

October 7, 2021

AMO Policy Update – Increased Staffing in Long-Term Care & Red Tape Reduction Bill

Ontario Taking Action to Increase Staffing in LTC

Yesterday, the Ontario government has [announced](#) that they will provide up to \$270 million this year to long-term care homes to increase staffing levels by 4,050 new long-term care staff across the province. This funding will increase the daily average hours of care to three hours per resident per day, by the end of this fiscal year. It also includes \$42.8 million provided to homes to increase care by allied health professionals by 10% this year. This funding is part of the province's \$4.9 billion commitment to hire more than 27,000 long-term care staff over four years and ensure that residents receive on average four hours of direct care per day by 2024-25. The Minister of Long-Term Care also announced the government intends to bring forward legislation that will enshrine its commitment to four hours of care into law.

In the coming days, homes will also be receiving allocations for the additional funding up to 2024-25 to assist them in planning future staffing needs to meet the new care requirements. The province also announced the launch of a \$10 million annual fund to support ongoing professional development opportunities in long-term care, through the Supporting Professional Growth Fund.

The Province Releases Fall Red Tape Bill

Today the Province [announced](#) Ontario's Fall Red Tape Reduction Package and introduced the [Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021](#). If passed, the Act would make a variety of changes across 15 different Ministries. The legislation has not been posted at the time of writing, but below is a list of sections that municipal governments should be aware of:

Canada Infrastructure Bank Low-interest Municipal Loans

The provincial government is amending the *Municipal Act* and the *City of Toronto Act* to allow municipalities to enter into special conditional long-term loan agreements with the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB) which could support revenue-generating projects such as electric bus acquisition with access to low interest loans from the

CIB.

Cannabis Delivery and Curbside Pick-Up

The Bill proposes amendments to the *Cannabis Licence Act*, the *Cannabis Control Act*, and the *Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act* to allow cannabis retailers to provide curbside pick-up and delivery services on a permanent basis. Previously, these distribution options were allowed to support physical distancing.

Cargo Bikes

The Ministry of Transportation is developing a pilot project for large electric-assist and non-electric cycles that municipalities could offer to support mobility, tourism and economic growth while maintaining road safety.

Consolidating Government Transfer Payments

The government is moving towards a new system for transfer payment recipients, including municipalities and District Social Service Administration Boards who receive government funding through agreements to provide services and goods to the public. The intent is to provide a seamless user experience, reducing their administrative burden and freeing up more time to deliver key services to people in Ontario. The system is called the Transfer Payment Ontario system (TPON).

Employment Services

The government is integrating employment programs from social assistance, such as municipally run Ontario Works Employment Assistance and the provincially run Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports, into Employment Ontario and expanding these changes province-wide. Service system managers for employment services are being selected based through a competitive process open to any public, not-for-profit, or private-sector organization. Municipal governments are eligible to apply.

Enhancing Government Productivity through Digital Tools

The government is implementing digital productivity tools such as eSignatures, eApprovals, Binder Browser and OPSdocs to make it faster and more convenient for people and businesses to interact with the government. This suite of digital office business tools will make the government's back-office work more secure, cost-effective, and efficient so decisions can be made sooner and services can be delivered more quickly.

Environmental Approvals & Changes to Transparency

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is proposing to allow businesses the option to consolidate environmental permissions for the same facility into a single approval, provided they follow all the same environmental protections and compliance conditions. A minor amendment to the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EA) around the Class EA process is included, as is proposals to streamline environmental permissions for projects and activities where environmental risks are low and simplifying environmental compliance approvals.

Additional changes are proposed to hazardous and special product exclusions, audit requirements for tires, and transparency around the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA) are also proposed and staff will review these proposals in more detail.

Fee Elimination for Police Records Checks for Volunteers

The Red Tape Reduction Bill includes amendments to the *Police Record Check Reform Act*, the *Supporting Volunteers Under the Police Record Check Reform Act* and changes to regulations under the *Municipal Act* and *City of Toronto Act* which eliminate the ability for police services to charge fees for volunteer Criminal Record Checks and Criminal Records and Judicial Matters Checks and provide up to five copies to prospective volunteers. AMO understands that the Ministry of the Solicitor General expects that this will reduce barriers to volunteerism in Ontario communities.

Liquor Licensing Act

Changes proposed in the Bill allow the government to make regulations to allow restaurant and bar patio extensions without application to the registrar of the AGCO for approval. The changes would make permanent the changes to allow patio extensions that were put in place to allow physical distancing during the pandemic. AMO understands that municipal governments will have the flexibility to put in place requirements and approvals as necessary to ensure extensions meet local needs and interests. If passed, these changes should support hospitality businesses to provide safer spaces for liquor and food consumption.

Public Pools: Amendments to R.R.O. 1990, Reg.565

The Ministry of Health is proposing amendments to this regulation under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to enhance efficiency and make it more flexible for pool operators to comply with safety and water chemistry requirements while maintaining public health and safety in aquatic environments. These proposed amendments are to make an attendant optional at certain public wading pools with water depths of 15cm or less and setting water chemistry in line with current scientific evidence and best

practices.

AMO understands that these proposed changes will allow for greater local flexibility and options for municipalities. Consultation on this proposed regulation is open to November 22, 2021, and more details can be found here:

<https://www.ontariocanada.com/registry/view.do?postingId=39199&language=en>

Streamline Planning Approvals: More Municipal Tools

The proposed changes would help streamline the planning system and, in some cases, help expedite approval timelines by providing municipal councils with greater authority in deciding what planning decisions can be made by committees of council or staff. This authority can be delegated by councils if they so choose.

AMO will continue to provide updates as needed once the legislation has been posted.

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources](#) page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.

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