

# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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Infrastructure

### Leaders push for federal surplus bucks

McGuinty, Tory clamour for cash

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Premier Dalton McGuinty's recent demand for more infrastructure dollars from the federal government, considering it has a \$13.8 billion surplus, is supported by the Infrastructure Investment Coalition (IIC).

"Crumbling infrastructure is becoming more evident in communities across Ontario," said Andy Manahan, IIC member and Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario executive director. "This trend needs to be reversed with increased financial commitments from the federal government."

McGuinty recently wrote to Prime Minister Harper in response to his government's announcement of a \$13.8 billion surplus. McGuinty asked Harper to commit to dedicating the equivalent of one per cent of the Goods and Services Tax towards municipal transit and infrastructure.

McGuinty also asked for a commitment from Harper to provide the federal government's one-third share of the provinces \$17.5 billion MoveOntario 2020 plan.

"We would like to urge the federal government to move immediately to release the funds needed to begin building the Spadina subway extension and the Mississauga Transitway and Brampton AcceleRide projects," wrote McGuinty.

The coalition would like to see all governments commit dedicated funding to core infrastructure, such as public transit, roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, to help cut down Ontario's infrastructure deficit.

"Leaky water pipes might not appear to be a sexy issue but if we do not properly maintain this underground infrastructure, Canada's economic competitiveness suffers," added Frank Zechner, IIC member and Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association

executive director.

In response to McGuinty's request, Jim Flaherty, Canada's finance minister, said the federal government has hit record levels in infrastructure spending and Ontario has benefited through funding for numerous projects.

The coalition intends to meet with Flaherty and make its case for increased federal investment in Ontario's infrastructure. Flaherty once "sabre rattled" for Ontario in looking for federal investment assistance in infrastructure, noted Manahan.

"Mr. Flaherty understands the situation in Ontario, not too long ago he was finance minister here," said Manahan.

Ontario Progressive Conservative party leader John Tory has disagreed with Flaherty's view that Ontario's infrastructure needs have been met by the federal government. Tory has previously spoken out for the need of further federal government investment in Ontario.

IIC advocates a life-cycle approach for better asset management, noting infrastructure dollars could be spent more efficiently.

For more information on IIC, visit [www.infracoalition.ca](http://www.infracoalition.ca)