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March 25, 2020

To: All Affiliates
Local Building Trades Councils
Provincial Executive Board
Canadian Executive Board
Non-affiliates

Dear Colleagues,

As you are all aware, the COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on our province. The situation is changing rapidly, on a daily, and sometimes hourly basis. As we indicated in our Advisory notice from March 20 (which we have attached to this letter), we are reiterating that **construction sites in the province of Ontario remain open**. Having said that, we are continuously calling for all employers to provide hand-washing stations with enough soap and hand sanitizers accessible to workers, and with practices in place that the workers readily use the said products. We are also calling for physical distancing to be adhered to, and for staggered work breaks and lunches, as well as added shifts (where necessary) to spread out the workforce to better adapt to these changes.

Yesterday, the provincial government released its list of sectors and businesses that it has deemed essential, including the construction industry. We have attached a copy of that list for your reference and information. You will also find attached a copy of the Summary from the Provincial Executive Board / Local Building Trades Councils / Canadian Executive Board Teleconference that we hosted on Monday March 23rd, and the CBTU's Teleconference of the Provincial Building Trades representatives held on Tuesday March 24th where we discussed the COVID-19 impact across the country.

Premier Ford also hosted a phone call yesterday morning with a select group of construction labour and employer representatives to discuss the situation in the construction sector and our particular needs in coping with the pandemic on a daily basis. Subsequently, the Premier held a press conference in which he expressed his commitment to a major increase in enforcement (as requested by the Provincial Building Trades) to see compliance with the safety measures, and that construction jobsites that didn't meet the safety protocols would be shut down. Premier Ford emphasized that the government's top priority is the health and safety of the workers, and of Ontario citizens at large – a priority that we all share. Moreover, after yesterday's provincial Cabinet meeting, I had a telephone conversation with Labour Minister Monte McNaughton who indicated that 75% of the Ministry's inspectorate were on the jobsites yesterday, and that they have been instructed to enforce the safety protocols as strictly as possible. Lastly, I also had a conversation with Premier Ford where he again committed to working with the Building Trades to strengthen both safety protocols and inspection capacity.

While we are all anxious to see the successful containment of COVID-19, we must show resolve, diligence, and speaking with a unified construction voice in tackling this pandemic. We are making progress and we need to work together with our employer partners and government, to ensure a coordinated and effective response to the challenges we face. When the Building Trades speak on the issues we face with this COVID-19 pandemic, we speak with the health, safety and well-being of the construction workforce in mind.

Please feel free to contact our office at (416) 679-8887 or at info@ontariobuildingtrades.com if you have any questions or concerns.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Dillon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Patrick J. Dillon, Business Manager & Secretary Treasurer
Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario