

VIEW FROM QUEEN'S PARK: Spring Sitting

Ontario Government Wraps Up a Successful Spring Sitting

By Chris Ballard, MPP

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The Ontario legislature has wrapped up its spring sitting and I'm looking forward to spending more time in the riding. The government made substantial progress in a number of key areas that I outlined below.

Last week marked the one year anniversary of my election as your Member of Provincial Parliament. I want to thank all of you who reach out to me with your questions and input on how to make this great riding, and Ontario, even better.

Select spring sitting bills that passed:

Bill 6 - Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015

Requires the province to table a long-term infrastructure plan covering at least 10 years and support job creation, training opportunities, economic growth, environmental protection and design excellence.

Bill 31 - Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act (Making Ontario's Roads Safer), 2015

Strengthens penalties for offences such as distracted driving in order to help keep Ontario's roads among the safest in North America.

Bill 45 - Making Healthier Choices Act, 2015

Protects youth from the dangers of tobacco and the potential harm of electronic cigarettes; it will also help families make healthier food choices by giving them caloric information when they eat out or buy take-away meals.

Bill 49 - Ontario Immigration Act, 2015

Enables Ontario to maximize the economic benefits of immigration by helping the province work with the federal government, strengthening efforts to reduce fraud and increasing transparency.

Bill 56 - Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2015

Lays out a framework to create a first-of-its-kind mandatory provincial pension plan that would provide a predictable stream of retirement income to eligible Ontarians.

Bill 57 - Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act, 2015

Provides a framework for the establishment and administration of pooled registered pension plans (PRPPs) in Ontario ? a voluntary, low-cost, tax-assisted option to increase retirement savings, available to employees and the self-employed.

Bill 80 - Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 2015

Prohibits the acquisition and breeding of orcas (killer whales) in Ontario and allows the government to set administrative standards of care for marine mammals.

Bill 103 - Protecting the School Year Act

Protects the school year for 72,000 public secondary students in Durham, Rainbow and Peel district school boards by ending local strikes by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Bills Introduced during spring sitting:

Bill 66 - Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015

Would further strengthen protection of the Great Lakes by reducing harmful algal blooms, protecting wetlands, and monitoring and reporting on the health of the lakes.

Bill 73 - Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015

Would reform the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act to give residents a greater say in how their communities grow; it would also expand opportunities to fund community services such as transit and recycling.

Bill 85 - Strengthening and Improving Government Act

Would strengthen and modernize a number of Ontario's laws and regulations, including the Family Law Act, the Employment Standards Act and the Highway Traffic Act.

Bill 100 - Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015

Would protect and improve thousands of kilometres of Ontario's urban, suburban, rural and remote land and water trails network, while encouraging its expansion.

Bill 109 - Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015

Would amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and the Fire Prevention and Protection Act to further ensure that the rights of injured workers and firefighters are protected. Would also amend the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act to support harmonious labour relations for employees in the broader public sector.

Bill 112 - Strengthening Consumer Protection and Electricity System Oversight Act

Would enhance the capabilities of the Ontario Energy Board in order to further protect electricity ratepayers by boosting consumer protection, improving the ability to ensure continuity of service and enabling the government to identify priority transmission projects.

Bill 113 - Police Record Checks Reform Act, 2015

Would set province-wide standards for the types of police record checks available across Ontario, and by directing which information can and cannot be released to ensure public safety and protect personal privacy.

Bill 115 - Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015

Would increase the number of provincial ridings in southern Ontario to 111 to align with the new federal boundaries while maintaining the 11 existing ridings in northern Ontario.

If you would like to contact me on any issue, please call my community office at 905-750-0019, or visit my website at www.ChrisBallardMPP.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.