

Province announces measures to protect workers, businesses from tariff impacts

The Province of Ontario has announced a raft of measures designed to help mitigate the impacts businesses and workers will feel as a result of U.S. tariffs and economic uncertainty.

Among the new steps is the deferral of some Provincially-administrated taxes for six months, retroactive to April 1, which the Government says will give ?businesses and job creators approximately \$9 billion worth of cash flow they need to keep workers employed and weather the economic turmoil.?

An additional \$2 billion rebate will come through the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) for safe employers to support business and keep workers on the job.

Ontario will also work to help speed up timelines in tearing down existing inter-provincial trade barriers.

?In the face of President Trump's attacks on Ontario's economy, our government will do whatever it takes to protect Ontario workers and businesses,? said Premier Doug Ford in a statement on Monday morning. ?Today's measures will help give workers and businesses the support they need in the face of growing economic uncertainty. We can't control President Trump, but we're in full control of the kind of future we build for ourselves. The best way to protect Ontario is to build the most competitive economy in the G7, breaking down internal trade barriers and diversifying our trade so we can build a more resilient, prosperous and secure province.?

Ontario is granting relief to businesses remitting taxes under Ontario's 10 business-focused tax programs, including the Employer Health Tax, Insurance Premium Tax, Gasoline Tax, Fuel Tax, Mining Tax, Tobacco Tax, International Fuel Tax Agreement, Beer, Wine & Spirits Tax, the Retail Sales Tax on Insurance Contracts and Benefit Plans and the Race Tracks Tax.

Providing up to \$9 billion in cash flow support to about 80,000 Ontario businesses by offering six months of interest and penalty relief will allow them to temporarily delay payments for select provincially administered taxes, giving them more flexibility to deal with any challenges resulting from U.S. tariffs.

The six-month period begins April 1, 2025, and ends October 1, 2025. All taxes owed must be paid by October 1, 2025.

?We are ready to protect Ontario's workers, businesses and families from the economic uncertainty of U.S.-imposed tariffs,? said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. ?Today's measures help Ontario to weather the storm while continuing to build on our plan for ongoing prosperity.?

Added Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development David Piccini: ?In the last year, the WSIB provided historic, 50-year-low premiums to over 320,000 employers and surplus rebates to over 280,000 safe employers. Ontario is looking to provide further relief to employers through an additional distribution that will help them keep workers on the jobs, whatever comes our way from President Trump.?

By Brock Weir