



**Meeting Date:** March 6, 2024

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**Submitted by:**

**Report No:** CAO-5-2024

**Subject:** Proposed Legislation – Get It Done Act and Keeping Energy Costs Down

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**Recommendation:**

THAT Report CAO-5-2024, re: Proposed Legislation – Get It Done Act and Keeping Energy Costs Down be received for information.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update of legislation that has been tabled as the Provincial legislature has resumed session.

**Background:**

The Provincial legislature resumed the third week of February and some notable omnibus bills have been put forward.

The two bills are:

Bill 162: Get It Done Act, 2024

Bill 165: Keeping Energy Costs Down Act, 2024

## **Analysis:**

Below is an overview of each Bill that has been put forward for consideration:

### Bill 162: Get It Done Act, 2024

Ministry of Transportation (MTO)

**Banning new tolls on provincial highways:** Ontario is proposing amendments to the *Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act* to prohibit Ontario from introducing new tolls on provincial highways and require public consultation before considering new tolls. In April 2022, the government removed tolls on Highways 412 and 418, which is expected to save drivers \$68 million between 2022-27.

**Legislating the freeze on driver's licences and Ontario Photo Card fees:** Ontario is proposing to legislate the current freeze on driver's licence and Ontario Photo Card fees. If passed, any future increases for driver's licence renewals or Ontario Photo Cards would require a legislative amendment.

**Designating the Hazel McCallion Line extensions as priority transit projects:** Ontario will use measures introduced in the *Building Transit Faster Act, 2020*, to declare the Hazel McCallion Line extensions to downtown Mississauga via the Confederation Parkway loop and downtown Brampton as priority transit projects.

**Introducing automated licence plate renewals:** In 2022, the government eliminated licence plate renewal fees for passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds. The government is proposing changes to the *Highway Traffic Act* that will allow for the transition to automated renewal of licence plates.

Ministry of Finance (MOF)

**Giving voters a veto over future carbon taxes:** The government is introducing legislation that would protect the people of Ontario from the risk of new provincial carbon pricing programs by requiring the government to first ask Ontarians via a referendum before implementing a new provincial carbon pricing program.

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)

**Helping get critical infrastructure built faster:** To help get critical infrastructure such as highways, railways and transmission lines built faster, Ontario is streamlining and simplifying the complex 50-year-old environmental assessment (EA) process to make it easier and faster to build the infrastructure needed to support the province's growing population.

Streamlining environmental assessments to support municipalities: To help get more homes built and support municipal priorities, the Ontario government is beginning consultations, including with municipal partners on a new streamlined process for certain municipal water, shoreline and sewage system projects. This new process would help accelerate project planning by limiting the process to six months from 18 months or more. The proposed process could see the EA process completed in as little as six months. There will continue to be environmental oversight of projects that follow a streamlined process, including requirements for mandatory Indigenous and public consultation, prior to implementation.

Clarifying the *Environmental Assessment Act*: To help municipalities, provincial ministries and other provincial government agencies when planning for infrastructure development, Ontario is proposing a minor change to the *Environmental Assessment Act* that would make it clearer that expropriation is one of the ways property can be acquired for a project before the EA process is completed. Acquiring property for a project is already allowed under the Act before a proponent is authorized to proceed with the project. This clarity will provide greater certainty to municipalities and other proponents as they plan for future projects and get shovels in the ground sooner. Project proponents will continue to have to comply with other applicable legislation for expropriating land, such as the *Expropriations Act*.

#### Ministry of Mines (MINES)

Improving the process for mine permitting: Ontario is exploring opportunities to improve the permitting process for mine development and operation, as part of its efforts to ensure the province's mining sector remains competitive and attractive to investors.

#### Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)

Supporting municipalities to build more homes: Ontario will propose changes to the legislatively approved official plans of some of the province's fastest-growing municipalities to address local priorities while continuing to support the government's goal of building at least 1.5 million new homes by 2031. The proposed changes follow recent consultations with the affected municipalities and, where appropriate, respond to feedback from the local municipalities. Changes would apply to the legislatively-approved plans for the cities of Barrie, Belleville, Guelph, Hamilton, Ottawa, Peterborough, Wellington County and the regions of Halton, Peel, Waterloo and York. Modifications maintained through Bill 150 impacting these municipalities and the Niagara Region would continue to apply.

### Bill 165: Keeping Energy Costs Down Act, 2024

The legislation makes amendments to the *Ontario Energy Board Act* to address the cost of new connects to natural gas infrastructure.

The legislation, if passed, would reverse a December 2023 decision by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) that requires consumers to pay the cost of connecting a new home to natural gas infrastructure up front instead of over a period of 40 years. It would also increase the OEB's Leave to Consult threshold from \$2 million to \$10 million, requiring fewer energy projects would need OEB orders to construct a new pipeline. AMO welcomes this development to streamline projects and focus OEB approvals on larger, more complex projects.

#### **Financial Implications:**

N/A

#### **Strategic Plan:**

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Responsive Municipal Government
- Vibrant Local Economy

Providing information to council on legislative policy that will impact the Municipality is prudent and makes for good decision making.

#### **Attachments:**

N/A