

December 2, 2016

Via email: premier@ontario.ca; kwynne.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne,
Premier Government of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne:

Re: Bill 70, Building Ontario Up for Everyone Act (Budget Measures)

I am writing to express to you in the strongest of terms possible our union's opposition to schedules 16 and 17 in Bill 70.

First and foremost, we request that your government remove Schedule 16 from Bill 70. Schedule 16 includes truly dangerous changes to Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Among other things, we are concerned that Schedule 16 will squarely place the accreditation of workplace health and safety programs in the control of employers, with no worker representative input and no focus on workplace hazard prevention. One need only read the proposed name for accreditation in Schedule 16— "health and safety management systems" — and the definitions which follow, to understand this much.

We are equally concerned by the proposed amendments which give the Chief Prevention Officer (CPO) the power to accredit private consultants' proprietary health and safety management systems and recognize employers who use them. Further, the Bill proposes to outsource from government and privatize approvals for health and safety training courses and training providers.

As such these changes open the door to an employer self-reported audit system — a system potentially rooted in behaviour-based safety (BBS) approaches - instead a hazard-based approach, rooted in the hierarchy of control and the precautionary principle. These changes will also strike at the heart of sustainability for the Workers Health & Safety Centre —the only health and safety training provider endorsed by the Ontario labour movement.

Once accredited by the Ministry of Labour staff, employers would then be shielded from pro-active Ministry of Labour inspections and possibly from other "routine burdens".

I understand that in an effort to address the very serious concerns our union and others are raising, the Minister of Labour and Chief Prevention Officer have sent emails to some in the labour movement suggesting a "misunderstanding" of their intent on inspections. Further, these emails promise a broad consultation on what an accreditation program would look like once Bill 70 is passed.

However, after the fact consultations will not undo the harm already done to our *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. I call it *our Act*, as this piece of legislation was hard-won by our members and hundreds of thousands of union members across this Province. It was our Union that led the fight for the Ham Commission in the 1970's that created our modern health and safety regime. Our members died so that all Ontario workers could benefit from the protections of the OHSA and we will not stand by while you government dismantles the enforcement regime that it has taken decades to develop.

So let's be clear, we do not accept the Minister and CPO assurances regarding the accreditation program. Once passed, no amount of assurances will change the fact that your government will have enshrined into law the ability of the Chief Prevention Officer to empower private-for-profit consultants to recognize employer health and safety programs, as well as approve health and safety training programs and training providers.

If your government is sincere about enacting a truly effective accreditation program, then we ask you to drop Schedule 16 from Bill 70 and sit down in a spirit of genuine cooperation with trade unions and health and safety advocates in this province, and discuss how we might develop and administer a program that "builds up" working people.

We also join with other unions in expressing our great concern regarding the implementation of Schedule 17 under Bill 70 which amends the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act 2009 (OCOT).

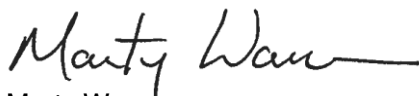
It is our belief that the amendments contained in Schedule 17 will significantly undermine the training and certification process for skilled trades in Ontario. We are also asking that Schedule 17 be deleted from Bill 70.

Given the widespread repercussions that Schedule 17 will have on the Ontario College of Trades, and the work performed by skilled trades in general, we believe that in the name of transparency and accountability, Schedule 17 should be withdrawn and proper consultations with all affected parties take place prior to any new Bill being reintroduced.

It is clear to us that the individuals who drafted Schedule 17 have no clear understanding as to how skilled trades and apprenticeship operate in the workplace and furthermore do not seem to understand how and why the College of Trades was established.

The workers of Ontario deserve better than the legislation in Bill 70. They need good government, not privatization, deregulation and employer self-regulation. We request that schedules 16 and 17 be removed from Bill 70.

Yours sincerely,



Marty Warren
Director United Steelworkers District 6
Ontario and Atlantic Canada

MW/slq

cc: Hon. Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance
Hon. Kevin Flynn, Minister of Labour
Andrea Horwath, MPP. Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario
Ken Neumann, USW National Director for Canada
Leo W. Gerard, USW International President