

**BACKGROUND / DOCUMENT D'INFORMATION**

June 2, 2006

**ONTARIO AND QUÉBEC PREMIERS SIGN PROTOCOL  
FOR COOPERATION**

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and Québec Premier Jean Charest signed a protocol for cooperation on June 2, 2006 in Ottawa at the Château Laurier. The premiers announced they will cooperate on several key economic and social issues to improve public services for the people of both provinces.

The new cooperation initiative consists of a series of agreements between Ontario and Québec, focusing on shared priorities between the two provinces. The two central agreements are the Protocol for Cooperation between the Government of Ontario and the Government of Québec and The Agreement for Cooperation and Exchanges for Francophone Affairs. The protocol also encompasses eight sector-specific agreements that will focus on culture, health care, transportation, the environment, natural resources, tourism and emergency management. The two premiers also announced today the signing of the Ontario - Québec construction labour mobility agreement.

The process began in April 2004, when the two premiers met in Toronto to discuss opportunities for collaboration on shared priorities. They agreed to work together and directed their ministers to negotiate and prepare agreements for each of the key sectors.

The following agreements are a result of this collaboration:

**A Protocol for Cooperation between the Government of Ontario and the Government of Québec**

This agreement provides the foundation for Ontario and Québec to maintain a strong and effective relationship, while paving the way for joint actions in key areas that will provide long-term benefits for the people of both provinces. It establishes a framework for sector-specific agreements and promotes bilateral cooperation to improve public services in both provinces.

**The Agreement for Cooperation and Exchanges for Francophone Affairs**

This Ontario-Québec agreement will strongly contribute to cooperation and increase partnerships between the two provinces in key areas such as education, early childhood, health and culture. On a cultural level, a permanent Working Group on Francophone Culture between Québec and Ontario will be set-up to identify among other things, the priorities and initiatives shared by Québec and Ontario with regard to culture.

Additionally, the agreement will benefit Francophones' access to education by integrating culture into the curriculum and into teaching practice, by improving strategies for the welcome and integration of immigrants into French-language schools and by maintaining high-quality educational services in remote regions.

The early childhood sector will also gain from the agreement through the sharing of information and expertise in terms of the area of training of Francophone child care personnel and decentralized management strategies of child care services. Lastly, the agreement is expected to yield positive outcomes for Francophones in the health sector through a series of joint initiatives, including terminology, training, information to citizens and promoting careers in health among young people, as well as promoting cooperation and the signing of specific agreements between institutions to stimulate ongoing exchanges between Québec and Ontario with respect to health in French.

### **Agreement Concerning Transportation Cooperation**

Ontario and Québec will exchange information and best practices on an ongoing basis and pursue a variety of joint transportation initiatives that will enhance public safety and security. To encourage economic growth, the two provinces will also work in partnership with other governments and associations to support the continuous development of the Ontario-Québec trade corridor, to identify bottlenecks, and to make strategic improvements to facilitate the efficient movement of goods and people through the length of the corridor in all modes.

### **Agreement to Promote Sustainable Development of Crown Land and Natural Resources**

Ontario and Québec will work cooperatively in areas of mutual interest that may include the protection of forests, scientific research in the forestry sector, management of geographic, land and resources information, management of fish, wildlife and wildlife species at risk, sustainable development of public lands, forests and protected areas, cadastral surveying in relation to public land registration systems, forestry and wildlife resource evaluation, enforcement of natural resources legislations and integrated natural resource and Crown land management. Ontario and Quebec will develop a four-year plan to identify specific joint projects and establish timelines for carrying out those projects.

### **Forest Protection Cooperation Agreement**

Ontario and Québec have agreed to share responsibility for a protected forest zone boundary area that covers a distance of eight kilometres on each side of the Québec-Ontario border. The new agreement emphasizes the importance of sharing information, expertise and knowledge to help prevent and suppress forest fires, insect infestations and tree diseases both within and outside of the boundary area, and to minimize any potential adverse effects of such disturbances. Forest protection falls within the Agreement to Promote Sustainable Development of Crown Land and Natural Resources

### **Agreement for Cooperation on Health Care**

Both Ontarians and Quebecers value high-quality and sustainable health care systems. Enhanced cooperation between Ontario and Québec, particularly through sharing information and best practices, will work to strengthen health care planning and service delivery in both provinces. Mutual assistance in health emergencies is a priority under

this Agreement, requiring both provinces to develop mechanisms to cooperate should an emergency affect the operation of health and social services in their respective provinces.

### **Agreement for Cooperation on Culture**

Ontario and Québec are working together to promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of the culture and heritage of each province. Both provinces are committed to ensuring the regular exchange of cultural information, statistics, research findings and skills in priority areas of mutual interest. This greater cooperation will strengthen cultural and heritage activity in both provinces, contributing to economic prosperity and job creation.

### **Agreement for Cooperation on Tourism**

Joint promotion of tourism products and destinations can increase the number of visitors to Ontario and Québec and bolster this important sector of the economy. Combining and building on our strengths will make both provinces more competitive in the global tourism market. An annual action plan will be created to identify priorities, with initial activities to include:

- Development of the 2006 Travel Activities and Motivational Survey (TAMS);
- Development of new and stronger tourism experiences in shared border regions; and
- Display and distribution of travel information and promotional material in select provincial travel information centres.

### **Agreement for Collaboration Concerning Emergency Management**

Ontario and Québec have a shared interest in public safety and security and already have a number of cooperation initiatives. They will continue to promote mutual understanding in matters of emergency management and develop procedures for collaboration that will facilitate exchanges of appropriate information, expertise and practices in the area of emergency management, in particular with regard to functions related to operation centres, knowledge about and assessment of risks and disaster financial assistance programs.

To further enhance collaboration, Ontario and Québec have agreed to explore additional opportunities in the public security sector and identify options for efficient joint projects. In the short term, this could include expanding the existing collaboration on the exchange of police equipment, assets and resources so that officials have access to additional resources in emergency situations.

### **Agreement concerning Transboundary Environmental Impacts**

Many of today's environmental issues can better be solved through cooperation across borders. A new environmental cooperation agreement between Ontario and Québec will encourage and facilitate closer working relationships on key transboundary

environmental issues. It is expected to contribute to more effective and efficient coordination of actions on such issues as air quality, surface and groundwater management, and monitoring and reducing pollution in rivers, lakes and waterways.

### **Labour Mobility Agreement**

The Ontario - Québec construction labour mobility agreement will significantly enhance the mobility of construction workers between the two provinces, while respecting the regulatory systems already in place with regard to this industry. Amongst other things, it broadens the range of activities and circumstances giving Ontario workers access to Québec's construction market. It introduces simplified and abbreviated mechanisms for dispute resolution and for resolving complaints of harassment. Finally, the agreement modifies the mandate of the Bilateral Coordinating Committee, so that it can propose certain updates, as the agreement evolves.

It also provides that contractors from both provinces shall be equally entitled to bid on construction contracts of certain Crown Corporations, including liquor and lottery corporations as well as electrical utilities of both provinces. With respect to procurement, the agreement restores access for Québec contractors to the construction contracts of Ontario's public sector.

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For more  
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