

## **Construction leaders commend Murray as he steps down**

by Angela Gismondi Aug 14, 2017

Glen Murray's resignation as Ontario's minister of the environment has leaders of various construction associations reflecting on the impact he made while in that role, with several stating he was a strong advocate for environmental issues and took a particular interest in those facing the industry.

After Murray stepped down on July 31, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced changes to the cabinet including Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard as the new minister of the environment and climate change. Ballard was formerly minister of housing and the minister responsible for the poverty reduction strategy.

Murray, who has been MPP for Toronto Centre since 2010, is leaving political life and moving on to a new role as executive director of the Pembina Institute, a Canadian environmental think-tank.

Over his career, Murray has been appointed to a number of portfolios in the provincial cabinet including minister of research and innovation, minister of training, colleges and universities, minister of transportation and minister of infrastructure.

He also resigned from cabinet in 2012 to run as a candidate in the 2013 Ontario Liberal Party leadership election but ended up stepping down to support Wynne.

Giovanni Cautillo, executive director of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association, said Murray has been a champion for the environment in all aspects associated with climate change since starting his term in office.

"From the aspect of the sewer and watermain sector, minister Murray was highly attune with our issues: excess soils management; the municipal class environmental assessment process; combined storm and sewer overflows; and stormwater issues, only to name a few," said Cautillo in an email to The Daily Commercial News. "During our interactions we found him to be very knowledgeable and he clearly understood the idiosyncrasies of the separate and distinct issues our industry faced."

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Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association

Andy Manahan, **executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)**, said Murray had a good understanding of the issues surrounding excess construction soils and the need for regulations for the disposal of those soils.

"He was an early champion of what we were trying to achieve and he was very interested in the U.K. model that we brought forward," said Manahan, recalling one occasion when Murray attended a multi-ministry meeting on the subject.

"He proceeded to give a pep talk to all these political staff from various ministries like infrastructure, natural resources, transportation and agriculture and we were going 'wow, he really gets what we're trying to do. He's passionate about it and he wants to see changes and he knows that it's going to take all these ministries working together.' That was really a stellar moment for me in seeing the minister in action on that file.

"It was refreshing to see someone take the bull by the horns on the soils issue."

The RCCAO also has an application for review of the Class Environmental Assessment process and a letter from the ministry states the review is expected to be completed by December 2018.

"Our job here at RCCAO and the Municipal Engineers Association is essentially to hold the ministries' feet collectively to the fire so that's what we're going to do," said Manahan, adding it might take time to transition for the new minister but there is enough momentum on the files the RCCAO is working on to keep them going.

"I'm confident that Chris Ballard is going to be brought up to speed on not only soils but also on the application for review that we've done on the environmental assessment process."

Ian Cunningham, president of the Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA), said COCA interacted with Murray most when he was the minister of infrastructure and the minister of training, colleges and universities.

"We found him very accessible, he listened to our ideas, our proposals and our solutions," said Cunningham. "I found him to be a person of high intellect, very analytical, very forward thinking, very progressive. I'm disappointed that he's leaving government. His resignation is a loss to the government. I think he really found a home in climate change. I think he had a genuine passion for finding workable solutions to the challenges of climate change."

On behalf of the Ontario Road Builders' Association, chief operating officer Geoff Wilkinson thanked Murray for his work with the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

"He was very passionate about his portfolio and the issues, challenges and opportunities he championed," said Wilkinson. "We may not have always seen eye to eye on issues but we always knew where the minister stood."

Cautillo is looking forward to working with the new minister.

"He (Murray) was the driving force at the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and we now look forward to working alongside Chris Ballard in his new role...to affect a positive outcome on all matters environmental," he stated.