

## Queen's Park Today – Daily Report March 9, 2016

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### Quotation of the day

“Excellent customer service doesn't have a cup size.”

*The Ontario Human Rights Commission calls on employers to end discriminatory dress codes*

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## Today in Queen's Park

### On the schedule

The House will convene at 9:00 a.m. to continue debate on the government's budget motion. The NDP will be given 60 minutes to respond to the motion.

After question period, MPPs will vote on a time allocation motion on the government's budget bill, **Bill 173**, Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act (Budget Measures).

In the afternoon, members will debate **Bill 166**, Supply Act 2016. The supply bill authorizes the government's expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016. Perfunctory debate on supply bills is required by the standing orders.

The House will then return to second reading debate on **Bill 172**, Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, for the remainder of the afternoon.

### Tuesday's debates and proceedings

MPPs convened at 9:00 a.m. to continue debate on **Bill 173**, the budget bill. Government House Leader **Yasir Naqvi** put forward a time allocation motion on the bill, guaranteeing it will move through the finance committee by Thursday, April 7. The motion was debated in the morning and briefly in the afternoon.

After question period, MPPs voted on the third reading stage of, **Bill 132**, Sexual Violence and Harassment Plan Act. The bill passed unanimously (Ayes 94; Nays 0).

Three private members' bills were introduced during routine proceedings:

- NDP MPP **Peter Tabuns** introduced a bill entitled **Bill 175**, Jonathan's Law. The bill would allow employees to take up to 52 weeks unpaid work leave after the death of child.
- Liberal MPP **Granville Anderson** introduced a bill entitled **Bill 176**, Maternal Health Awareness Day Act.
- NDP MPP **Peggy Sattler** introduced a bill entitled **Bill 177**, Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act. Sattler's bill would provide employees with up to 10 days of paid leave if they or their children have experienced domestic or sexual violence.

In the afternoon, MPPs returned to second reading debate on **Bill 172**, Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act.

### Question period

- PC leader **Patrick Brown** led off with questions about the government's cap-and-trade plan.
- Environment Minister **Glen Murray** responded by accusing the PC Party of "flip-flopping" on climate change. Murray read a number of past quotes from Brown saying he opposed a carbon tax.
- On the occasion of International Women's Day, the opposition called the government out for its poor record on files pertaining to women's rights, including the authorization of two male-only college campuses in Saudi Arabia, cuts to the Partner Assault Response (PAR) program and statistics that show female seniors in Ontario earn \$4,000 per year less than males.
- Education Minister **Liz Sandals** continued to face questions about the possible closure of four "demonstration schools" for students with learning disabilities across the province, as well as the Robarts School for the Deaf in London.
- Sandals would not rule out the closure of the schools, citing low enrollment in some schools, and the need to fund special education for the largest possible number of Ontario students.

### In the park

The Ontario Confederation of University of Faculty Associations held its annual lobby day at Queen's Park, including a scheduled breakfast reception.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers also held a lobby day and MPP reception at Queen's Park.

### Topics of conversation

- The James Bay Cree Nation filed a lawsuit with the Ontario Superior Court over land rights of 48,000 square kilometres south of James Bay. The lawsuit includes \$495 million in damages for past breaches of the Cree Nation's rights in relation to these lands.
- A [report](#) from the Fraser Institute found that Ontario has accumulated more debt than all other provinces combined since 2003.

## Today's committee meetings

### Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills

- Wednesday, March 9 at 9:00 a.m.
  - Room 1
  - The committee will meet to consider the 2015 draft report on regulations.

### Standing Committee on Public Accounts

- Wednesday, March 9 at 9:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
  - Room 151
  - The committee will meet to write its report on the 2014 Auditor General Report

### Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly

- Wednesday, March 9 at 1:00 p.m.
  - Room 1
  - The committee will meet to consider **Bill 76**, Natural Gas Superhighway, Act.
  - Representatives from the following organizations are scheduled to appear:
    - US Gain
    - Union Gas
    - Canada Steamship Lines
    - Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management and Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Environmental Applied Science and Management
    - FortisBC Energy Inc.
    - The Rustbelt Group
    - Emterra Group
    - Cummins Westport Inc.

