



**March 27, 2020**

## **Joint Statement by the Unionized Building & Construction Council and the Ottawa Construction Association –**

### **Majority of Ottawa Construction Sites are Safe, but Message to Minority: ‘Comply or Say Goodbye’**

The Government of Ontario, in its identification of essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, deemed construction as an essential component of the economy. Although the industry remains open, it is important that everyone do their part to protect workers, contractors, suppliers, our customers and their families from the spread of COVID-19 by adhering to Ontario Public Health rules and enhancing the health and safety conditions on our active jobsites.

Our construction workers, and our families standing behind them, deserve the highest standards of protection from COVID-19. Sensibly, most Ottawa construction sites have been making the necessary health and safety adjustments to quickly adapt to our new reality.

For the few contractors of our industry not wishing to safely proceed with work, we insist it is time to comply or say goodbye. You are in the minority and risking the lives of workers and their families, while unfairly dragging the industry into disrepute.

“Like all work sites during the pandemic, general contractors and employers need to protect their workers, and the families of these workers, from viral transmission,” said John Bourke, president, Unionized Building & Construction Trades Council, representing over 35,000 members. “That means contractors need to immediately implement necessary job site protocols such as strict job site access screening, daily health reviews, additional protective equipment, enhanced cleaning of equipment and surfaces, social distancing, and most importantly elevating the standard of toilet and washing facilities.”

“We have many exemplary construction sites and companies in Ottawa who prioritize the health and safety of their workers by implementing safe job site protocols,” said John DeVries, president and general manager, of the Ottawa Construction Association representing over 1,100 member firms. “We are witnessing a significant evolution on the job sites in response to

COVID-19 with one positive outcome being the heightened awareness and understanding of personal hygiene, and proper toilet and wash-up facilities. The days of the porta-potty are hopefully over.”

Both the Ottawa Construction Association and the Unionized Building and Construction Trades Council support construction projects staying open, but only if the projects have the appropriate safety measures to protect our workers against the spread of COVID-19. This is a new world order and like all businesses, the building and construction industry can and will adapt now.

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