

Residential builders urge feds to take steps to keep industry healthy

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The [Residential Construction Council of Ontario \(RESCON\)](#) is calling on the federal government to take steps to keep the industry and its workers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that enough skilled trades are in the pipeline to fill future jobs.

In a statement this week, RESCON said it is crucial that Canada receive COVID-19 vaccines and at a faster rate, and that government must continue to maintain PPE supply chains throughout the remainder of the pandemic so that there is an abundant supply for all Canadians, including construction workers.

The organization also wants the allocation number for Ontario's Immigrant Nominee Program increased to give the province flexibility to recruit for specific skilled trades occupations.

RESCON wants the government to work with Ontario to provide municipalities with funds so shovel-ready and state-of-good-repair projects can continue.

“The construction industry represents six per cent of Canada’s GDP and it is critical to the post-pandemic recovery of our country,” RESCON president Richard Lyall said in the news release. “It is imperative that government take the steps we have outlined to keep workers safe and ensure we have an adequate supply of trades so that we will be able to contribute to Canada’s post-pandemic recovery.”

He notes that vaccines are the strongest line of defence against COVID-19, and personal protective equipment (PPE) is integral to the effort, so it is critical that efforts continue on both fronts.

RESCON also wants the government to increase the allocation number for Ontario’s Immigrant Nominee Program and introduce a “trusted employer program” within the Temporary Foreign Workers Program that would reward compliant businesses with a streamlined process to hire workers. The organization, meanwhile, is also asking the federal government to continue harmonization of the skilled trades in the Red Seal program to allow for greater interprovincial mobility.

To keep Canada on the road to recovery, RESCON also supports a request by the [Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario](#) urging the federal government work in partnership with Ontario to provide municipalities with financial assistance through a Safe Restart Agreement 2.0 or other 2021 funding mechanism, as investing in infrastructure and public works is crucial to the country’s economic recovery.

A request for improvements to the review process for the National Building Code is also included in a 2021 federal pre-budget submission made to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland. RESCON outlines four steps that are necessary to ensure the construction industry remains a significant driver of the economy throughout the pandemic and beyond.

“Due the fiscal challenges facing municipalities, many are unable to support infrastructure and public works projects,” says Lyall. “We need immediate assurances from the federal government that municipalities will soon get the funds that they need to continue with capital projects in 2021.”

[Click here](#) for the 2021 federal pre-budget submission.