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ONTARIO GOVERNMENT RAISES MINIMUM WAGE *Increase Helps Lowest Paid And Most Vulnerable Workers*

TORONTO — The Ontario government is raising the minimum wage on February 1, 2006, for the third time since taking office, Labour Minister Steve Peters announced today.

“We are providing Ontario’s lowest paid and most vulnerable workers with the third increase in the minimum wage in three years,” said Peters. “It is to Ontario’s economic advantage to see that our workers are paid a fair wage.”

The general minimum wage will be raised to \$7.75 per hour on February 1, 2006, and there will be a further increase to \$8 per hour on February 1, 2007.

Other minimum wage rates will also increase on February 1, 2006. The minimum wage for:

- Students under 18 years old and employed for not more than 28 hours a week will rise from \$6.95 to \$7.25 per hour
- Liquor servers will increase from \$6.50 to \$6.75 per hour
- Hunting and fishing guides currently paid a minimum of \$37.25 for less than five consecutive hours in a day and \$74.50 for five or more hours in a day (whether or not the hours are consecutive) will also increase to \$38.75 and \$77.50 respectively.

“The increase is part of the McGuinty government’s investment in people,” said Peters. “By phasing in the minimum wage increases, we can help these workers benefit from Ontario’s economic growth while keeping Ontario businesses competitive.”

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