



December 2, 2020
Hon. Amarjot Sandhu
Chair, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
99 Wellesley Street West
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Submitted electronically

RE: Residential Construction Council of Ontario's Commentary on the 2020 Ontario Budget

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) is pleased to submit its comments to the Committee in support of *Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures)*, 2020.

RESCON represents over 200 residential builders of high, mid, and low-rise buildings in the province, with a focus on the GTA. RESCON supports the Ontario government for its strong focus in the budget on the skilled trades and digital innovation.

RESCON is pleased to see the government's continued focus and prioritization of digital innovation in the Budget. Through proposed initiatives like the Ontario Onwards Acceleration Fund and accompanying \$500 million funding, meaningful and necessary innovation can take place. In addition to the \$60 million the Province is setting aside to pilot new technologies to improve how people and businesses experience government services, the Acceleration Fund will help reduce barriers to development by cutting red tape and modernizing government services to streamline the approvals process is critical to increasing housing supply.

A recent RESCON commissioned report by the [Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis](#) (CANCEA) found that speeding up and digitizing the development approvals process in regions across Ontario would boost employment, result in greater units of housing and lead to billions of dollars in investment for communities. Specifically, the GTA could see 100,700 additional units by 2040, and the City of Toronto could see 21,100 additional units by 2025 if a standardized and digitized e-permitting process is implemented.

We support the Budget for its strong focus on the skilled trades and are pleased to see the government reaffirming its focus and leadership on improving the pathways to a career in the skilled trades. Residential construction, specifically the voluntary trades are and will continue to experience challenges with recruitment and retention of youth, in part due to retirements from the industry. The government's Skilled Trades Strategy will help enable the construction skilled trades to be considered a viable career option for the next generation and simply pathways into the industry. The strategy also encourages greater employer participation through the Group Sponsorship Grant.

In the RESCON commissioned, "[Retaining Employees in the Skilled Trades](#)" report from March 2019, it was recommended that a Centralized Resource "Hub" for Construction Workers and those interested in working in the construction industry. The investment of \$4.7 million in the Budget Measures Bill to develop a digital portal to support the trades and apprenticeship system, is in line with RESCON's

recommendation and is a crucial part in ensuring that the pathways to entering the skilled trades are as accessible as possible for interested youth.

RESCON also supports the investment of \$60 million to the Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP). This funding will go towards expanding partnerships with employers in the private sector, including residential developers. In September, RESCON launched the Anti-Racism Roundtable to address and combat racism within the construction industry. Part of the strategic goals of the Roundtable include removing barriers for BIPOC youth to entering the skilled trades. This is directly in line with the government's priorities and funding increase to BYAP.

RESCON believes investments in the budget are timely and incredibly necessary. We will continue to work collaboratively with the government and be a partner in fixing the barriers youth face in entering the skilled trades as well as speeding up the development approvals process through digitization to ensure more housing is built for the families of Ontario.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RL', is positioned above the printed name.

Richard Lyall
President
RESCON