

# Peter Bethlenfalvy: Ontario's improved credit rating means we're ready to build

Peter Bethlenfalvy, [Special to National Post](#) Published Dec 30, 2024

This month, S&P Global upgraded Ontario's credit rating, handing our province our second upgrade in half a year and continuing our government's reversal of a decade-long trend of downgrades under the previous Liberal government.

Why should Ontario taxpayers care?

Because improved credit ratings and their accompanying lower borrowing costs give us the flexibility to keep helping families that are struggling due to high interest rates and the federal government's terrible carbon tax. And at a time of global economic uncertainty, particularly with a new administration taking office south of the border, that flexibility is more important than ever.

Consider Ontario's last budget update, which I had the privilege of delivering earlier this fall.

In it, our government was able to set aside \$200 in taxpayer rebates for early next year. These will be sent to every eligible taxpayer as well as their kids, working out to \$1,000 for a family of five. With the federal government set to increase its carbon tax yet again next April, I know many families across Ontario will be counting on this provincial help.

We're also able to continue investing in our plan to build Ontario, with a 10-year, \$191-billion infrastructure plan to construct roads, transit, highways, hospitals and schools. This includes major new transit like the Ontario Line in Toronto, the Hazel McCallion Line in Mississauga and Brampton, Hamilton's LRT, GO Train expansion and the return of the Northlander passenger train service. It also means we can keep expanding and upgrading the highway system, including building Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass and building Highway 7 from Kitchener to Guelph, and widening Highway 401 east of the Greater Toronto Area.

And of course, let's not forget the \$50 billion we're investing in more than 50 new and improved hospital projects across Ontario, from Ottawa to Windsor and Niagara to North Bay.

This is why our credit rating matters.

Under the previous Liberal government, which spent wildly without making meaningful long-term investments, our credit rating was a mess. The cost of borrowing went up while public services and infrastructure got worse.

But thanks to six years of careful management, Ontario's finances have turned around. We've cut red tape, saving people and businesses over \$1 billion every year, and we've made it easier for businesses to invest in our province, helping create nearly 850,000 new jobs since taking office. We're investing in the long-term success of public infrastructure and services instead of using taxpayer dollars to pay interest costs. In fact, now with the lowest borrowing costs of any province, Ontario saved \$1 billion in interest expense compared to last year. We've also attracted tens of billions of dollars in investments, including \$43 billion in our electric vehicle and EV battery sector.

#### Article content

With a new administration taking office in the United States, in addition to the ongoing costs of high interest rates and the federal carbon tax, Ontario's upgraded credit rating could not come at a more important time.

Like the rest of the world, Ontario continues to face economic uncertainty and challenges. But our government's prudent fiscal management means we have more money to invest in public services instead of paying even more for our public debt. It also means we can react to new global uncertainty to keep costs down for workers and families.

There's a lot more work to do, but last week's credit rating upgrade shows Ontario's finances are headed in the right direction. And under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, we're going to keep getting it done.

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