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Archived - 2014 Mandate letter: Research and Innovation

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities for the year 2014



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Dr. Reza Moridi
Minister of Research and Innovation
Ministry of Research and Innovation
77 Wellesley Street West
12th Floor, Ferguson Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

Dear Minister Moridi:

I am honoured to welcome you back to your role as Minister of Research and Innovation. We have a strong Cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the

work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.

Our government's most recent Speech from the Throne outlined a number of key priorities that will guide your work as minister. Growing the economy and helping to create good jobs are fundamental to building more opportunity and security, now and in the future. That critical priority is supported by strategic investments in the talent and skills of our people, from childhood to retirement. It is supported through the building of modern infrastructure, transit and a seamless transportation network. It is supported by a dynamic business climate that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships to foster greater prosperity. And it is reflected across all of our government, in every area, and will extensively inform our programs and policies.

As we move forward with our plan to grow the economy and create jobs, we will do so through the lens of fiscal prudence. Our 2014 Budget reinforces our commitment to balancing the budget by 2017-18; it is essential that every area adheres to the program-spending objectives established in it. We will choose to invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services to our families. The President of the Treasury Board, collaborating with the Minister of Finance, will work closely with you and your fellow Cabinet members to ensure that our government meets its fiscal targets. The President of the Treasury Board will also lead the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization as we implement new accountability measures across government.

As Minister of Research and Innovation, you will support a business environment in which entrepreneurs and innovators can continue to create the high-growth businesses that will provide the well-paid jobs of the future. You will facilitate investments and research funding that will lead to new discoveries and new approaches — and will ensure that those innovations are used to boost the competitiveness of Ontario's industries.

Your ministry's specific priorities include:

Developing Research Infrastructure

- Working to maintain and strengthen Ontario's flagship research program, the Ontario Research Fund, by managing new investments of \$250 million over the next three years.
- Continuing to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the province through initiatives such as the Northleaf Venture Catalyst Fund and the Youth Investment Accelerator Fund.
- Identifying opportunities for targeted investments in research infrastructure, such as the Institute for Quantum Computing at the University of Waterloo.
- Exploring the merits of developing a High Performance Computing and Big Data Strategy for the province. Your goal is to ensure that Ontario is at the cutting-edge of one of the most important technological platforms of the 21st century.

Supporting an Innovative Business Climate

- Strengthening the relationship between entrepreneurs and investors.
- Continuing to encourage a dynamic culture of entrepreneurship — including social entrepreneurship — throughout the education sector via the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs.
- Building on Ontario's progress in connecting high-growth firms to sources of capital by establishing new start-up hubs. You will collaborate with the private sector and other orders of government to leverage international agreements for research and commercialization opportunities.
- Bringing forward initiatives and encouraging partnerships that increase levels of venture capital and lead to other innovative funding alternatives, such as crowdfunding.

Collaborating on Shared Responsibilities across Government

- Working with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and the Minister of Finance to explore options for improving government investments that support business research and development.
- Collaborating with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and partner ministries, to develop and deliver sector strategies. You will focus on sectors with a strong culture of innovation, such as life sciences, advanced manufacturing, cleantech, and information and communications technology.
- Working closely with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to implement the Jobs and Prosperity Fund. Your goal is to ensure the government takes a strategic approach to identifying business investments that focus on innovation and productivity improvements — and to explore opportunities for funding early-stage demonstration projects.
- Advising your Cabinet colleagues on how best to incorporate an innovation lens into their policy submissions and initiatives.
- Supporting initiatives led by partner ministries to help increase innovation within the public service and broader public sector — and provide new opportunities for Ontario's innovators and entrepreneurs. You will provide input on areas such as improving the effectiveness of the government procurement system, Open Government and implementation of the Youth Jobs Strategy.

Working with the Federal Government

- Continuing to create and develop partnerships with the federal government to strengthen support for risk capital.
- Exploring ways of working more closely with federal and provincial partners to better co-ordinate the delivery of innovation support programs.

Promoting Openness and Accountability

- Developing a public-facing website that highlights the outcomes, both successful and unsuccessful, of all government investments in innovation. The website will include information on the short- and long-term impact on employment, growth and secondary innovations. Your goal is to demonstrate that the government's strategy for supporting innovation is working and generating real results.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next four years. I know that, by working together in partnership, we can be successful. The above list of priority initiatives is not meant to be exhaustive, as there are many other responsibilities that you and your ministry will need to carry out. To that end, this mandate letter is to be used by your ministry to develop more detailed plans for implementation of the initiatives above, in addition to other initiatives not highlighted in this letter.

I ask that you continue to build on the strong relationships we have with the Ontario Public Service, the broader public sector, other levels of government, and the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors. We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country. We want to be a government that works for the people of this province — and with them. It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.

I look forward to working together with you in building opportunity today, and securing the future for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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