

# Council of Ontario Construction Associations Report to the Membership

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June 2022

**Council of Ontario Construction Associations**

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The Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA) is a federation of 30 construction associations whose 10,000 general and trade contractor members operate in the industrial, commercial, institutional, and heavy civil segments of the construction industry in all regions of the province. These affiliated contractors are enterprises of all sizes from smallest to largest and are both unionized and non-union. COCA is mandated to work with our members and senior officials in the Ontario government to ensure that the province's laws and regulations support success in the construction industry and broad prosperity across the province. COCA is your voice at Queen's Park.

I'm pleased to submit this brief report highlighting some of the activities and accomplishments of your provincial construction federation over the past six months. As in the past, I will provide this summary in two parts: 1) Government Relations; and 2) Association Initiatives.

## Government Relations

- Our pre-budget submission to the government recommended a review of the Construction Act, strengthening the province's workers' compensation system, relief for contractors from pandemic related delay claims and unanticipated costs, strengthening the province's workers' compensation system, investing in public infrastructure maintenance and expansion, accelerating the development of Ontario's new skilled trades and apprenticeship system and working with the federal government to admit more immigrants with skilled trades qualifications into Ontario. [View the submission.](#)
- We provided advice from a construction industry perspective to the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development's employment standards consultation and to the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks' proposal to increase administrative monetary penalties for environmental infractions
- We initiated relationships with the WSIB's newly appointed Chair, Grant Walsh and President & CEO Jeff Lang
- We worked with the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development's Chief Prevention Officer to encourage construction employers to access supplies of antigen rapid tests that were made available free of charge from the government and to be deployed at worksites as an additional screening tool
- We collaborated with the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development with respect to policies to support the distribution by the WSIB of surplus funds to qualifying employers; approximately \$1.3 billion was distributed to employers

- We attempted to demystify the widely misunderstood need for employer vaccination policies
- We engaged with stakeholders to the Construction Act to pursue a review of the Construction Act with shared ideas for reform
- COCA vigorously but unsuccessfully opposed Schedule 4 of Bill 88 which amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act in three ways: 1. to require certain construction employers to have naloxone kits on their work sites and to train workers in their use; 2. to increase fines for OHSA convictions for owners and directors from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000; 3. To extend limitations periods for prosecutions from one year to two.
- Prior to the Ontario general election, letters were sent to the leaders of all major political parties identifying COCA's six "asks" if their party was elected to form government. These "asks" were:
  - i. Initiate a review of the Construction Act
  - ii. Strengthen the province's workers compensation system
  - iii. Continue with long term commitments to the province's core infrastructure maintenance and development with projects sequenced in a way that as much as possible smooths the demand for construction services, to ensure competitive prices from multiple bids and to avoid stretching beyond the capacity of the industry
  - iv. Commit to ensuring that the province's new apprenticeship and skilled trades system becomes fully operational and begins its work at an accelerated pace to make up for four lost years.
  - v. Work collaboratively with the federal government towards the admission into Ontario of a much greater number of immigrants with construction trades skills to help fill the skills gap in a more immediate way
  - vi. Provide relief for contractors from pandemic-related costs, project delay claims, not reasonably anticipated skyrocketing increases in project input costs

## Association Initiatives

- Our annual Year in Review publication titled “Building Towards a Brighter Future” which describes the activities and successes of COCA in 2021 in full detail, was published and distributed in February 2022. [View the Year in Review](#)
- A successful virtual Annual General Meeting was held on March 1, 2022; COCA’s independent auditors reported on the successful financial performance over the 2020-21 financial year and on the association’s solid financial position
- COCA relocated to new offices at 123 Edward Street, Suite 926, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1E2
- By unanimous agreement of the board of directors, COCA donated \$10,000 to the Ukrainian Humanitarian Relief Fund. Member associations were encouraged to make donations also.
- An inclusivity statement was developed to be read aloud at the beginning of every COCA meeting
- A successful Members Dinner was held on the evening of June 8<sup>th</sup> and our Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony was held on June 9<sup>th</sup> in Niagara Falls. Award recipients included former WSIB Chair Elizabeth Witmer, lawyer Michael Sherrard who led the review of the province’s skilled trades system, former longtime Building and Construction Trades Business Manager Patrick Dillon and the late Andy Pilat, longtime General manager of the Sarnia Construction Association.
- The board of directors approved the development of a social media campaign to elevate awareness of the prompt payment and adjudication provisions of the Construction Act. Lack of awareness is believed to be the major cause of the underutilization of adjudication.
- Representatives from Support Ontario Youth and a company called Spotwork made presentations to COCA’s Chief Operating Officers Committee regarding their initiatives to address the skills shortage. The shortage of skilled trades people is perhaps the industry’s greatest challenge at this time.
- COCA provided advice to the WSIB with regard to refinements to its health and safety index.

## Conclusion

I hope these highlights of your provincial federation's activities and accomplishments over the past six months have served to make your association, your members and the industry in your region more successful. After all, it is on behalf of the membership that this work is performed.

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### COCA Members Stronger Together

Acoustical Association of Ontario  
Architectural Glass & Metal Contractors Association  
Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario  
Barrie Construction Association  
Canadian Farm Builders Association  
Canadian Institute of Steel Construction  
Concrete Floor Contractors Association  
Construction Association of Thunder Bay  
Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario  
Grand Valley Construction Association  
Hamilton-Halton Construction Association  
Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario  
London and District Construction Association  
Niagara Construction Association  
Northeastern Ontario Construction Association  
Ontario Association of Demolition Contractors  
Ontario Erectors Association  
Ontario Industrial Roofing Contractors Association

Ontario Masonry Contractors Association  
Ontario Painting Contractors Association  
Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association  
Ontario Structural Steel Fabricators Association  
Peterborough Construction Association  
Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada  
Reinforcing Steel Institute of Ontario  
Sarnia Construction Association  
Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association  
Toronto Construction Association  
Utility Contractors' Association of Ontario  
Windsor Construction Association

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