



## Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19

### Premier Ford and Minister Phillips Announce Support for People, Jobs and Employers

TORONTO — Today, Finance Minister Rod Phillips released Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19 (March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update).

The government's action plan is a first step in its response to COVID-19 and includes \$7 billion in additional resources for the health care system and direct support for people and jobs. It also will make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flow, protecting jobs and household budgets.

The government's plan includes measures that will make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flows over the coming months, including:

- Making available \$6 billion by providing five months of interest and penalty relief for businesses to file and make payments for the majority of provincially administered taxes.
- Over \$1.8 billion by deferring the upcoming June 30 quarterly municipal remittance of education property tax to school boards by 90 days, which will provide municipalities the flexibility to, in turn, provide property tax deferrals to residents and businesses, while ensuring school boards continue to receive their funding.
- Making available \$1.9 billion by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) allowing employers to defer payments for up to six months.
- Cutting taxes by \$355 million for about 57,000 employers through a proposed temporary increase to the Employer Health Tax (EHT) exemption.

#### People and Jobs

- Supporting more affordable electricity bills for eligible residential, farm and small business consumers, by providing approximately \$5.6 billion for electricity cost relief programs in 2020-21, which is an increase of approximately \$1.5 billion compared to the *2019 Budget* plan.
- Further supporting more affordable electricity bills by setting electricity prices for residential, farm and small business time-of-use customers at the lowest rate, known as the off-peak price, 24 hours a day for 45 days to support ratepayers in their increased daytime electricity usage as they respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, addressing concerns about time-of-use metering.
- Providing \$9 million in direct support to families for their energy bills by expanding eligibility for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) and ensuring that their

electricity and natural gas services are not disconnected for nonpayment during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- Providing additional supports of \$26 million to Indigenous peoples and communities, including emergency assistance for urban Indigenous people in financial need, and costs for health care professionals and critical supplies to reach remote First Nations.

To read the full report: [Ontario's Action Plan 2020: RESPONDING TO COVID-19](#)