

MARCH 9, 2010

ONTARIO'S MARCH 8TH 2010 SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

By J. Stephen Andrews, Government Relations Advisor

Introduction

On Monday March 8, 2010, the McGuinty government delivered their fourth Speech from the Throne marking the opening of a new session of the Ontario Legislature and laying out the government's legislative and policy priorities. The government's "Open Ontario", five year economic growth plan is the key theme of the speech.

Below is a short summary of the central initiatives outlined in yesterday's Speech from the Throne that are of primary interest in BLG's clients and friends.

Leveraging Clean Water and Water Conservation

The government has committed to introducing new legislation to build on the province's expertise in clean water technology. The legislation is entitled "*The Water Opportunities Act*" and it will strengthen existing protections for the province's water resources while also building a clean technology sector for water conservation.

Government Agency and Asset Review

The Speech from the Throne also notes that the government has initiated a review of its business enterprises (Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation, LCBO among others). It also states that once the review is concluded, any change in Ontario's assets will be guided by what is in the public's best interests. Also the government would reinvest any proceeds from any asset sale to better support Ontarians' priorities in a global economy, like its commitment to skills development and education, for example.

Continuing Tax Reform

The government signalled that it will continue with its various tax reform initiatives announced in last years budget (elimination of the capital tax, income tax reductions) and will continue to moving forward with the harmonized sales tax.

THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S MARCH 8TH SPEECH FROM THE THORNE

Expanding Mining Opportunities in Ontario's Far North

The McGuinty government will expand chromite mining in the far north in the region known as the "ring of fire" in partnership with First Nations communities. Chromite is a key ingredient in the manufacturing of stainless steel and Ontario has one of the largest deposits in the world.

Health Care Reform

Building on the various health reform initiatives such as reducing emergency wait times, the government plans on introducing new legislation to make health care providers and executives accountable for improving patient care. In addition, the government will introduce a process to "keep drugs affordable" and reinvest the savings in health care. The government will establish an "expert panel" of independent advisors to provide recommendations on clinical practice guidelines to ensure Ontarians receive quality care. The government also plans to review the *Public Hospitals Act* and will introduce legislation to create a hospital system that better leverages the health care expertise of community partners and other health care professionals..

Investing in Financial Services

The government will establish a "Financial Services Leadership Council" to support the industry and will also develop a strategy to make Toronto one of the world's key financial centres. This would also include establishing Toronto as the location for a new, single securities regulatory body.

Expanding Post Secondary Education and the Knowledge Economy

The government stated that it will raise Ontario's postsecondary rate to 70% from the current 62% to better accommodate training needs for the knowledge economy. The government will also work with all stakeholders to improve the quality of postsecondary education through a five year plan. The government indicated that it will create a new "Ontario Online Institute" which will expand on-line educational opportunities for students. Finally, the government plans to promote Ontario postsecondary institutions abroad to attract more international students.

If you have any questions, please contact **Stephen Andrews** at 416-367-6219 or sandrews@blgcanada.com.

THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S MARCH 8TH SPEECH FROM THE THORNE

BLG Government Relations Services

The Government Relations Group at Borden Ladner Gervais LLP represents clients in their relations with governments in Canada at all levels – municipal, regional, provincial and federal and with departments, boards, authorities, and agencies of each of those governments.

BLG professionals bring extensive experience working within the public sector and maintaining excellent contact with key decision-makers. We provide insight with respect to new legislation, assessment of complex policies, and identification of key contacts within the public service regardless of department and including appropriate elected officials.

Our services include:

- Monitoring political policy developments
- Analyzing the potential impact of emerging government policy and program changes on clients interests
- Preparing briefs, submissions and presentations to governments on behalf of clients
- Creating advocacy campaigns on behalf of clients, including communicating on behalf of clients with government decision-makers
- Developing strategic advice that incorporates political agendas of the day with the technical expertise needed to meet the challenge of any public pronouncements

National Contact:

Colin P. MacDonald
Calgary
403-232-9523
cmacdonald@blgcanada.com

Regional Contacts:

Tommy Tremblay
Montréal
514-954-2520
ttremblay@blgcanada.com

Hon. Gar Knutson
Ottawa
613-787-3729
gknutson@blgcanada.com

Jack Hughes
Ottawa
613-787-3509
jhughes@blgcanada.com

J. Stephen Andrews
Toronto
416-367-6219
sandrews@blgcanada.com

Jeffrey S. Graham
Toronto
416-367-6174
jgraham@blgcanada.com

Jeffrey S. Thomas
Vancouver
604-640-4203
jthomas@blgcanada.com

This newsletter is prepared as a service for our clients and other persons dealing with government relations issues. It is not intended to be a complete statement of the law or an opinion on any subject. Although we endeavour to ensure its accuracy, no one should act upon it without a thorough examination of the law after the facts of a specific situation are considered. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. This newsletter has been sent to you courtesy of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. We respect your privacy, and wish to point out that our privacy policy relative to newsletters may be found at <http://www.blgcanada.com/home/website-electronic-privacy>. If you have received this newsletter in error, or if you do not wish to receive further newsletters, you may ask to have your contact information removed from our mailing lists by phoning 1-877-BLG-LAW1 or by emailing subscriptions@blgcanada.com.

© 2010 Borden Ladner Gervais LLP

BORDEN LADNER GERVAIS LLP

Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
Lawyers • Patent &
Trade-mark Agents

Calgary

1000 Canterra Tower
400 Third Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2P 4H2
tel: 403 232-9500
fax: 403 266-1395

Montréal

1000 de La Gauchetière
Street West
Suite 900, Montréal,
Québec, Canada H3B 5H4
tel: 514 879-1212
fax: 514 954-1905

Ottawa

World Exchange Plaza
100 Queen St., Suite 1100
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1P 1J9
tel: 613 237-5160
1-800-661-4237
legal fax: 613 230-8842
IP fax: 613 787-3558

Toronto

Scotia Plaza,
40 King Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5H 3Y4
tel: 416 367-6000
fax: 416 367-6749

Vancouver

1200 Waterfront Centre
200 Burrard Street,
P.O. Box 48600
Vancouver, British Columbia,
Canada V7X 1T2
tel: 604 687-5744
fax: 604 687-1415

Waterloo Region

Waterloo City Centre
100 Regina Street South,
Suite 220
Waterloo, Ontario,
Canada N2J 4P9
tel: 519 579-5600
fax: 519 579-2725
IP fax: 519 741-9149

www.blgcanada.com

Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
is an Ontario Limited
Liability Partnership