



October 24, 2016

Re: Expo 2025

This letter is written on behalf of three organizations which strongly support Ontario's unionized construction industry. The Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS) is a tripartite organization with representation from labour, contractors and the Ontario Government. Our stakeholders represent more than 100,000 construction union members and 5,000 union contractors. The Construction Labour Relations Association of Ontario is an Employer Bargaining Agency comprising of 13 member associations in Ontario negotiating with seven trades: the Carpenters, Operating Engineers, Labourers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Rodworkers and Plasterers. The General Contractors' Section (GCS) Toronto represents Toronto-based contractors in the administration of six trade union collective agreements which cover the industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector.

The unionized construction industry is disappointed to learn that a City of Toronto staff report does not support the development of a bid to host Expo 2025.

A prime consideration for this lack of staff support is staff's assertion that the construction industry is not able to meet what it describes as an "extremely challenging" construction schedule. The report points to a lack of capacity within the construction industry. This is simply not the case. Ontario's construction industry has a labour force of close to 410,000 skilled trade professionals in 2016. Approximately, 70% of that labour force is located within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the central region of the province surrounding the GTA.

Buildforce Canada - a national industry-led organization committed to working with the construction industry to provide information and resources to assist with its management of workforce requirements – has not identified any specific labour market concerns in Ontario, the GTA or Central Ontario in its current labour market scenario to 2024. This annual scenario reviews economic conditions, supply of labour and major construction projects. Ontario is identified as a balanced market for virtually all trades and regions with no anticipated labour shortages over the forecast period.

The staff report further ignores the City's commissioned report by HLT Advisory "Expo 2025 Feasibility Study Peer Review". According to notes in the report "consultations with both PCL and Ellis Don concluded that although detailed coordination efforts were necessary, the major projects could be completed."

Ontario's unionized construction industry does recognize these projects will have challenges, and we are prepared to meet them. We also recognize the importance of funding commitments from the federal and provincial governments as important components of this project. However, we urge you to give little weight to the lack of contractor and labour capacity as a reason for not proceeding with this bid. The benefits of Expo 2025 far outweigh the risks. From a construction industry perspective, we can do the work!

Sincerely,

Sean W. Strickland
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Construction Secretariat

Joe Keyes
General Manager
Construction Labour Relations
Association of Ontario

Jim Vlahos
Director, Labour Relations
General Contractors Section