

Ministry of Training,
Colleges and Universities

Ministère de la Formation
et des Collèges et Universités

Minister

Ministre

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Telephone (416) 326-1600
Facsimile (416) 326-1656

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2
Téléphone (416) 326-1600
Télécopieur (416) 326-1656



Sessional Paper No. P-10

P-10 – Ontario College of Trades Petition (Sessional Paper No. P-10)
Mr. McDonnell (Tabled February 20, 2013 and February 25, 2013), Mr. Hillier,
Mr. McDonnell and Mr. Pettapiece (Tabled February 27, 2013)

Response

I have received your second petition requesting the discontinuation of the Ontario College of Trades, the College's membership fees, and addressing skilled shortage by encouraging youths to enter careers in the skilled trades. I understand you submitted a similar petition to the Legislative Assembly regarding the College in September 2012, to my predecessor, the Honourable Glen Murray.

Our government is committed to supporting a high quality apprenticeship system that ensures public and workplace safety, and ensures the next generation of skilled workers are ready to meet future labour market demands. There are over 150 apprenticeship trades in Ontario with 120,000 apprentices currently training in the province, an increase of 60,000 apprentices since 2002/03.

The idea of an all-trades governance institution, College of Trades, was recommended by Tim Armstrong in 2008. Mr. Armstrong, who is a mediator, arbitrator and labour lawyer with expertise in Ontario's apprenticeship and trade certification system, made this recommendation from his study on whether trades in Ontario should be compulsory.

This report was followed by the *College of Trades – Report of the Advisor to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities* by Kevin Whitaker. Mr. Whitaker's report solicited submissions from skilled tradespeople across the skilled trades sector. After extensive consultation with stakeholders from the sector, including employers, journeypersons, apprentices and laypersons, Mr. Whitaker made recommendations on the implementation of the proposed Ontario College of Trades, including the College's governance structure, scope and mandate. In 2009, based on these recommendations, the College was established through legislation.

The College is an industry-driven organization, independent of the ministry, governed by the people who make up the trades in Ontario. It has a board of governors, divisional boards and trade boards that are comprised of entrepreneurs and tradespeople, who are eager to make the trades in Ontario more accountable, more responsive to the needs of Ontarians, and more attractive as occupations.

Membership in the College will begin on April 8, 2013. Similar to other professionals, like teachers and physicians, people in the skilled trades in Ontario now have their own self-governed regulatory college. Instead of the government making decisions for the trades, industry members can now make their own key decisions. The College was created to ensure representative decision-making. In the past, there was not a consistent process for decision-making that was open to direct input from skilled workers. Some of the benefits of a professional self-regulatory body for the trades include:

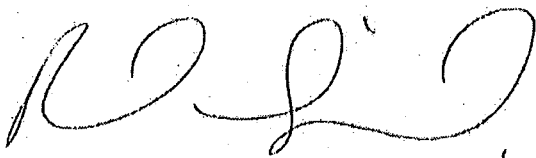
- promotion of skilled trades careers in order to attract people who will contribute to the renewal and growth of the industry;
- opportunities for skilled trades professionals to speak out about key issues affecting their careers;
- a complaints, investigation and discipline process that protects the public;
- a public register that will provide consumers with confidence that members are qualified to do the work in their trade; and,
- industry-driven processes where tradespeople and employers can make submissions to recommend changes for a trade (e.g., journeyperson to apprentice ratio reviews, trade classification reviews).

Like other self-regulatory bodies, the College needs fees to support its services to its members and to the public. Membership fees to support these activities will be the lowest of any regulatory college in Ontario, and are tax deductible. The benefits to being a member of the College of Trades outweigh the relatively low annual cost of membership. As a member, your name will appear on a public registry letting your customers and potential employers know that you are a professional, certified journeyman. Existing apprentices will enjoy free membership in the College until 2014.

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform you that membership for employers of apprentices and journeymen will be voluntary for now. It is up to the employer to choose whether they would like to become a member of the College and pay a fee.

The College will promote skilled trades as a career of first choice for young people. Ontario needs to ensure that young people are aware of opportunities in the skilled trades and that it's easier for them to pursue the trades as a professional career. Having a regulatory college gives the trades professional recognition. The College raises the profile of the skilled trades, and promotes the trades as great career opportunities for our young people.

Ontario needs to maintain high standards in the skilled trades to make sure we have the qualified workforce we need, and to protect public and workplace safety. As with any new program or product, building awareness takes some time and we expect industry to benefit from the College in its first full year of implementation.



Hon. Brad Duguid