



Ontario
Home Builders'
Association

***MEDIA* RELEASE**

Take the Politics out of Planning

Toronto, April 17, 2014..... The Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) appeared today before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to oppose the Private Member's Bill proposed by NDP MPP Rosario Marchese, to remove Toronto from the jurisdiction of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

"The point of the OMB is to take the politics out of planning," said Joe Vaccaro, OHBA CEO. "Removing the City of Toronto from the jurisdiction of the OMB will reduce our public planning process down to cold, hard political calculations by local councillors and would not serve the public interest."

The land-use planning system is much bigger than the OMB, and many communities across Ontario, including Toronto, have zoning by-laws which are decades out-of-date and, ultimately, lead to unnecessary OMB appeals. This proposed legislation would mean that the professional opinions of planners, engineers and other professionals could be dismissed by a political process with no appeal other than the courts.

"Every application, regardless of whether it is from a developer, a not-for-profit social housing provider, a builder of rental housing or a resident applying to expand their current home, make their way to council for a political vote," said Vaccaro. "Councillors do a disservice to the community when they use the OMB as a political scapegoat. Councils should be prepared and proud to have planning decisions tested through an independent non-political tribunal - that is the only way to ensure that decisions conform to provincial policy and don't fall victim to local politics."

In January 2014, OHBA responded to a comprehensive consultation on the land-use planning and appeals system brought forward by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and proposed several recommendations to support greater transparency, accountability and certainty for applicants and the community. Among OHBA's recommendations, and under the theme of **Getting it Right from the Beginning**, included a recommendation for the province to enforce the legislative requirement for municipalities to update zoning by-laws and educate the public on the new provincial planning framework that requires complete communities.

"Change is difficult for communities to manage and accept. OHBA has been recommending that the province, and municipalities, actively educate the public on why their communities are evolving so when those broader principles get applied to the local built environment, the public understands those decisions. They may not agree with the decision, but they understand the decision," said Vaccaro.

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The Ontario Home Builders' Association is the voice of the residential construction industry in Ontario representing 4,000 member companies organized into 31 local associations across the province. The industry contributes over \$42 billion dollars to Ontario's economy, employing more than 325,000 people across the province.

*For further information or to arrange an interview with OHBA CEO Joe Vaccaro
Please contact Kathryn Segal at the OHBA office at 416-443-1545.*



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20 Upjohn Road #101, North York, Ontario M3B 2V9 (416) 443-1545 Toll Free:800-387-0109 Fax:(416) 443-9982 email: info@ohba.ca