



Tuesday, August 4, 2020

CDAO Opening Remarks to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

Good Afternoon. My name is Sandro Perruzza, and I am the Chair of the Board of the Construction & Design Alliance of Ontario, or CDAO. I am pleased to introduce my colleague and co-presenter, Andy Manahan, the Vice Chair of the CDAO Board. It is our privilege to represent our members here today, and we wish to express our gratitude to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs for the opportunity to share the collective knowledge, expertise and experiences of the CDAO membership and our recommendations on how to build infrastructure effectively and efficiently, so it serves the citizens of this great province.

The 16 member organizations of CDAO represent the various provincial industry associations which plan, design, build, operate, and maintain the vast majority of public and private infrastructure in Ontario, including the supply chain. Collectively, our member companies employ hundreds of thousands of workers in this province and account for billions of dollars of local economic development and growth. Quite simply, we are the respected collective voice of the infrastructure sector.

This group of organizations have come together early on during the onset of COVID-19. We worked along side of our labour and industry partners to codevelop new H&S protocols that were eventually adopted by the province as the gold standard in our industry. This demonstrates our highest priority, which is the health, safety and wellness of our collective workforce. Our member organizations also collected and donated personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer to front line workers, including our health care practitioners. We are an industry that not only builds Ontario, but cares about the future of Ontario.

One of the most important components of economic recovery will be the restoration of government investment in public infrastructure. These investments have the dual effect of generating jobs and enhancing prospects for future economic growth, both of which will be critical for economic recovery at both the municipal and provincial levels.

It is our pleasure to share the following recommendations:

1. *Implement covid-19 contract provisions*

A legislated provision for accommodation (both time and compensation) should be inserted into all construction and professional services contracts where the effects of COVID-19 might result in failure to perform or delay, including workforce and supply chain considerations. This could be performed under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

2. *The Government should develop a comprehensive project investment pipeline document, similar to that of the Infrastructure Ontario P3 Market Forecast. This would allow proper sequencing, scheduling and preparation of market resources which can be sufficiently marshalled and coordinated to maximize and streamline industry's response to the Province's needs*

3. *Ensure that infrastructure stimulus funding is allocated to capital projects based on evidence-based, business-case approaches, supported by asset management plans for municipal projects.*

4. *Place more emphasis on the role of organizations such as Infrastructure Ontario and the Canada Infrastructure Bank in assisting the municipal sector deliver worthwhile projects. For example, they can seek out opportunities for regionalizing the management of infrastructure in small- and medium-sized municipalities.*

5. *Continue investing and supporting training and education programs in the construction industry as skilled trade shortages will continue to be a factor. The government should also begin investing in addressing the skills leakage that is occurring in the design sector as there is a growing shortage of professionals needed to design the infrastructure we need for the future.*

6. *Utilize our COVID-19 response to achieve climate stability and build our province's capacity to build sustainably.*

As we look to develop an economic response to COVID-19 and beyond, there is an excellent opportunity to expand and create new jobs and business opportunities by promoting research and local manufacturing of the building materials needed for the construction industry as it transitions to greater sustainability.

Building products and regulations that support sustainability and resiliency efforts, such as engineered mass timber components which sequesters carbon should be considered.

Many building-related products are currently imported from abroad, slowing down timelines, impacting efficiencies and costs. While this would create new jobs and business opportunities, an Ontario that invests in new build projects would have the additional benefit of ensuring we are resilient to the increasing likelihood of more severe climate events on the horizon. Providing a supportive business climate, including appropriate incentives, will help to usher in a lower carbon future. For example, encouraging the renovation of the province's existing building stock will result in the reduction of emissions and operational energy costs.

7. *Streamline the regulatory and development approvals process in Ontario. Although the recent changes to Municipal Class Environmental Assessments are welcomed, there is still much work to do. Ontario's development planning and building approvals processes are much slower and less innovation focused than many other advanced jurisdictions. Research shows that site plan control approvals that should take one month often take more than nine months and the approval target timeline for a complex Official Plan and/or Zoning Bylaw amendment application that should take no more than nine months requires more than three years to be approved.*
8. *Work with the Federal Government to upgrade and modernize the digital infrastructure that will ensure businesses and workers succeed. Covid-19 has shown the disparities in access to broadband internet across the province. In a knowledge-based economy, this is simply unacceptable and must be addressed.*
9. *Invest in Ontario's Mining Industry, in building access corridors in Northern Ontario communities and resources, including the development of the Ring of Fire.*

Thank you for your consideration. During the question and answer phase, we will both be answering your questions. Thank you for the opportunity.