

November 18, 2024

Hon. Laurie Scott, Chair  
c/o Isaiah Thorning  
Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy  
99 Wellesley Street W, Room 1405  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Sent electronically

**RE: *Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024***

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) is pleased to provide commentary to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy in support of *Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, 2024*.

RCCAO is an alliance of key labour and management stakeholders from the residential and civil construction sector. RCCAO's members build the critical infrastructure that all Ontarians rely on. Our goal is to work in cooperation with government to offer solutions to challenges facing the construction industry, which also have wider societal benefits.

Our members include the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association; Heavy Construction Association of Toronto; International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 793; Joint Residential Construction Association; LiUNA Local 183; Ontario Formwork Association; and Toronto and Area Road Builders Association.

RCCAO commends the Government of Ontario's continued focus on building and maintaining critical infrastructure across the province. This bill is focused on taking real action on Ontario's plan to build and maintain the infrastructure that we all rely on.

The bold elements of this bill recognize that with Ontario's population growing at a record pace, building critical infrastructure like roads, housing, transit, water and wastewater capacity is key to ensure the province will continue to have a strong economy and high quality of life.

RCCAO particularly welcomes the fact that the bill designates projects like Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass as priority transportation projects. Accelerating these critical infrastructure initiatives—through measures like streamlining utility relocations and allowing for extended construction hours—will not only support Ontario's growing economy, but also create thousands of jobs, enhance economic growth, and improve connectivity in the province's fastest-growing regions. These steps will deliver long-term benefits for all Ontarians by ensuring that vital projects are completed more efficiently and effectively.

It is important to note that strong public support for these transformative infrastructure projects has been consistent. Public polling on this topic since 2021 has repeatedly showed robust support for Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass, and the development of new critical roads, bridges, and highways throughout the province. The public support highlights Ontarians' understanding that expansion of the current transportation and transit systems is necessary for the province's future.

Ontario's Greater Toronto Area is among the fastest growing regions in North America. The area expects to welcome an additional 2.8 million people over the next 25 years, with 58 percent of that population growth destined for York, Halton, and Peel regions. The expected population growth will increase demand for critical infrastructure.

Given the years of under investment in critical infrastructure across the province, RCCAO members believe it is important for the Government of Ontario to advance and accelerate the construction of transformational projects like Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass that are essential to the province's future.

Building necessary transportation infrastructure expansion will also provide additional benefits for the region and the province, including supporting housing initiatives through increased land availability for future housing stock, building future communities and neighbourhoods for our growing province.

Roads and highways are also essential infrastructure for the movement of goods across Ontario, which is the backbone for local and regional economies. Demand for goods has reached historic levels and that demand is only projected to increase as both as e-commerce takes firm hold and as the population of the region continues to grow. Building and maintaining road infrastructure increases business productivity and competitiveness by reducing the time and cost of transporting goods. It allows products to move efficiently through the supply chain and to end-use customers around the region and beyond.

RCCAO also commends Bill 212 for focusing on supporting smaller municipalities by developing a pothole prevention and repair fund in the 2025 construction season. RCCAO has consistently advocated for government investment in the maintenance of current infrastructure assets across the province.

Investing in state-of-good-repair work is a foundational element to keeping regional economies strong and ensuring the longevity of Ontario's economic growth and competitiveness. Maintaining infrastructure in a state-of-good-repair also maximizes the lifespan of infrastructure assets so that Ontario taxpayers get the best value for their money, while also decreasing the risk of disruptions for services that millions of residents rely on.

As the Government of Ontario determines the criteria for the Pothole Prevention Fund, we would ask that a condition be included for municipalities to adopt sustainable building practices by using Recycled Crushed Aggregate (RCA) as part of accessing the fund. Using the Ministry of Transportation jointly established Ontario Provincial Standard Specifications (OPSS1010.MUNI) to inform municipal use of RCA would be of economic and environmental benefit for all.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation has been a leader in using RCA in the construction and maintenance of its 400-series highways, benefiting from millions in cost savings and carbon-emission reduction. If Ontario's municipalities adopted a 20% recycling rate as part of the construction and maintenance of their transportation networks, as is practice on provincial projects, Ontario could avoid extracting up to 33 million tonnes of new aggregate per year. This would result in annual construction cost savings of \$264 million and GHG emission reduction equivalent to taking 15 million cars off the road for a year.

RCCAO commends the Government of Ontario for prioritizing building critical infrastructure and recognizing how important it is for the economic growth and competitiveness of Ontario communities. We appreciate the opportunity to provide commentary and look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Government of Ontario.

Sincerely,



Nadia Todorova  
Executive Director