

Ontario investing in critical infrastructure

Adam Freill November 9, 2023

Province supporting municipal water projects with \$200 million in funding to help build more housing and spur economic growth.

The Ontario government is earmarking \$200 million over a three-year period to help municipalities repair, rehabilitate and expand critical drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. The funding, says the province, will support rapidly growing population, unlock more housing opportunities and spur economic growth.

“We have heard time and time again that municipalities need more options for funding to meet the growing demand for infrastructure in their communities,” said Kinga Surma, Ontario’s Minister of Infrastructure. “We are listening and taking action by launching a new Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund to build stronger, more prosperous communities. At the same time as the province is moving forward with our own program, we continue to call on the federal government for new federal-provincial infrastructure funding to address significant unmet infrastructure needs.”

The fund will help growing municipalities build critical water infrastructure that would not otherwise get built in an effort to bring the province closer to its goal of building at least 1.5 million homes by 2031.

“We know that to build homes faster, municipalities need to service those homes. That’s why our government has been stepping up, giving our partners the tools that they need to build housing-enabling infrastructure,” said Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “Programs like the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund are just one of several ways we are working with municipalities to help build more homes.”

As announced in Ontario’s 2023 Fall Economic Statement, the government is also introducing additional measures to help build critical infrastructure faster and smarter. This includes launching the new Ontario Infrastructure Bank and the building of more rental homes by taking steps to remove the full eight per cent provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax.

“Ontario is facing a housing crisis like never before and our government will continue to work with partners at every level of government to get shovels in the ground to build more housing,” said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. “We will continue building a strong Ontario together through our responsible, targeted approach to get more critical infrastructure built while laying a strong fiscal foundation for future generations.”

Eligible municipalities will be able to nominate housing-enabling water and wastewater projects through the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund in early 2024.

“The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario welcomes the Ontario government’s focused \$200 million investment in critical water infrastructure,” stated Nadia Todorova, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario. “Water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure are essential to accommodate growth and keep existing systems flowing smoothly.”

“Water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure are the most critical infrastructure assets necessary in the residential construction process,” added Patrick McManus, executive director of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association. “This is the first step in building new residential developments, so without these assets being built, homes can’t get built.”

The government has committed over \$185 billion over the next 10 years for the construction and renewal of hospitals, long-term care homes, highways, public transit and other key public infrastructure.

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