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Newly-appointed Minister of Transportation Glen Murray addresses the 86th annual [Ontario Road Builders' Association](#) convention. He touched on his fiscally-prudent policies during his time as the mayor of Winnipeg, noting how he cut taxes by 11 per cent.

Wynne's cabinet shuffle leaves construction leaders unmoved

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Though many of the ministries important to the Ontario construction industry changed leadership in Premier Kathleen Wynne's newly announced cabinet, industry leaders said they do not see it making much difference.

"I don't see the approach changing substantially, but there is an advantage though that we've got a new premier and some new cabinet ministers, so it gives them a chance to re-evaluate what they've been doing and do a little more on resetting the course. We'll try to take advantage of that," said David Frame, director of government relations for the [Ontario General Contractors Association](#) (OGCA).

Wynne recently announced an expanded 27-minister cabinet, up from former premier Dalton McGuinty's 22-member cabinet and much larger than the 16-member cabinet proposed by Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak.

"I think it's a reflection that they've got a short period of time to do quite a bit. When

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you've got more time, when you've got a majority government you can afford to do it with less people, but that's not the case today," noted Frame.

During one of his first public appearances as a minister for transportation and infrastructure, Glen Murray told the 86th annual Ontario Road Builders' Association (ORBA) convention that he is fiscally prudent. He pointed to his tenure as mayor of Winnipeg.

"I famously cut taxes by 11 per cent and we just about doubled the infrastructure budget," he told the crowd amidst thunderous applause.

Murray said he and Wynne are committed to finding dedicated revenue streams and increasing the amount of money and capacity the province has to build roads, highways and bridges.

"We understand that if you can spend \$100,000 today to maintain and build a road or a bridge, and avoid \$1 million by deferring maintenance to have to replace the entire thing, that is a wise investment," he said.

Some construction industry stakeholders see Murray as someone who will push hard for urban intensification and confronting gridlock in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

"In terms of the Metrolinx investment strategy...I have a feeling that will be a very high priority so in terms of setting the framework for that, I'm sure that he will be very aggressive," said **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)** executive director Andy Manahan.

The Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA) applauds the government for having transit and transportation as a key focus.

"We're hoping whatever way they want to lead this policy, they'll be engaging stakeholders first and foremost making sure that they continue to attract investments and jobs. COCA strongly believes in sustainable long-term funding for infrastructure that is predictable and does help to tackle the province's infrastructure deficit on a go forward basis," said Ashley De Souza, COCA vice-president policy and government relations.

Many see Charles Sousa's appointment to Minister of Finance as an indication that the government will continue to strive to eliminate the deficit by 2017/18.

The construction industry hopes that long-term infrastructure funding will not be sacrificed in order to eliminate the deficit. Manahan pointed out that Steven Del Duca, the former director of public affairs for the Carpenters District Council of Ontario, is a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance.

"I think that's good news. Charles knows construction as well, but it's good having reinforcements from Del Duca."

Frame hopes to continue the OGCA's relationship with the Ministry of Labour as new cabinet member Yasir Naqvi steps into the lead role.

"There's a lot about to happen on the health and safety field. I understand we're going to be in consultations any time now on the health and safety strategy which is coming out of the implementation of the Dean Report."

De Souza said he is looking forward to working with Naqvi as COCA is eager to discuss the progress at the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board \(WSIB\)](#) and the reduction of the unfunded liability.

Bob Chiarelli becomes the Minister of Energy and will have to navigate the investigations into the cancelled

gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville.

He also has the duty to move towards a decision on new nuclear builds and fulfill Wynne's commitment for greater municipal say on renewable energy projects without killing the sector.

The Liberals' budget, which would need support from either the NDP or Progressive Conservatives to pass, is expected this spring.