

Today's News - Tuesday, April 17, 2018

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Date: Tue, 17 Apr 2018 14:45:00 -0400

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Ontario will introduce legislation today that would ensure that people working in construction, building cleaning or security jobs under contracts with the government will be paid the fair, prevailing wage in those sectors. Premier Kathleen Wynne was at the United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters, Local 46, in Toronto today to announce that the province is taking action to ensure fair wages are paid for work on government contracts in those sectors. The proposed Government Contract Wages Act, 2018, would, if passed, allow Ontario to establish minimum rates of pay for workers in the construction, building cleaning and security services work, requiring contractors and subcontractors to pay according to those rates. This fair wage policy would be enshrined in legislation. The legislation would build on historic actions Ontario has already taken to create more opportunity and security for workers and help them get ahead in a rapidly changing economy. The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, passed last fall, takes action to protect workers by:

- Raising the minimum wage to \$14 this year and again to \$15 next year;
- Ensuring equal pay for equal work for part-time, casual and seasonal workers performing substantially the same duties as full-time workers, as of April 1;
- Creating up to five days of paid leave and up to 17 weeks of unpaid leave for survivors of gender-based violence;
- Mandating 10 days of emergency leave for all workers, including two paid days, because no one's job should be at risk if they need to deal with a serious family or personal emergency.

Ontario is also increasing opportunity and fairness for workers through its Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy. That strategy is the first-of-its-kind in Canada and aims to make workplaces fairer for all women. It also includes landmark pay transparency legislation that would:

- Require certain employers to report on differences in compensation among their workforce based on gender and other prescribed characteristics
- Mandate that publicly advertised job postings in Ontario include a compensation range;
- Bar employers from asking a job applicant about past compensation or seeking that information through other means.

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Also Today:

- Ontario is supporting projects to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, save municipalities money on energy costs and fight climate change, through the [Municipal Challenge Fund](#). This initiative is part of Ontario's [Climate Change Action Plan](#) and is funded by proceeds from the province's carbon market. Chris Ballard, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, was at St. Lawrence Market in Toronto to announce successful applicants from the Toronto area and open the next round of funding for the program. With support from the Municipal Challenge Fund, St. Lawrence Market will install a renewable geo-exchange system for ground source heating and cooling as part of the redevelopment of [St. Lawrence Market North](#). This new system will help to reduce the building's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Other examples of [funded projects](#) in the Toronto area include developing near-zero emissions heating networks for housing developments and buildings across the city, converting ambulances and fire trucks to low-carbon vehicles, introducing 30 zero-emissions electric Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) buses and upgrading waste management facilities to

collect landfill gas and convert it into renewable natural gas. Successful applicants from 15 municipalities across the province, including projects from rural and northern communities, will be announced in the coming weeks. Municipalities are important partners in the fight against climate change. Investing in community-led action on climate change is essential to achieving long-term and cost-effective greenhouse gas reductions while reducing energy costs and creating new jobs in communities across Ontario.

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Our government's plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario includes **historic new investments in health care**, including free **medications for everyone under 25 and over 65 through OHIP+**, providing free **tuition to over 210,000 students** and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 kids access quality, licensed child care and making it more affordable for families, making everyday life more affordable by **reducing electricity costs by 25 per cent** on average through our Fair Hydro Plan, and taking action to **make housing more affordable** for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.