkaria,

Congratulations on your re-election and renewed mandate to protect Ontario's economy and enhance its competitiveness. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) looks forward to working collaboratively with you and your government to drive inclusive, sustainable economic growth.

Today, I write on behalf of our [Infrastructure Policy Council](#), a group of business leaders from a wide range of sectors, including construction, engineering, finance, transportation, municipal, and broadband, to provide recommendations that will strengthen Ontario's infrastructure and transportation ecosystems.

Our infrastructure and built environment are undergoing significant transformation due to climate change impacts, technological disruption, and demographic shifts. To ensure this sector remains globally competitive and supports economic growth, we must prioritize significant **modernization, accelerate project delivery, and unlock future-oriented investments**. Meaningful engagement with businesses, municipalities, and Indigenous communities will be essential in supporting these aims, ensuring infrastructure planning and delivery are inclusive, coordinated, and responsive to local needs while promoting responsible land use and sustainable growth.

As the legislature resumes, the Ontario Chamber urges your government to build upon recent efforts and take the following steps to advance key infrastructure priorities, including:

1. **Modernizing infrastructure development and approvals:** Streamlining regulatory approvals and modernizing public procurement processes from planning and design to construction and maintenance will improve Ontario's investment climate. These changes will also accelerate the delivery of critical infrastructure projects.
 - o Reduce permitting delays and improve project delivery by modernizing locates delivery, implementing standardized procurement contracts, adopting emerging technologies, and addressing resource and staffing constraints to eliminate bottlenecks and drive efficiencies throughout the development process.
 - o Prioritize environmental and agricultural stewardship by optimizing the use of existing settlement areas, protecting employment lands, and increasing transparency in project pipelines to attract investment, improve resource efficiency, and ensure infrastructure keeps pace with Ontario's population and economic growth.

2. **Enhancing supply chain resilience and regional connectivity:** A strong transportation and supply chain network is essential for Ontario's economic growth and competitiveness.
 - o Strengthen critical trade and transportation corridors by addressing infrastructure bottlenecks and investing in Northern Ontario's highway infrastructure and forest road networks. This will mitigate risks posed by evolving trade dynamics, climate-related events, and supply chain disruptions.
 - o Invest in sustainable and modern transit by expanding zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, upgrading transit systems, and increasing support for public transportation, such as GO Transit expansion and High-Speed Rail. These investments will reduce congestion, improve network visibility, and support sustainable growth.
 - o Protect manufacturing capacity through actions such as broadening criteria for the Ontario-Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit to safeguard trade-exposed jobs across the province.
 - o Prioritize infrastructure that improves mobility and supply chain resilience, including trade corridors, airports, ports, and intermodal hubs, to ensure Ontario remains a leader in economic development and environmental sustainability.
 - o Ensure infrastructure investments are cost-effective and discourage the inefficient expansion of settlement areas that consume and further fragment agricultural lands, contributing to long-term economic and environmental resilience.

3. **Integrating resource planning and future-proofing infrastructure:** Proactive infrastructure planning—guided by a whole-of-government approach—is critical to addressing workforce

gaps, mitigating climate and trade risks, and extending the lifespan and value of both public and natural infrastructure assets.

- o Address infrastructure gaps and strengthen climate resilience by tackling municipal infrastructure backlogs, mitigating project cost implications from tariffs, advancing state-of-good-repair projects, strengthening climate adaptation measures, and investing in resilient infrastructure and opportunities to ‘build back better’.
 - o Integrate electricity and broadband planning by coordinating infrastructure upgrades that align energy system modernization with the need for expanded digital connectivity, particularly in underserved and rural communities. This will maximize efficiency, reduce duplication of efforts, and support economic and productivity growth.
 - o Leverage digital technologies, such as digital twinning in resource planning, and expand infrastructure investments to create a more future-ready system.
 - o Build and preserve the right supply mix of affordable housing along the continuum by promoting innovative construction technologies, developing housing strategies tailored to address regional challenges and student housing needs, and supporting the renewal and expansion of non-profit and cooperative housing.
4. **Expanding broadband and digital connectivity:** Reliable broadband and sustainable competition are fundamental to Ontario’s economy, education system, and public services, yet many rural, remote, and Indigenous communities still face significant connectivity gaps.
- o Remove barriers to broadband deployment while considering unique demographic, infrastructural, and geographical challenges across regions and strengthen digital infrastructure resilience. This means supporting faster permitting, improving coordination, and fostering public-private partnerships.
 - o Increase and incentivize long-term investments that support next-generation digital infrastructure, such as smart transportation systems, autonomous vehicles, smart energy grids, telehealth, and environmental monitoring systems, to enhance service quality, support innovation, and position Ontario for long-term economic growth and competitiveness in an increasingly digital world.

As we deal with shifting economic headwinds, there has never been a greater need for a proactive policy strategy that supports the industries of today and strengthens foundation for the industries of tomorrow.

The OCC and its members are committed to working collaboratively with your ministries to respond to today's threats and build towards our shared goal of inclusive, sustainable prosperity.

Sincerely,



Daniel Tisch
President & CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce

cc.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney, President of the Treasury Board

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff, Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries

Doug DeRabbie, Chair, OCC Infrastructure Policy Council & Director, Government and Stakeholder Relations, Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – Ontario