

Ontario Extends Declaration of Emergency to Continue the Fight Against COVID-19

Sustained Measures Necessary to Stop the Spread and Protect Public Health
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TORONTO — On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and with the approval of the Ontario legislature, the Ontario government is extending the Declaration of Emergency under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* for a further 28 days. This will allow the government to continue to use every tool at its disposal to protect the health and safety of the people of Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Passed during a special sitting of the Ontario legislature and with the full cooperation of all parties, the Declaration of Emergency has been extended until May 12. The extension of the provincial declaration of emergency allows Ontario to continue to enforce current emergency orders, such as the closure of all non-essential workplaces, outdoor amenities such as parks and recreational areas, public places and bars and restaurants, as well as restrictions on social gatherings of more than five people, and prohibitions against price-gouging. A full list of emergency orders can be found on the [e-Laws website](#) under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

"During these unprecedented times, we cannot let our guard down. The actions being taken by everyone to stay home and practice physical distancing are making a difference, but we are not out of the woods yet," said Premier Ford. "With the support of every Ontario MPP, we continue to take any and all actions necessary to support our frontline health care workers and respond rapidly and decisively to slow the spread of this deadly virus."

The legislature also passed the *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Protection Act* to amend the *Education Act*, *Planning Act*, *Development Charges Act*, *Police Services Act* and the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*. This new legislation demonstrates that the government is actively listening to the concerns of education and municipal stakeholders during this COVID-19 emergency.

"This legislation is about protecting the health and economic interests of Ontarians," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "We will do whatever it takes to get through this challenge — most especially for the next generation — so that students continue learning and graduating."

The amendments to the *Education Act* will allow school boards to continue charging fees on new construction in order to retain a vital source of revenue for new school projects. The bill also includes an amendment to provide a fair and consistent provincewide

approach to addressing school suspensions and expulsions as part of the government's commitment to the safety of students and staff upon the reopening of schools.

The changes to the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act* will temporarily suspend student loan payments for OSAP borrowers and initiate a six-month interest-free moratorium on OSAP loans.

"We are taking action to ease the financial burden for students and current borrowers during the COVID-19 outbreak," said Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities. "By temporarily suspending loan repayments and interest accrual, our government is providing immediate support for OSAP borrowers during these challenging times."

The government is making it possible to suspend certain municipal planning decision timelines during the state of emergency, and change the *Development Charges Act* to ensure municipalities can continue to count on a vital source of revenue that helps pay for local growth-related infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewers as well as fire and police services. The amendments to the *Police Services Act* also allow the Solicitor General to give municipalities an extension beyond January 1, 2021 to prepare and adopt a [community safety and well-being plan](#).

"Nothing is more important than protecting the health and well-being of all individuals and families," said Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "We have listened to our municipal partners and made these changes to help them better manage staff time and resources so they can focus on the COVID-19 outbreak."

"In these unprecedented times, our government is doing everything in its power to support our municipal, policing and community partners," said Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General. "While Community Safety and Well-Being Plans are an important tool for municipalities to keep our communities safe, we need them to focus on allocating resources where they are needed most right now, and that is to stop the spread of COVID-19."

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