



Rescinding bylaw exemption will cripple Toronto's housing market: RESCON

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by Neil Sharma 12 Apr 2019



A proposed amendment to a City of Toronto noise bylaw could hamstring construction to the point of worsening affordability struggles and will threaten jobs, charges an industry association.

While Municipal Licensing and Standards wants to rescind an exemption on concrete work, a typically raucous process, the **Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON)** says it put 7,000 jobs on the line and cripple Toronto's construction industry.

"The production and productivity wouldn't be able to achieve anywhere near where they are, and hopefully the exemption continues," said **Paul De Berardis, RESCON's director of building science and innovation**. "If the exemption is removed, we expect timeline increases of anywhere from 30-40% on construction schedules."

De Beradis added that the noise exemption was introduced in 2007 to facilitate the construction of high-rises, which have helped elevate the city's global status. However, should the exemption be withdrawn, 32,000 units permitted for construction will be imperiled.

“The schedule of delivering them to renters and new condo buyers would have been laid out with the current exemption in place, but if work has to stop at 7PM there’s no way projects that are just starting construction or already undergoing concrete superstructures will complete on schedule because they won’t be able to maintain production.”

On the best of days, concrete curing takes hours, but it’s especially long on cold winter days.

In a city that brings housing supply to market very slowly, in part because of an unhurried permitting process, that could exacerbate existing affordability woes.

Additionally, thousands of construction jobs could be lost—and given that there’s already a shortage of skilled trades and 90,000 workers slated for retirement in a decade, RESCON worries the noise exemption will do irreparable damage to Toronto’s housing market.

"It's mystifying why the City is targeting housing without supporting data as this will kill jobs and reduce supply," said RESCON’s President Richard Lyall.

The Municipal Licensing and Standards emailed REP a statement from Carleton Grant, its director of policy and strategic support, about why the 12-year-old noise exemption may be repealed:

“The [proposed amendments to the Noise Bylaw](#) (Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 591, Noise) regarding continuous concrete pouring are meant to ensure companies consider noise management and mitigation before projects are underway. Under the proposed amendments, companies that wish to undertake continuous concrete pouring and/or large crane work outside of the permitted hours, can apply for a noise exemption permit. During the permit process, Municipal Licensing and Standards may request a noise mitigation plan. For construction, this may include a list of equipment to be used and noise mitigation efforts such as sound barriers. Permits can be obtained before work begins and cover an extended period of time.

“Construction-related noises are one of the main sources of noise complaints to the City, representing one-third of all general noise complaints. The goal of the amendment is to work collaboratively with the construction industry to support their work, while balancing the needs of residents.”

However, De Berardis pointed to Municipal Licensing and Standards polling that revealed only 8% of Torontonians are bothered by construction noise. He, furthermore, stated that withdrawing the noise exemption will stall construction in the city and move it elsewhere.

“Neighbouring jurisdictions that don’t employ strict rules will push development to the outside of Toronto where it’s simpler to build,” he said