



OHBA ACTIVITY Summary

Keeping Members Informed

May 2017

DATES TO NOTE

- **May 1:** Awards of Distinction [online entries open](#) and OHBA Conference [early-bird registration begins](#)
- **May 28 – June 1:** Sweden – International Housing Tour
- **Throughout May:** EnerQuality ENERGY STAR courses - Members register at a special rate [enerquality.ca](#)

2017 ONTARIO BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

On April 27th, Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa introduced a balanced Ontario Budget, which includes a continued focus on investments in infrastructure across the province, as well as a major new initiative to expand Universal Healthcare, offering a Pharmacare Plan for Children and Youth. OHBA notes that the strength of the housing market has contributed significant additional unexpected revenues to the provincial treasury, allowing the Provincial Government to balance the budget and invest in new initiatives. The Land Transfer Tax alone has contributed an additional \$637 million in unexpected revenue for the province and HST revenues for the province came in well over last year's budget projections. Furthermore, the spin-off impacts of the strong housing market through corporate and income taxes have a net positive contribution to the provincial economy.

Please [click here to view OHBA's media release](#) on the 2017 Ontario Budget.

ONTARIO'S FAIR HOUSING PLAN

Premier Kathleen Wynne, Finance Minister Charles Sousa and Housing Minister Chris Ballard announced a comprehensive package of measures as part of *Ontario's Fair Housing Plan* to address rapidly escalating housing prices. [In a press release](#) OHBA recognizes that the Fair Housing Plan is a comprehensive package of initiatives that address both housing supply and demand challenges in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

"As the industry that builds 95 per cent of new housing in Ontario, we are pleased that the government has accepted our recommendations to create a housing advisory group and Housing Supply Team to resolve land-use approvals issues and red tape, which prevent housing from coming onto the market for new home buyers," says Joe Vaccaro, OHBA CEO. "We look forward to working with our provincial and municipal partners and continue to promote solutions, such as pre-zoning, fast-tracking approvals, and fixing the EA process, in order to bring more housing supply and housing choice to consumers."

Regarding new policies and taxes that address housing demand in the Fair Housing Plan, Vaccaro says, "OHBA is always concerned that new taxes and regulatory controls may potentially impact housing prices and future housing supply. The existing housing market has served an important role in providing new rental stock, and our industry is concerned that new rent controls will dampen consumer confidence and potentially have negative impacts on future rental supply."

OHBA will continue to monitor the effects of the Ontario Fair Housing Plan, and looks forward to participating in both the housing advisory group and Housing Supply Team. Key aspects of the Fair Housing Plan include:

Actions to Address Demand for Housing:

1. Introducing legislation that would, if passed, implement a new 15-per-cent Non-Resident Speculation Tax (NRST) on the price of homes in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) purchased by individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of Canada or by foreign corporations. The proposed tax would apply to transfers of land that contain at least one and not more than six single family residences. "Single family residences" include, for example, detached and semi-detached homes, townhomes and condominiums. The NRST would not apply to transfers of other types of land including multi-residential rental apartment buildings, agricultural land or commercial/industrial land. The NRST would be effective as of April 21, 2017, upon the enactment of the amending legislation. There are a number of exemptions - [See technical bulletin for further information](#).

Actions to Addressing the Rental Market

2. Expanding rent control to all private rental units in Ontario, including those built after 1991. This will ensure increases in rental costs can only rise at the rate posted in the annual provincial rent increase guideline. Under these changes, landlords would still be able to apply vacancy decontrol and seek above guideline increases where permitted. The [Rental Fairness Act, 2017 \(Bill 124\)](#) was introduced on Monday April 24th that, if passed, will enact this change effective April 20.
3. The proposed [Rental Fairness Act, 2017 \(Bill 124\)](#) would also if passed include developing a standard lease with explanatory information available in multiple languages, tightening provisions for "landlord's own use" evictions, ensuring that tenants are adequately compensated if asked to vacate under this rule; prohibiting above-guideline increases where elevator work orders have not been completed; and making technical changes at the Landlord-Tenant Board.

Actions to Increase Housing Supply

4. Establishing a program to leverage the value of surplus provincial land assets across the province to develop a mix of market housing and new, permanent, sustainable and affordable housing supply.
5. Introducing legislation that would, if passed, empower the City of Toronto, and potentially other interested municipalities, to introduce a vacant homes property tax.
6. Ensuring property tax for new multi-residential apartment buildings is charged at a similar rate as other residential properties.
7. Introducing a targeted \$125-million, five-year program to further encourage the construction of new rental apartment buildings by rebating a portion of development charges.
8. Municipalities could be permitted to impose a higher tax on vacant land that has been approved for new housing.

