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Industry no stranger to new transportation minister

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Ontario's construction industry looks forward to continuing its strong relationship with MPP Steven Del Duca, as he takes on his new role as the province's transportation minister.

"ORBA has had a great working relationship with him over the last few years in his role as PA to the Minister of Finance. We worked closely with him around legislation on prompt payment and other issues important to the industry. We hope to continue that going forward," said Ontario Road Builders' Association director of government relations Ashley De Souza.

Del Duca will be in charge of the Liberals' plan, which includes investing \$130 billion over the next 10 years in transportation and infrastructure, including \$29 billion dedicated to transit and transportation. This \$29 billion investment will be broken into \$15 billion for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and \$14 billion for the rest of Ontario.

"We are generally supportive of the approach the government is taking in terms of transportation infrastructure investments. We are quite encouraged by the 10 year investment they are making, both in the GTHA and in the rest of the province," said De Souza.

Del Duca was elected in his riding of Vaughan in a 2012 by-election and this is his first cabinet appointment. He has also served as parliamentary assistant to the finance minister where a lot of the budget was infrastructure oriented as well. In addition, he has served as the director of public affairs for the Carpenters District Council of Ontario.

"This is a great appointment for the construction sector," said **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario** (RCCAO) executive director Andy Manahan.

"Roughly in the last year as MPP, he was clearly very supportive of certain projects, like the extension of the Highway 427 — I know he understands the transportation infrastructure side of things."

Manahan hopes to work with Del Duca on a pilot project of high occupancy toll lanes after the 2015 Pan American Games come to Toronto. Del Duca will also be responsible for the Highway 407 East project and Manahan hopes to work with him through consultations on the tolls and implementation of the system.

Council of Ontario Construction Associations president Ian Cunningham said Del Duca knows the industry and its players well. He was pleased with how Del Duca handled the tabling and committee hearings of Bill 69, the Prompt Payment Act.

"He handled this better than any private members bill that I have ever seen move through first and second reading. He held his own kind of private members' meetings, with all the stakeholders and tried to achieve consensus. I couldn't think more highly of Steven. He is first class and it was no surprise to me that he was included in cabinet," he said.

The Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO) says its already strong relationships with MTO staff, combined with Del Duca's appointment, provides an encouraging opportunity for future discussions.

"That's very important at the staff level to be able to work together. We're just happy that we have a minister who I think is going to work well with staff. We're hoping and believe that they'll recognize the value of working with CEO in advisory capacity in terms of transportation," said CEO chief executive officer Barry Steinberg.

He added that the finer details about the extent of policy and planning for the transportation funding commitment are the big questions.

"The finer details are where does this fit with infrastructure, where does this fit with transportation, where does it fit with finance and so on. That will work out as we consult with various ministries."

The 23-ministry cabinet was sworn in on June 24.