



Ontario Association of Architects

March 23, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP  
Premier and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs  
Legislative Building Room 281, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

[sent via email]

Dear Premier,

The Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) is the licensing body and professional association for the province's architects. It was established under the *Architects Act* to regulate the practice of architecture "in order that the public interest may be served and protected."

The OAA commends steps being taken in response to the COVID-19 crisis, but there remain some issues of significant concern from within the architectural profession. We need clarity from your government on how the practice of architecture will move forward.

The architectural profession has a tremendous impact, enabling 14% of the province's GDP and supporting nearly one million jobs in Ontario. In some respects, this makes it easy to overlook the fact that the majority of architectural practices are small businesses that are particularly vulnerable.

The OAA supports the first steps initiated by Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario (CDAO) in its document, "COVID-19 Advisory for Construction Workplaces in Ontario," and looks to your government to provide further guidance that can be implemented quickly.

The government must make decisions not only as a client group, but also for construction occurring across the private and public sectors. We require stability for the entire design and construction sector to ensure projects critical for responding to the COVID-19 crisis can move forward, and that the industry is ready to step into action as part of the economic recovery plan.

It is important to note that many municipalities have restricted or even halted the services they deliver to the design and construction industry. This further exacerbates project delays and their related consequences. There is a need for government to engage directly with municipalities to clarify how work may continue in this period of work-from-home and social distancing. The majority of Ontario's architecture practices have instituted remote working conditions to continue providing their services within the province.

I note that many of the speeches from different levels of government have referenced additional shelters and emergency clinics. These projects often require the work of architects and building officials. It is important that the processes are in place for this work to be expedited.

If there is work that can be safely done without risk to planning and building officials or those serving on associated panels, committees, boards, and tribunals, then we encourage the province to work with municipalities to ensure the continuation of this work. While there will be a disruption to construction, it is important that it can resume quickly once we have collectively

emerged from this crisis. Once that time comes, taking necessary steps to ensure we are ready to build is critical for rebounding the economy.

Finally, on behalf of the OAA and the profession, I want to assure you that architects are ready to play our part as we work together to overcome this crisis. As you develop public health and emergency planning measures, know that we are only a phone call away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Kurtin', written in a cursive style.

Kathleen Kurtin  
OAA, FRAIC  
President

cc. The Honourable Steve Clark  
The Honourable Doug Downey  
The Honourable Laurie Scott

