

# On-Site

## Toronto noise bylaw amendment puts 7,000 jobs, high-rise development at risk, construction groups warn

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The exposed concrete structure at a residential high-rise construction site on the west end of Toronto

**TORONTO**—A proposed amendment to Toronto’s noise bylaw that would restrict builders from pouring concrete or conducting heavy crane work after 7 p.m. puts thousands of jobs at risk and threatens to slow high-rise development across the city to a crawl, several construction groups warn.

The possible change will come before council next week after a years-long review of the city’s rules governing noise.

Currently, construction noise is typically restricted after 7 p.m. and before 7 a.m. on weekdays. The bylaw pushes start times to 9 p.m. on Saturdays and halts work entirely on Sunday.

Continuous concrete pours and large crane work, however, have more leeway. Both activities have been exempt from the restrictions through a subsection of the bylaw. The proposed changes would eliminate the exemption for private-section projects, such as condos.

**The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON)**, the Building Industry and Land Development Association, LiUNA Local 183 and the Ontario Formwork Association are calling on city council to shoot down the amendment.

“It’s mystifying why the city is targeting housing without supporting data as this will kill jobs and reduce supply,” **Richard Lyall, RESCON’s president**, said in a statement. “We want to work with the City of Toronto and address residents’ concerns. We have proposed the implementation of a noise management plan for each project so we can come to a resolution that balances the needs of existing and future residents.”

According to the building group, the change would add considerably to construction timelines. For a typical 40-storey high-rise, for instance, the concrete structure takes about 18 months to complete. Eliminating the bylaw exemption would push that number to 24 and 28 months, RESCON said.

“This hurts housing supply at every level, including purpose-built rental and affordable housing,” Lyall said. “This action will also further hinder development in Toronto where high-rise construction is already challenging given the level of city congestion impeding concrete deliveries.”

LiUNA Local 183, which represents tens of thousands of construction workers across the Greater Toronto Area, says the change puts 7,000 high-rise forming jobs at risk, and more in related fields.

“There would be a snowball effect on other trades such as plumbers and electricians, whose workflow is contingent on the pace of work,” said Jason Ottey, director of government relations and communications for Local 183. “If you include those trades, it’s easily over 9,000 jobs.”

In public meetings conducted as part of the noise bylaw review, residents in favour of tightening noise restrictions pointed to the negative health impacts of construction noise. Some in attendance favoured removing blanket exemptions for concrete and crane work, while others argued for replacing the exemption with a permitting process.

Despite the detractors, most residents are prepared to live with the exceptions for concrete pouring and crane work, according to public opinion polling commissioned by the city. 60 per cent of the approximately 1,000 residents surveyed called the nighttime work very acceptable or somewhat acceptable, while 40 per cent disagree.

The changes are expected to come to a vote at the next council meeting April 16.