

Council of Ontario Construction Associations Report to the Membership

January 2026

Council of Ontario Construction Associations

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The Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA) is a federation of 29 construction associations whose 10,000 general and trade contractor members operate in the industrial, commercial, institutional, and heavy civil segments of the construction industry in all regions of the province. These affiliated contractors are enterprises of all sizes from smallest to largest and are both unionized and non-union. COCA is mandated to work with our members and senior officials in the Ontario government to ensure that the province's laws and regulations support success in the construction industry and broad prosperity across the province. COCA is your voice at Queen's Park.

I'm pleased to submit this report on the activities and accomplishments of your provincial construction federation over the second half of 2025.

COCA had two big advocacy wins in the second half of 2025. They were:

1. Our long-sought after amendments to the Construction Act in the form of Schedule 2 of *Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act 2025* and Schedule 4 of *Bill 216, Building Ontario for You Act 2025*, finally passed into law and came into effect on January 1, 2026. The key features were mandatory annual release of holdback and the right to initiate, and adjudication was extended 90 additional days after contract completion, termination, or abandonment
2. Under pressure from COCA and other stakeholders, as well as the looming mandatory "nuclear option" when the WSIB's Schedule 1 surplus hits 125%, the province's workplace insurance agency distributed another \$2 billion from its surplus to need funds to qualifying employers at the end of October. This was the WSIB's second surplus distribution in 2025. The two distributions totaled \$4 billion.

Other smaller yet important successes included the following:

- During the period, COCA strengthened its relationship with Skilled Trades Ontario (STO), gaining a better appreciation for the successes and challenges faced by the organization responsible for the province's apprenticeship system. STO is undertaking to gather difficult to collect data in order to gain a more accurate measure of the performance of the apprenticeship system. Apprentice employers/sponsors may be leaving Achievement Incentive monies on the table
- Along with other skilled trades stakeholder, COCA promoted the Level Up! skilled trades career fairs organized by the Ministry of Labour Immigration Training and Skills Development. COCA member associations amplified the promotion through their networks which resulted in record attendance at the 12 fairs held across the province
- COCA continued to push the government to consider for implementation the expertly developed and fully vetted recommendations made by the Provincial Labour-Management Health and Safety Committee (PLMHSC) to the Minister of Labour and the Chief Prevention Officer (CPO), to make the province's construction project sites safer.

Even though the PLMHSC is officially established by the Ontario Health and Safety Act to provide advice to the Minister and the CPO, its recommendations seem to get ignored

- COCA alerted members about a new construction health and safety regulation that starting January 1, 2026 requires constructed projects with an expected duration of 3 months or longer with 20 or more workers regularly on site, to have an AED onsite. COCA also informed members how to access reimbursements for the costs of AEDs, up to \$2,500 per unit, from the WSIB
- COCA maintained its leadership on the WSIB file and, along with our Ontario Business Coalition (OBC) partners, met with Minister's political staff to discuss recommended improvements to the province's workers compensation scheme
- COCA continues to advocate for an efficient and effective workplace insurance system that serves employers and injured workers fairly and in accordance with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. In the fall 2025, the WSIB announced that the average premium rate for 2026 would be \$1.23 per \$100 of payroll, a reduction of \$0.02 from 2025
- At a value-for-money audit consultation facilitated by consultants from Deloitte's for the WSIB, COCA advised the Second Injury Enhancement Fund (SIEF) is critically important to construction employers and emphatically asserted that it must not be scrapped. A decision is still pending
- We continued to strengthen our engagement with our important construction industry and multi-sector partners including the Provincial Labour-Management Health and Safety Committee, the League of Champions, the Prevention Employers Partnership, the Ontario Business Coalition and the WSIB Chiefs' Advisory Committee
- The COCA board of directors struck a Procurement Committee to develop programs and resources to serve the membership
- COCA provided construction market intelligence at an Infrastructure Ontario (IO) market sounding consultation. Input from the session will be used to inform the rollout of future IO projects
- Along with other stakeholders, COCA provided advice on the construction of Highway 413 at a consultation facilitated by the Ministry of Transportation
- COCA supported Ontario's college system, asking the government to provide the province's community colleges with fair, predictable and sustainable funding. The Minister of Colleges and Universities subsequently committed to a review of the colleges' funding model
- COCA successfully pressed the Minister of Transportation to have automated speed cameras removed from municipal streets. The removal of penalty points on commercial vehicle CVORs from automated speed camera is still under consideration by the Ministry of Transportation

These are merely the highlights of our accomplishments that were only made possible by the dedicated hard work of COCA’s Board of Directors and our army of devoted volunteers that serve as committee members. I am grateful for their sound guidance and support.

It is my great privilege to serve as your provincial construction federation’s President and to serve as your voice at Queen’s Park. Please contact me directly if you have issues that are of concern to our industry or if you have constructive advice or ideas to offer. COCA is here to serve!

Respectfully,

Ian Cunningham
President

COCA Members Stronger Together

Acoustical Association of Ontario	Ontario Erectors Association
Architectural Glass & Metal Contractors Association	Ontario Industrial Roofing Contractors Association
Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario	Ontario Masonry Contractors Association
Barrie Construction Association	Ontario Painting Contractors Association
Canadian Farm Builders Association	Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association
Canadian Institute of Steel Construction	Ontario Structural Steel Fabricators Association
Concrete Floor Contractors Association	Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada
Construction Association of Thunder Bay	Reinforcing Steel Institute of Ontario
Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario	Sarnia Construction Association
Grand Valley Construction Association	Toronto Construction Association
Hamilton-Halton Construction Association	Utility Contractors Association of Ontario
Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario	Walls and Ceilings Contractors Association
London and District Construction Association	Windsor Construction Association
Niagara Construction Association	Corporate Partners
Northeastern Ontario Construction Association	Sherrard Kuzz LLP
Ontario Association of Demolition Contractors	Two Grey Suits