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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Government and Consumer Services

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Marie-France Lalonde
Minister of Government and Consumer Services
900 Bay Street
6th Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Lalonde:

Welcome to your role as Minister of Government and Consumer Services. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with

all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives. Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and we have achieved the following key results:

- Recognized as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers for the ninth year in a row.
- Funded projects through the Innovation Procurement Initiative to advance the adoption of innovation solutions and technologies to improve patient care.
- Achieved an all-time high 85 per cent 'very satisfied' customer satisfaction with ServiceOntario.
- Launched ServiceOntario modernization to improve the customer experience while maintaining program integrity and cost effectiveness.
- Introduced the *Alternative Financial Services Statute Law Amendment Act* with stronger financial protections for the users of payday loans, rent-to-own contracts, installment loans and those with debts in collection.
- Created the Business Law Advisory Council with a mandate to provide recommendations to modernize corporate and commercial law.
- Introduced the *Protecting Condominium Owners Act*, which received Royal Assent on December 3, 2015, to increase protections for condo owners, improve how condo corporations are run and ensure that condo boards are governed professionally.
- Implemented new towing and storage sector requirements to improve consumer protection.
- Launched public consultations to develop policy on how ministries collect, use, and display sex and gender information on government forms and products (Ontario.ca/myID).
- Continued to increase awareness of consumer rights, through Consumer Protection Ontario.

Your mandate is to deliver efficient, high quality services to the people and Government of Ontario. Your specific priorities include:

Strengthening Consumer Marketplace Fairness and Transparency

- Continuing to support *Bill 156, Alternative Financial Services Statute Law Amendments Act* and continuing to increase protections for vulnerable indebted consumers, including payday loan borrowers.
- Enhancing consumer protection and business compliance in the moving sector through education and enforcement of contract requirements.
- Expanding protections to help consumers deal with unscrupulous door-to-door salespeople trying to sell home appliances.
- Working with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to improve awareness of Consumer Protection Ontario as a source for trusted information, and an access point for protecting consumers and enabling compliance.

Strengthening Consumer Protections for Home Buyers

- In 2016, introducing legislation on Home Inspector Qualifications to protect homebuyers from financial and safety risks.
- Implementing by fall 2017 key elements of the *Protecting Condominium Owners Act*, to expand protections for condominium buyers and owners to meet the fast growing needs of the condominium community and support the long-term sustainability of condominium living.
- Responding to the independent review of Tarion Warranty Corporation (Tarion) and the *Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act*.

Enabling More Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible Public Services

- Strengthening French language services to promote the ability of Franco-Ontarians to access services they need.
- Consulting widely on a policy for the collection, use and display of sex and/or gender information on government forms and products, and work with affected ministries to bring forward a plan for implementation. As a second phase, work across government on a framework to support gender neutral policies within government and across the broader public service.
- As part of Ontario's Action Plan for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, implementing new rules to allow vital events registration of single names in accordance with a person's traditional culture to enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim their traditional names.
- Continuing to work across government to develop and implement anti-racism training and to promote accessibility, mental health and inclusion across the Ontario Public Service (OPS).
- Continuing to work with the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and the President of the Treasury Board to implement the province's action plan to end sexual violence and harassment.

Creating a More Modern ServiceOntario

- Working with ServiceOntario and private ServiceOntario franchise operators to ensure a minimum standard when it comes to overall appearance, physical condition and accessibility of ServiceOntario outlets.
- As part of the broader Digital Government strategy, reimagining the delivery of government programs and services to remove unnecessary red tape, lower the cost of doing business, and make everyday life easier, including:
 - Making all new and remodeled online services user-friendly and relevant to consumers and businesses.
 - Supporting the development of OPS-wide service-design standards and performance measures.
 - Leading the development of a digital identity pilot to improve key online transactions (for example, change an address on a health card or driver's licence), and support the development of a government-wide digital identity, including a pilot that explores opportunities to collaborate with federal, provincial and municipal governments, community organizations and the private sector, allowing Ontarians to view, apply for and access government services as well as verify their identity with partners outside of government.
 - Improving and promoting Ontarians' ability to renew their driver's licences and licence plate stickers online, and make it easier for them to find and use ServiceOntario online services.
 - Supporting the Minister of Economic Development and Growth by continuing to revamp online business services to make them more accessible and easier to use.

Supporting a Dynamic Business Climate

- Supporting the newly established Business Law Advisory Council, and bring forward amendments to modernize corporate and commercial legislation by the end of 2017.
- Implementing an improved delivery model for business registration services and supporting technology, using the Ontario Business Information System.
- In 2017, exploring the modernization of co-operative enterprises to enhance their contribution to sustainability and growth for our economy and communities.

Continuing to Deliver Modern Shared Services and Support the Climate Change Action Plan

- Working with the President of Treasury Board and ministers of Health and Long-Term Care, Economic Development and Growth, and the Environment and Climate Change to transform government procurement including \$20 million committed to innovation procurement, Ontario Health Innovation Council's supply chain strategy, and social enterprise procurement.
- Working with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Community and Social Services to support the transformation of income-based and other benefit programs focusing on client-focused delivery and information sharing.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Continue to support the adoption of a single business number by ministries.
- Continue to provide internal shared services support to help ministries deliver on their business.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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