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Industry to focus on the effects of climate change on infrastructure with new minister

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Leaders in Ontario's construction industry are looking forward to working with the new expanded Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in the hopes of addressing the impacts extreme weather events have on infrastructure.

Though Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO) has not traditionally worked with the Ministry of Environment on a regular basis, the organization expects to now be more involved with the ministry since it has expanded to include climate change. Glen Murray will take on the portfolio.

"We'll be meeting with Minister Murray to start thinking about how do we start planning in the long term for the impact that climate change has on infrastructure and what do we have to do within our sector to be prepared to start folding the concept of climate change into the concept of long term infrastructure planning," said CEO chief executive officer Barry Steinberg.

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The portfolio will now "ensure Ontario can protect the gains it has made in fighting climate change, lead Ontario's mitigation and adaptation efforts to extreme weather and strengthen its position as a leader in clean technology," says a government press release.

"Everyone has been talking about more resilient infrastructure over the last few years. I think the minister will be a tremendous advocate for ensuring that urban areas, and other areas as well, where there is lots of infrastructure and more risk to humans and natural habitats, are prepared for extreme weather events," said **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)** executive director Andy Manahan.

CEO already has a strong working relationship with Murray from his time spent leading the ministries of transportation and infrastructure.

Steinberg, who is on the advisory board for the Ontario Climate Change Consortium, says there are currently a lot of good ideas on how to address climate change.

"They need to be brought together and I think Minister Murray is the guy that can do that," said Steinberg.

RCCAO has been working with the Ministry of Environment on the issues of excess "clean" construction soils and the Municipal Class Environment Assessment (MECA) process, which a recent study identified as causing a growing number of delays on provincial infrastructure projects.

Manahan was one of the founders of [Supporting Ontario Infrastructure Investments and Lands \(SOiIL Inc.\)](#), a service to further support efforts by Ontario's Ministry of the Environment and the construction industry to implement Best Management Practices for the responsible handling of excess "clean" soil that has been generated from infrastructure and development projects in both the public and private sectors.

It offers a soil matching service between those who have excess soils and those who are in need of soils.

“He seemed to be very supportive of the soil matching service that we put in place. I think it should be a seamless transition,” said Manahan.

He hopes to speak with Murray about the possibility of government funding to help support SOiiL, as has happened with a similar organization, Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environments (CL:AIRE) in the United Kingdom.

The new cabinet was sworn-in on June 24. Brad Duguid will now head the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, Stephen Del Duca is now the Minister of Transportation and Reza Moridi takes on the role of Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Kevin Flynn will maintain his role as Minister of Labour as does Bob Chiarelli as Minister of Energy.