



Ontario
Home Builders'
Association

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Ms. Goldie Ghamari, MPP Carleton
Chair, Standing Committee on General Government

99 Wellesley Street West
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON

RE: Bill 276 Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act, 2021

The Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) appreciates the opportunity to participate in the consultation on Bill 276 the *Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act, 2021*. OHBA thanks the Minister of Small Business & Red Tape Reduction, the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, for bringing this legislation forward.

Planning Act Modernization

Bill 276 makes important changes and modernizations to the Planning Act, while also implementing many aspects of the OHBA supported Private Member's Bill (PMB) 88 that was introduced by Barrie - Springwater - Oro-Medonte MPP, Doug Downey. OHBA has long supported the measures outlined in PMB 88 and subsequently in Bill 276. Recent support includes,

- OHBA passing an association resolution in 2019 supporting PMB 88.
- OHBA's submission to the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee Post Pandemic further supported PMB 88.
- The last three pre-budget submissions made by OHBA also supported PMB 88.

Section 24 of the legislation provides *Planning Act* modernization changes that OHBA has long called for through PMB 88 and we are glad to see many of these outlined in Bill 276.

Changes to Sections 50 & 51 of the *Planning Act* have long been called for by legal experts as a needed modernization of the *Planning Act* to effectively respond to modern land planning needs and realities. Currently there are certain provisions of Section 50 of the Planning Act that create unnecessary delays, conditions, expenses and red tape for Ontario businesses and homeowners. The proposed changes will provide more clarity and consistency around consents and severances and more specifically, resolves the unintended issues that confront property-owners by the inadvertent mergers, saving Ontario businesses and homeowners time and money.

The proposed changes to consents are also welcomed, not just due to the impacts of COVID-19, but also, recognizing how approval processes in general have become increasingly complex. OHBA would



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support the two years becoming standard or alternatively, the right to ask for a one-year extension. The granting of this extension could be done by senior staff as opposed to traditional committee processes.

OHBA further encourages the Committee to explore a 20-year rule for searching abutting lands for *Planning Act* compliance, so that any contravention of the subdivision control and part-lot control provisions of the Planning Act that arise beyond the 20 years will be deemed to have no effect or impact on the current conveyance, and thereby make the sub-searching process easier for everyone concerned (similar to the 20-year rule for corporate escheat searches for Ontario companies registered on title).

Red Tape Reduction: Eliminating the Need for Wet Signatures at Land Registry Offices

The Provincial Government has been steadfast in its commitment to support small businesses while reducing antiquated and burdensome red tape and regulations that get in the way of innovation and competitiveness. Furthermore, the Provincial Government has also committed to digitizing government services through both the *Ontario Onwards: Action Plan* and by leveraging the resources of the Ontario Digital Service.

The Teraview system is the online digital resource for accessing the Government of Ontario's land records database, and is used by lawyers, paralegals, title searchers, title insurers, financial institutions and government. Almost all documents to purchase land can be signed digitally in the Teraview system by registered users with the Ontario Land Registry Office (LRO). However, the LRO still requires hardcopy submissions with "wet signatures" completed in ink, of the principal condominium creation documents, such as the condominium declaration and the condominium plan. This requirement amounts to red tape given that virtually all other land management records and documents can be signed and submitted digitally.

OHBA proposes that eliminating this need for wet signatures would bring the Teraview system in line with the province's digital government services and red tape reduction objectives, while eliminating a frustrating and antiquated requirement. OHBA suggests that this be done through an amendment to Bill 276.

We thank the Committee for this opportunity to provide feedback on Bill 276.