

## Cabinet shuffle ‘not surprising,’ transportation in new hands

Angela Gismondi January 24, 2018

**With the June provincial election on the horizon, construction industry stakeholders are saying the biggest change in Premier Kathleen Wynne’s recent cabinet shuffle is on the transportation file.**

Kathryn McGarry, who until recently was the minister of natural resources and forestry, has replaced former Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca, who becomes the minister of economic development and growth.

“Minister Del Duca has done an outstanding job and has a tremendous amount of respect for our members and I know he’ll be sorely missed,” said David Caplan, chief operating officer of the Ontario Road Builders’ Association (ORBA).

“Kathryn McGarry is no stranger, however. She was formerly parliamentary assistant (to the Minister of Transportation), has attended ORBA’s convention previously and she has a good understanding of issues particularly having come from natural resources. She brings a wealth of knowledge.

“She’s very thoughtful and I think that’s really going to help maintain that strong relationship between the ministry and the Ontario Road Builders’ Association.”

Del Duca was slated to attend the ORBA Convention on Feb. 6. Caplan said he spoke with McGarry the day after she was sworn in and while she is “familiar with the event” and “expressed interest,” her ability to attend will depend on scheduling.

Del Duca held the position of transportation minister since 2014.

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— **Andy Manahan**

**Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario**

“He was very popular in the construction industry and he was accessible,” said Ian Cunningham, president of the Council of Ontario Construction Associations, adding many politicians like the economic development file. “Minister Del Duca is a good choice for that. He is a good communicator.”

Cunningham said he is looking forward to working with McGarry in her new role.

Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO), said he doesn't think there will be much change on specific files. Although McGarry was involved in drafting the province's first driverless car regulations, Manahan said he expects Del Duca and McGarry to work closely on the matter.

"I do expect that Del Duca will probably work with McGarry on the automated vehicle file," said Manahan.

Stakeholders also agreed the shuffle was not much of a surprise as three ministers previously announced they were not running in the June election — former Deputy Premier and Advanced Education Minister Deb Matthews, Treasury Board President Liz Sandals and Economic Development Minister Brad Duguid.

"We already knew that three senior ministers wouldn't be seeking reelection so it's not surprising," said Cunningham. "We knew it would be coming but we didn't know when. A shift in cabinet is a complicated exercise with a lot of different layers."

Both Cunningham and Manahan said the shuffle indicates the Liberals are trying to improve their re-election chances.

"Ministers were appointed from ridings where the Liberals need to improve their presence," Cunningham noted.

Three backbenchers were also promoted into cabinet: Nathalie Des Rosiers has been promoted to natural resources minister; Daiene Vernile becomes the minister of tourism, culture and sport; and Harinder Malhi is the new minister of the status of women.

Manahan said it's interesting the three new ministers are women.

"I think they're following what the Trudeau government did to create more of a balance," he noted.

Other changes in the cabinet include Mitzie Hunter moving from education minister to become minister of advanced education; Eleanor McMahon who leaves her role as tourism, culture and sport minister to lead the treasury board; and Indira Naidoo-Harris, the status of women minister and minister responsible for early years and child care, will fill the role of education minister, while keeping her early years and child care responsibilities.