

Stakeholders laud Ontario budget infrastructure focus during uncertain times

[Don Wall](#) March 30, 2026

Ontario construction stakeholders have expressed strong support for what they view as a pro-construction budget introduced by Ontario Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy on March 26.

The government pledged to boost capital spending to more than \$210 billion over 10 years, including \$37 billion in 2026-2027, reduce the tax burden on new homes costing up to \$1.85 million to stimulate homebuilding, cut the small-business corporate income tax rate and create up to 4,000 new training seats for apprentices each year for the next three years.

Stakeholders raised few criticisms of the package, dubbed A Plan To Protect Ontario, in interviews or through statements.

The budget “shows that the government is firmly devoted to investing in Ontario’s infrastructure at a time of global uncertainty,” said Ontario Building Trades business manager Marc Arsenault.

“This is reassuring for construction, given the anxiety that is felt out there resulting from tariffs and war in the Middle East.”

Highways, transit commitments

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario issued a statement saying it supports the broad strokes of the budget.

Executive director Nadia Todorova commented, “RCCAO commends the government of Ontario’s continued focus on delivering transformative, generational infrastructure across the province...Sustained investment in infrastructure will remain critical to Ontario’s long-term economic growth, productivity and global competitiveness.”

Progressive Contractors Association of Canada vice-president-Ontario Karen Renkema said she welcomed a significant boost to community recreational infrastructure, with an

additional \$300 million over six years to be spent through the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund.

“Those aren’t billions of dollars, but they are important to local economies and to spur local growth and to keep local skilled workers employed as well, as well as improving, obviously, community infrastructure,” she said.

Renkema added, however, it was regrettable the Ontario government failed to address the PCA’s call to reform public procurement to provide more opportunities for alternative unions such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada, a partner with the PCA.

“In times of austerity like this, both sides of the ledger should be looked at, and if there’s cost savings and there’s competitive measures available so that all Ontarians can benefit from massive infrastructure investments, those should be considered,” she said.

The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) and the Ontario Home Builders’ Association issued a joint statement March 25 supporting the pre-budget pledges by the provincial and federal governments to remove the HST on new homes under \$1 million and reduce the sales tax on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.85 million for the next year.

BILD CEO Dave Wilkes commented, “At a time where we are facing huge economic uncertainty and a slowing housing industry, this is a major step toward unlocking affordability in Ontario’s housing market and supporting the broader economy. This is great news for both new-home purchasers and the hundreds of thousands of workers in our industry.

Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association executive director Patrick McManus lauded the HST rebate and the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program but said, “Without new investment in municipal infrastructure it won’t lead to the steady construction activity the industry needs.

“What we need most is consistent, predictable investment. That’s what lets companies plan ahead, hire workers and deliver projects efficiently.”

Trades ‘standing strong’

Building Trades director of government relations Igor Delov said the stagnation in the residential market was being felt across the whole construction workforce, among residential and ICI as well as unionized and non-union workers, given that residential represents a major part of the Ontario economy.

Outside of residential, he said, the trades are busy and “standing strong,” though there is reason for concern due to rising oil prices, supply chain issues and trade tensions.

The hike in capital spending, Delov said, was not only positive but “motivational,” with unions given further incentive to keep recruiting new workers.

In its Budget 2026 summary, the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS) praised “high-impact” pledges from the Building Ontario Fund including the previously announced \$1-billion commitment to the Darlington New Nuclear Project and a newly announced \$300-million housing initiative with High Art Capital.

The OCS also spotlighted a \$133.6-million partnership with Arch Corporation to build four long-term care homes.

The OCS said two new or reintroduced supports for businesses that are relevant to the construction sector include:

- Protect Ontario Financing Program: Provides working capital for businesses affected by trade volatility, including Algoma Steel; and
- Buy Ontario Act: Prioritizes Ontario goods and services in public procurement, including infrastructure projects, fleet vehicles and construction-related investments.

Other stakeholders weighing in on the budget included:

- Ian Cunningham, president of the Council of Ontario Construction Associations: “Given the very significant range of uncertainties of these times, Minister Bethlenfalvy’s 2026 budget presented a reasonable financial blueprint for the road ahead. I am optimistic with the steps the government has taken, the provincial economy can be repositioned to meet the challenges of the future and take advantage of the opportunities that arise.”
- Skills Ontario stated it was pleased to see the government strengthen its support for skilled trades promotion, education and training, including in the college sector.

“Skills Ontario has consistently called for increased funding for the college sector, recognizing the vital role colleges play in training Ontario’s skilled workforce,” said CEO Ian Howcroft.

- The Ontario General Contractors Association stated in a release tax relief on new homes is “a meaningful step to stimulate residential construction and bring workers back to job sites.”

The reduction in the small-business corporate income tax was called “highly meaningful for smaller general contractors and, in turn, supportive of the broader construction sector.”

Another tax measure, which will allow businesses to accelerate income-tax deductions for the cost of depreciable assets, was praised as an effective tool to stimulate construction activity.