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MINISTRY ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF WORKPLACE NALOXONE TRAINING

Almost one year ago, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) launched the Workplace Naloxone Program ("WNP") which provides initial support to employers who are required to comply with the naloxone requirements in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA).

Under OHSA, employers must provide a naloxone kit when an employer becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, of the following scenarios:

- There is a risk of a worker opioid overdose.
- There is a risk that the worker overdoses while in a workplace where they perform work for the employer.
- The risk is posed by a worker who performs work for the employer.

Under the WNP, those employers are provided with:

- free naloxone training for up to two (2) workers per workplace and/or
- one (1) free nasal spray naloxone kit per workplace.

At time of launch, the MLITSD partnered with two program providers to help deliver the Workplace Naloxone Program through training delivery and kit distribution:

- St. John Ambulance Canada
- The Canadian Red Cross

As of August 31, 2023, the program has trained over 3,600 workers and distributed 2,990 nasal spray naloxone kits.

The Ministry recently announced that it has partnered with six additional program providers:

- CLAC – please contact ontraining@clac.ca or 519-653-3002
- Health & Safety Professionals Inc.
- Heart to Heart First Aid CPR Services
- Para-Mentors • Rescue 7
- SAJE Vital Signs

For further information please visit: [Ontario.ca/workplacenaloxone](https://www.ontario.ca/workplacenaloxone).

GOVERNMENT WATERS DOWN HOUSING TARGET

It's been reported that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing recently sent a letter to Ontario municipalities informing them about of a \$1.2 billion fund to incent them to accelerate their efforts to meet their assigned annual new housing targets and to let them know how the government would measure their progress towards their targets.

The letter stated that new rental units, basement suites and long-term care beds will be included in the government's new housing counts. The government has set a target of building 1.5 million new homes by 2031 and building 30,000 new long-term care beds by 2028. This makes the government's objectives only slightly less ambitious.

GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES BILL TO REVERSE REMOVAL OF GREEN BELT LANDS

On October 16th the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Paul Calandra tabled Bill 136, Greenbelt Statute Amendment Act, 2023 which among other things, returns the lands removed from the Greenbelt back into the seemingly untouchable, almost sacrosanct protected area.

It's expected that a month or more will pass before this piece of legislation appears on the schedule for Second Reading to allow time for the government to consult with affected municipalities and other stakeholders.

The Ford government hopes against hope that this move will put the Greenbelt scandal in the rear-view mirror.

GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE "USE-IT-OR-LOSE-IT" POLICY TO ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT

According to the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario, there are more than 330,000 projects that have been approved by municipalities and more than 700,000 in the approvals pipeline. Builders have permits but because of market and economic conditions, they aren't building.

In order to meet the government's new home construction target of 1.5 million new homes by 2031, an average of 150,000 new homes should be build every year. So far this year, there have been only 57,000 new home starts, far below the average.

SO, the government has announced that it plans to introduce a policy that would force developers to act on building permits that have been approved by Ontario municipalities often referred to as a "use-it-or-lose-it" policy.

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DATE OF FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT ANNOUNCED – PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS TO BEGIN

Ontario's Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy, will rise in the legislature on the afternoon of Thursday, November 7th to deliver his Fall Economic Statement (FES).

The FES is like a mini budget, summarizing the government's progress against its annual budget, which was struck about six months, (the government operates on an April 1 to March 31 fiscal cycle), providing an overview of prevailing economic circumstances and a forecast of conditions in the near term and addressing the government's plans in the months ahead that may include new initiatives.

To assist in the development of the government's 2024 budget, following the delivery of the FES, Ministry Bethlenfalvy and his Parliamentary Assistants, MPPs Rick Byers and Stephen Crawford, will convene pre-budget town hall type consultations at various locations across the province where groups and individuals can attend in person and make their views known.

In addition to the town halls, here are some other ways to provide your input into the 2024 budget making process:

- Take an online survey which can be accessed on the Ministry of Finance's website (coming soon)
- Submit your written submission through the Ministry of Finance's online portal (coming soon)
- Mail your written submission to The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
- c/o Budget Secretariat, Frost Building North, 3rd Floor, 95 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z1

More information is available at the following link: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2024-budget-consultations>

The 2024 Budget consultations will close on January 31, 2024.



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MPP JAMA OUSTED FROM NDP CAUCUS

Following the recent savage invasion of Israel by Hamas, NDP MPP Sarah Jama (Hamilton Centre, Andrea Horwath's former riding) made social media posts that were seen to be sympathetic to Hamas and antisemitic. The posts were not only offensive to many, but they were also contrary to the views of Jama's party. It appears that NDP Leader, Marit Stiles, made every effort to find a way out for Jama and the NDP and she directed Jama to remove the objectionable posts. Instead, Jama made another watered-down, equivocating post, a non-apology. In the end, Jama's defiance was unacceptable to Stiles and her fellow NDP MPPs and she was ejected from the NDP caucus.

Seemingly to divert attention away from their Greenbelt woes, the Tories introduced a motion in the legislature to censure Jama for her antisemitic social media posts. Jama remained defiant. The motion passed with PC members voting in favour, the NDP and Green opposed and the Liberals abstaining.

Jama now sits as an Independent without a voice in the legislature (because she was censured, she cannot be recognized by the Speaker) and without a budget for office and staff support.

The current party standings in the Ontario legislature are as follows:

- PC – 79
- NDP – 28
- Liberal – 9
- Green – 1
- Independent – 5 (two former PC MPPs, two former NDP MPPs and 1 MPP elected as an Independent)
- Vacant – 2 (Kitchener-Centre and Lambton-Kent-Middlesex)

GOVERNMENT TO UNDO MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY CHANGES

The Ford government recently announced that it will introduce legislation to unwind the expansions that it made to the boundaries of a number of municipalities. The boundary reversals that will be made include the following municipalities:

- Barrie
- Belleville
- Guelph
- Hamilton
- Ottawa
- Peterborough
- Halton Region
- Niagara Region
- Peel Region
- Waterloo Region
- York Region
- Wellington County

The boundary expansions were made when MPP Steve Clark was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. His successor in that role as of September 4th, Paul Calandra, said he has reviewed the decisions that were made and concluded that there was too much involvement from the Minister's office and that this reversal is being done to restore proper processes and improve the public trust.