

# BUILD- ING

## Construction councils applaud Ontario government's COVID-19 action plan

By **Building On** Apr 6, 2020

As a result of the government's *Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19 (March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update)*, the **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)** and the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) have announced their support of the recondition.

According to the province's website, the government's action plan includes \$7 billion in additional resources for the health care system and direct support for people and jobs.

It also will make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flow, protecting jobs and household budgets.

Today, Premier [@fordnation](#) and Minister [@RodPhillips01](#) unveiled Ontario's Action Plan in response to [#COVID19](#).

We're investing \$17 billion in our plan to protect Ontarians and support our healthcare system, economy and businesses! [#onpoli pic.twitter.com/QSXvxUHPTi](#)

— Prabmeet Sarkaria (@PrabSarkaria) [March 25, 2020](#)

**“During this uncertain period, our labour-management alliance welcomes the efforts of the Ontario government to provide support and clarity to the construction sector and all our partners, including municipalities. We also value the fine work that healthcare organizations are doing during difficult circumstances,”** said Andy Manahan, executive director of the RCCAO.

The economic update includes funding for municipalities through the Municipal Modernization Program to support 405 small and rural municipalities in service delivery reviews and projects aimed at increasing municipal efficiency. This is on the heels of the government's passing of the Municipal Emergency Act last week, which allows municipalities the ability to fully conduct council, local board and committee meetings electronically when faced with local and province-wide emergencies.

“The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the drawbacks of the traditional way of doing business,” said Richard Lyall, president of RESCON. “It is imperative that municipalities undertake innovative methods to continue with service delivery remotely and electronically. For example,

e-permitting and digital alternatives to municipal site inspections are more relevant than ever because of the speed and ease of these alternatives in the middle of a housing crisis and when municipal business processes have slowed down remarkably.

“There should be a concentrated effort by the Province to allow municipal building officials to undertake ‘remote inspections’ using interactive digital platforms. Policies have been introduced in Finland to address the slowdown in site inspections as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The document contained a restated commitment to supporting workers and increasing skilled trades training opportunities through the additional funding for skills training programs. Further, there is expanded funding for the Specialist High Skills Majors program, which allows students to focus on career pathways that match their skill set.

In addition, beginning April 1, 2020, penalties and interest will not apply to Ontario’s businesses that miss any filing or remittance deadlines under select provincially administered taxes. This will continue for a period of five months, up until Aug. 31, 2020, under several provincially administered tax programs, including the fuel tax.

**“Given that tax revenues will be diminished as a result of the pandemic, RCCAO has encouraged Queen’s Park to work with Ottawa to explore different revenue sources to maintain investments in infrastructure and other important services,” said Manahan.**