

Building Industry Supports Ontario Government's Decision to Allow Resumption of Below-Grade Construction

Toronto, May 6, 2020 — The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) and the Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) welcome the Government of Ontario's decision today to allow the resumption of below-grade construction under the COVID-19 Emergency Orders. Each step that is taken toward returning to normal construction activity allows the industry to meet the housing needs of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Ontario.

"With almost two thirds of the new housing units delivered each year in the GTA being in high-rise buildings, the resumption of below-grade construction is absolutely vital to meeting the region's housing needs," said Dave Wilkes, President & CEO, BILD. "No work on a high-rise building can start without below-grade construction being completed."

Mr. Wilkes added that getting back to more normal construction activity will help lead the economic recovery in the GTA. "Residential construction is an engine of the GTA economy, with every 1,000 housing units generating 2,600 direct and indirect jobs, paying half a billion dollars in wages and generating \$600 million in economic activity."

Today's decision allows for the resumption of below-grade construction. Below-grade construction is construction activity that occurs below ground level to put in place the foundation and systems that support a high-rise building. This includes excavation, temporary shoring, pilings, servicing as required, concrete forming, reinforcing and pouring, and many other tasks.

A safe working environment is possible during below-grade construction by limiting the number of trades on the work site and by practicing physical distancing. As with previous expansions to the emergency orders for construction, all work must be carried out in compliance with the Ministry of Labour's Guidelines for Construction Site Health and Safety during COVID-19. The industry supports the closing of any site that doesn't meet or exceed these requirements.

"We applaud the Government of Ontario for taking steady and consistent steps to safely re-activate residential construction work," said Joe Vaccaro, CEO, OHBA. "With enhanced health and safety policies, buildings across Ontario can resume construction and move closer to completion. This decision moves thousands of families closer to getting the keys for their new homes."

With 1500 member companies, BILD is the voice of the home building, land development and professional renovation industry in the Greater Toronto Area. The building and renovation industry provides \$34 billion in investment value and employs 270,000 people in the region. BILD is proudly affiliated with the Ontario and Canadian Home Builders' Associations.



The Ontario Home Builders' Association is the voice of the residential construction industry in Ontario, representing 4,000 member companies organized into 27 local associations across the province. The residential construction industry contributes over \$51 billion dollars to Ontario's economy, employing more than 330,000 people across the province.

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For additional information or to schedule an interview with BILD's President and CEO Dave Wilkes, please contact John Provenzano, BILD Communications and Media Relations Manager at JProvenzano@bildgta.ca (416) 617-7994, and to schedule an interview with OHBA's CEO Joe Vaccaro, contact Leah Sisnett, OHBA Communications, at (416) 525-8071.