9. Creating a new Housing Supply Team with dedicated provincial employees to identify barriers to specific housing development projects and work with developers and municipalities to find solutions. As well, a multi-ministry working group will be established to work with the development industry and municipalities to identify opportunities to streamline the approvals process.

Other Actions to Protect Homebuyers and Increase Information Sharing

10. The province will tackle practices to buy a residential unit and assigning it to another person prior to closing.
11. The province is committing to review the rules real estate agents are required to follow to ensure that consumers are fairly represented in real estate transactions.
12. Establishing a housing advisory group which will meet quarterly to provide the government with ongoing advice about the state of the housing market and discuss the impact of the measures in the Fair Housing Plan and any additional steps that are needed.
13. Educating consumers on their rights
14. Partnering with the Canada Revenue Agency to explore more comprehensive reporting requirements.
15. Making elevators in Ontario buildings more reliable by establishing timelines for elevator repair.
16. Working with municipalities to better reflect the needs of a growing Greater Golden Horseshoe through an updated Growth Plan. New provisions will include requiring that municipalities consider the appropriate range of unit sizes in higher density residential buildings to accommodate a diverse range of household sizes and incomes.

EXCESS SOIL MANAGEMENT REGULATORY PROPOSAL (EBR #013-0299)

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) is moving forward with an Excess Soil Management Regulatory Proposal. This proposal builds on input provided through an Environmental Registry review, meetings and through engagement on the [Excess Soil Management Policy Framework](#) which was finalized in December, 2016. [OHBA made a submission with industry recommendations on the proposed framework](#) in March 2016.

- This regulatory proposal developed by MOECC and partner ministries has been posted to the [Environmental Registry](#) and would achieve key actions under the framework as referenced below: The development of a new excess soil reuse regulation, supported by complementary amendments to existing regulations including Regulation 347 (Waste) and Ontario Regulation 153/04 (Records of Site Condition), made under the Environmental Protection Act, and Ontario Regulation 332/12 (Building Code), made under the Building Code Act, 1992 (Actions 1, 2 & 18).
- The development of new reuse standards and sampling guidance for excess soil, to support the proposed new excess soil reuse regulation (Actions 12 & 13).
- Clarification on approval requirements related to temporary sites and processing sites (Action 5).

Engagement sessions are being planned (OHBA will notify members once dates/locations are set) and OHBA is seeking feedback from members prior to the June 23rd commenting deadline. Please direct comments, concerns or questions to the OHBA Director of Policy, [Mike Collins-Williams](#).

WORKING AT HEIGHTS DEADLINE EXTENSION FOR CERTAIN WORKERS

The deadline for workers to complete a working at heights (WAH) training course that has been approved by the CPO was April 1, 2017. However, because of the huge demand for training, the Ministry of Labour has extended the deadline for certain workers to obtain this training. If a worker had completed a WAH training course before April 1, 2015 that met the requirements of subsection 26.2(1) of [O. Reg. 213/91 \(Construction Projects\)](#), that worker will have until October 1, 2017 to complete an approved working at heights training program. The worker must be enrolled in an approved WAH course that is scheduled to be completed before October 1st and the employer must have written proof of the worker’s enrollment. To learn more about the change, visit the Ministry of Labour’s [Working at Heights topic page](#) along with the list of [approved training providers](#).

MINISTRY OF LABOUR ENFORCEMENTS BLITZES

Each year the [Ministry of Labour schedules blitzes](#) to target specific activities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Ministry dedicates additional enforcement resources during these blitz periods to enforce specific sectors or high risk activities. Below are the blitzes for 2017 in construction.

FOCUS	PROGRAM	SECTOR/BUSINESS TYPE	DATES
Hours of work	Employment standards	Construction; transportation and warehousing; services to buildings and dwellings; retail trade; other sectors known to have a high number of hours worked	May 1 – August 31
Supervisor awareness and accountability	Health and safety	Construction	June 1 – July 31
Residential projects	Health and safety	Construction	September 1 – November 30
Falls – ladder safety	Health and safety	Construction	October 2 – November 24

