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NEW LEGISLATION AIMS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC PROTECTION AND SAFETY *Greater Cooperation Key To Ensuring Businesses Comply With Laws In Ontario*

QUEEN'S PARK — The McGuinty government is protecting the people of Ontario by introducing legislation that, if passed, would improve the way provincial ministries, agencies and inspectors work together to keep the public, workers, natural resources, and fish and wildlife safe, Labour Minister Steve Peters announced today.

“The legislation we introduced today is a key part of our government’s commitment to protect the public,” said Peters. “If passed, it would mean more cooperation among ministries and agencies that regulate businesses, better enforcement of provincial laws and fewer burdens on companies — all things that will help keep Ontarians safe and healthy.”

Currently, 13 different ministries and agencies enforce a wide variety of laws to keep the public safe in Ontario. If passed, the Regulatory Modernization Act, 2006, would enable staff from all 13 ministries and other agencies to share information and work together to ensure that businesses comply with provincial laws. It would also help the government monitor businesses that put the public at risk by violating Ontario laws.

This legislation is one part of a three-part strategy to improve the way businesses comply with laws that protect people, natural resources and the environment in Ontario. The other components of the government’s modernization plan include:

- Developing strategies that would recognize companies with exceptional records of compliance – while targeting enforcement efforts at businesses that continually violate Ontario laws
- Launching a pilot project that would provide “easy-to-understand” toolkits to small businesses, so they can improve the way they comply with provincial laws.

“This is a new frontier in inter-ministry cooperation,” said Peters. “We have listened and responded to what businesses, labour groups and our own employees have told us. Better connections equal better protection, and this approach is good for our front-line staff, good for the business community and good for the people of Ontario.”

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