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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Research, Innovation and Science

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

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

Dear Minister Moridi:

Welcome back to your role as Minister of Research, Innovation and Science. 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:

- Signed a five-year, \$25-million operating funding agreement with the Institute for Quantum Computing to help make the Waterloo region a global centre for the development and commercialization of quantum technologies.
- Invested \$209 million in research projects to build on the innovative research already underway in Ontario, foster new discoveries, develop highly skilled workers and support knowledge-based jobs.
- Developed an Advanced Computing/Big Data Strategy with stakeholder input. Compute Ontario and multi-year funding for advanced research computing will provide the tools for long-term planning and coordination across the research sector.
- Worked with the Ontario Capital Growth Corporation to turn the province's \$50 million commitment into the \$300 million Northleaf Venture Catalyst Fund. The fund is actively investing in the province's venture capital funds and technology companies.
- Signed an agreement with the Ontario Centres of Excellence to launch the \$74 million TargetGHG program. This program will help the province make the investments needed to meet our aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Worked with MaRS to achieve the 90 per cent lease-up of the West Tower (formerly known as MaRS Phase 2), putting the building on stable financial footing and cementing MaRS' standing as one of the world's largest urban innovation parks.
- Launched the IBM-J3 and JLABS@Toronto initiatives under the Strategic Partnerships Stream to support the development of disruptive technologies, while promoting their adoption in established sectors of Ontario's economy.
- Signed agreements to execute on the second tranche (\$27.8 million) of the Youth Jobs Strategy funding for innovation-focused programming.
- Supported the Minister of Economic Development and Growth to launch our Business Growth Initiative, a \$400 million strategy over five years to fast-track Ontario's knowledge-based economy by tapping into the creativity, education and skills of our people.

Your mandate is to support world-class research, commercialization and innovation taking place across Ontario through a range of programs and services. Your specific priorities include:

Maintaining and Strengthening Ontario's Research Programs

- Defining the role of the Chief Science Officer to lead the government's efforts to advance both basic and applied science and working with the Secretary of the Cabinet to recruit that individual by spring 2017. Consulting with and engaging the scientific community and the broader public as you develop the mandate of the Chief Science Officer.
- Continuing implementation of the Advanced Computing/Big Data Strategy for the province.
- Undertaking a review of the Ontario Research Fund to inform future research investments.

Fostering a Culture of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Science

- Completing a strategic review of the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs by spring 2017 to ensure that the funding and its programs are aligned with the government's priorities.

- Increasing venture capital activity investments through the ScaleUP Ventures Fund and launching a new \$55 million fund that will make equity investments in cleantech companies.
- Working with the Ontario Capital Growth Corporation, develop a strategy that will refresh and broaden the province's approach to making venture capital investments.
- As part of the Business Growth Initiative:
 - Continuing to support the development of disruptive technology platforms (for example, in smart digital infrastructure (5G) fintech-cybersecurity and autonomous vehicles) and brain belt initiatives (for example, in the bioeconomy, mining and cleantech sectors), while promoting their adoption in established sectors of Ontario's economy.
 - Launching a program to help growth-oriented firms with the highest potential to scale into large employers by providing them with the tools necessary to get their products to the global marketplace by 2016.
- Working with educators, communities, other ministries and the Chief Science Officer to promote science literacy throughout the province.
- Promoting Ontario's scientific achievements and know-how abroad.

Bringing More of Ontario's Scientific Knowledge to the Marketplace

- Creating a public/private life sciences working group by the end of 2016, to provide a structured and enduring forum to improve the strategic focus of the life sciences sector between industry, government and life science institutions.
- Exploring ways to promote availability of intellectual property (IP) services for Ontario's businesses and entrepreneurs, given that IP is an important strategic asset in the global knowledge economy.
- Working with the Office of the Chief Health Innovation Strategist to accelerate health technology commercialization efforts in Ontario, and support health technology innovators by removing barriers and improving access to Ontario's health care system.

Support the Climate Change Action Plan

- Working with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to undertake research and development action items from the Climate Change Action Plan including proposals that will support research and innovation:
 - An approach to fund research supporting greenhouse gas reductions.
 - An approach to develop low-carbon clean technology accelerators and clusters in sectors where Ontario has a competitive advantage.
 - An approach to fund 'proof-of-concept' projects for ultra-low carbon technologies.
 - An approach to help emerging low-carbon companies increase scale.
 - Working with the Minister of Finance, consider possible approaches to tax measures that incent low carbon technologies.
 - Develop a Global Centre for Ultra Low Carbon Mobility, branded under the Brain Belt Initiative.

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

- Work with the ministers of Economic Development and Growth, Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Northern Development and Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, and Finance to determine how innovation could advance or differentiate our economic sectors in Ontario.
- Work with the Minister of Economic Development and Growth on priorities outlined in Ontario's Business Growth Initiative.
- Work with the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development to:
 - Integrate policy development and decision-making to ensure that research, innovation and science investments in the postsecondary education sector are aligned with strategic mandate and university and college funding agreements.

- Ensure that the next round of strategic mandate and university and college funding agreements align with the government's innovation and research priorities.
- Work with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to ensure that research, innovation and science investments in health, hospital and other research organizations optimize health and economic growth in the province.

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.

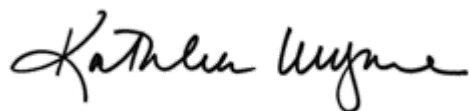
Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they 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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