## Today's events



**March 9 at 7:00 a.m. — Toronto**

The Information Technology Association of Canada will host its Digital Health Day at Queen's Park. A morning reception is scheduled in the Legislative Dining Room.

**March 9 at 7:30 a.m. — Toronto**

The National Caucus of Environmental Legislators will host an MPP breakfast reception in Committee Room 228.

**March 9 at 9:00 a.m. — Toronto**

Tourism, Culture and Sport Minister **Michael Coteau** will make an announcement at Cinespace Film Studios, 30 Booth Avenue.

**March 9 at 9:15 a.m. — Toronto**

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will meet with Pacific Alliance Ambassadors at Queen's Park.

**March 9 at 10:30 a.m. — Toronto**

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will attend question period.

**March 9 at 12:00 p.m. — Toronto**

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** will hold a cabinet meeting at Queen's Park.

**March 9 at 3:00 p.m. — Toronto**

The Friends and Advocates of Catholic Education will host its Queen's Park day and an afternoon reception in the Legislative Dining Room.

## News briefs — Governmental

### Office of the Premier

Premier **Kathleen Wynne** toured Huawei's Canadian headquarters in Markham on Tuesday morning and announced a \$16 million investment into the company's 5G Ontario R&D expansion plan. Huawei will create 250 new R&D jobs in the province while establishing new research laboratories in Markham and Waterloo and expanding its existing research facility in Ottawa. This announcement fulfills a commitment made by Huawei during the premier's first trade mission to China in 2014. The full release is available [online](#).

## Funding announcements

### Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

- The ministry announced a \$120,000 investment in marbledmedia, a television and digital media company in Toronto.

## News briefs – Non-governmental

### Conference Board of Canada

The Conference Board of Canada's "Provincial Outlook: Winter 2016" forecasts Ontario's economy will grow by an estimated 2.4 per cent in 2016. This is slightly below the province's average of 2.5 per cent growth over the last two years. The report forecasts Ontario's international exports will grow by 4.7 per cent in 2016, due to the low Canadian dollar and strong demand from the United States. The conference board also forecasted an increase in business investment, including a 5.1 per cent increase in the residential housing business. However, the report notes that economic growth will be dampened by the provincial government's cuts to program spending as it tries to balance the budget. The full report is available [online](#).

### Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

#### Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Construction Association Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario

The professional engineers society and construction associations released their initial findings on excess soil management practices in Ontario. The findings recommend Ontario construction companies reduce the transport of soils that can be re-used or recycled, noting that the handling and disposal of excess soils can represent 13 per cent of total project costs and require more than 300,000 km in travel distance. The organizations called for a model by-law that would promote the use of excess soil best practices, which they said could reduce greenhouse gases and produce \$1 billion in cost savings for government infrastructure projects. The full study is expected to be completed in April. Call 647-981-4494.

### Ontario Human Rights Commission

In recognition of International Women's Day, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) released a statement calling for an end to sexualized dress codes that discriminate against female and transgender employees. OHRC chief commissioner **Renu Mandhane** said employers must "make sure their dress codes don't reinforce sexist stereotypes." OHRC executive director **Kathy Laird** said, "Excellent customer service doesn't have a cup size" and called on employees facing discrimination to call the commission for legal help. The full release is available [online](#).

**Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario**

PC MPP **Ernie Hardeman** issued an open letter to Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister **Ted McMeekin** on the government's Long-term Affordable Housing Strategy five-year update. Hardeman said the update, which should be released this spring, must include key performance indicators such as the Ontario Housing Measure, which measures the percentage of low-income households with children under 18 that are spending more than 40 per cent of their income on housing. Other indicators include the Rental Affordability Indicator and Social Housing Tenant Satisfaction Surveys. Hardeman said we need measures other than the number of people on waiting lists in order to determine whether the government's strategy is working. Call 416-325-1239.