

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT CONSULTS ON MEASURE TO COMBAT UNDERGROUND ECONOMY IN CONSTRUCTION

Paper Released On Extending Mandatory Workplace Safety And Insurance Coverage

QUEEN'S PARK – The McGuinty government is starting consultations on a proposal to extend mandatory workplace safety and insurance coverage to most people who work in construction, Labour Minister Steve Peters announced today.

“This consultation is part of a broader government strategy to tackle the underground economy in construction, protect workers and business from unfair competition and promote strong economic growth,” said Peters. “We want to hear the views of the construction industry on how best to tackle the underground economy.”

Extending mandatory coverage to most construction workers would make it more difficult for individuals and employers to hide underground economy activities. It would also bring a significant portion of workers in the construction sector under the protection of the workplace safety and insurance system, helping Ontario reach our goal of reducing workplace injuries by 20 per cent by 2008.

This would also help legitimate businesses who are now often undercut by unfair competition, and consumers who have no way of knowing if workers they hire are part of the underground economy.

“We are looking for ways to strengthen our economy and ensure fair competition for all Ontario businesses – particularly small businesses,” said Peters. “Our government is continuing to pave the way for improvements in key areas of our economy, ensuring a more prosperous long-term future for everyone.”

A discussion paper is available on the Ministry of Labour website at www.labour.gov.on.ca. Comments on this proposal can be sent to the Ministry by:

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