



April 22, 2021

Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON, M7A 1A1

Sent via e-mail to: premier@ontario.ca

RE: Ontario's response to third wave of COVID-19

Dear Premier Doug Ford,

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) is the advocacy body and voice for the engineering profession. Ontario currently has over 85,000 professional engineers, 250,000 engineering graduates, 6,600 engineering post-graduate students and 37,000 engineering undergraduate students. The engineering profession's commitment to safeguarding the public interest has always been extremely important, and in these uncertain times, there is no exception.

Throughout this pandemic, OSPE has presented the government with immediate, short-term, and long-term recommendations for the provinces post COVID-19 economic recovery plan. However, we know that economic recovery is not possible without a healthy workforce. Our members have expressed significant concerns regarding the lack of evidence-based decision-making and policies that have been enacted to combat the third wave of COVID-19. Now more than ever, it is imperative that the Ontario Government listen to experts, who have provided several recommendations on how to improve the safety of workplaces, support essential workers, and increase transparency in the vaccination process.

Improve workplace safety

In February 2021, OSPE called on the provincial government to immediately address airborne transmission of COVID-19. It is widely understood by health experts that aerosol transmission of the virus is a reality, particularly in indoor settings where people gather for long periods of time. OSPE believes the need for proper ventilation to stop the spread of infected aerosol particles is not being properly addressed. Recommendations called for actions to focus on air quality in schools to reduce

the spread of COVID-19. Today, these recommendations apply to all indoor workplaces, such as factories, warehouses, and offices, where many engineers work. We urge the government to:

1. Determine which workplaces require priority HVAC systems assessment
2. Commit more funding to ventilation improvements
3. Hire professional engineers to do this work now

Support essential workers

During this pandemic, engineers have led the re-design of manufacturing processes to create much needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and ventilators. Engineers use 3D printers to create tens of thousands of face shields and frames for our front-line workers. They are in the med-tech industry working diligently to bio-engineer new medications and a new vaccine to combat COVID-19. In times of crisis, you will always find engineers working tirelessly, in the background, without much accolade, diligently supporting the communities they serve. Our engineers are on the frontlines of this crisis, working to provide essential operations across the province safely and efficiently. Medical professionals have been calling for the implementation of paid sick leave to ensure that essential workers receive the support they need to stay home and self-isolate when sick. This protects everyone in these workplace settings including engineers.

Increase transparency

The Ontario Government has made significant decisions regarding the COVID-19 inoculation campaign and the policy response to the third wave of the pandemic in recent weeks. However, there seems to be a disconnect between these decisions and the advice of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table. As stated above, it is imperative that now more than ever, the government listens to advice of scientific experts, health system leaders, and other specialists, on how best to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the health of all Ontarians.

OSPE is committed to working with government and providing expertise to ensure the recovery of our province. We look forward to working with the government to further develop these recommendations. If you have any additional questions, please contact Andrea Carmona, OSPE Policy and Government Relations Lead at acarmona@ospe.on.ca.

Yours sincerely,



Réjeanne Aimey, P.Eng.
Chair and President
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers



Sandro Perruzza
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

CC:

Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Finance

Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training, and Skills Development

Hon. Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education

Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction

Hon. Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General

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