



April 16, 2019

Budget Bill Proposes Framework for New Trades System

Following his reading of the budget speech on Thursday, April 11th, Finance Minister Vic Fidele introduced *Bill 100 Protecting What Matters Most Act (Budget Measures), 2019* in the Ontario legislature for First Reading on Monday, April 15th. Just shy of 200 pages in length, this omnibus Bill effects 61 existing statutes. Of most interest to the construction industry are the 18 pages that constitute Schedule 40 of the Bill which proposes to enact the *Modernizing the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2019*. Schedule 40 is the enabling legislation for the province's new skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

The new system will be phased-in as elements are developed and the matching regulations are in place. The current system under the Ontario College of Trades will likely be completely wound down in the fall of 2019. The new system will be quite different than what we've experienced in the past. We were privileged to receive a briefing on the new system from officials in the Minister's Office and here are some of the notable features:

- There will be an investment in the creation of consortia of employers to which apprentices will be indentured; a pilot led by the Ontario Electrical League is currently underway; this will be ramped-up over time
- To support apprentices, there will be a single window/portal for access to the trades; this will be phased-in starting with supports for prospective apprentices to help them learn everything they need to know about the trades and eventually connecting them with possible sponsors
- The new system will move away from regulating trades to regulating portable skill sets; going forward, there will be a hybrid system, a combination of both, for several years
- The regulated skill sets will be determined in consultation with stakeholders and trainers
- Measures of success are yet to be developed but will likely include metrics such as the number of skill set completers who are employed in 6 months, 12 months, 18 months
- Some skill sets will be restricted but not all skill sets of a trade will be restricted
- The Minister will appoint a Chief Skills and Training Advisor to work with stakeholders to determine the criteria for a restricted skill set and which skills will be portable
- The Minister of Education has already announced a more prominent place for the skilled trades in the province's education system; the Ministry will be announcing the development of a skilled trades



strategy and will work with guidance counsellors to ensure that careers in the skilled trades are presented positively

- Bill 100 allows the Minister to delegate elements of his/her authority to an administrative authority; this is intended to allow the Minister to assign the responsibility for the administrative portal (the single window into the skilled trades) to the Ontario Colleges Application System, to handle registrations and the apprentice-sponsor match-making
- Down the road, perhaps in two years, responsibilities for compliance and enforcement responsibilities will be transferred over to other organizations that are already visiting workplace for the purposes of inspections; the responsibility for electricians will likely be transferred to the Electrical Safety Authority, responsibility for elevator techs to the TSSA and the culinary trades and hair dressing to the public health inspectors

Our Government wants to take its time, consult with stakeholder and get it right. Our Government appears committed to making apprenticeship the third legitimate path for success for young people. Our challenge is to make sure this remains a high priority of the Government as time marches on and that the new trades and apprenticeship system is properly resourced with strong, strategic leadership.