



Construction of new homes in Toronto delayed due to labour dispute

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Vaughan, Ont. – Construction of much-needed new housing throughout the GTA is being delayed because Local 183 of the Labourers International Union of North America is preventing bricklayers from working for builders, despite a ruling handed down by the [Ontario Labour Relations Board \(OLRB\)](#).

This is all being done in an attempt to organize or interfere with stucco/EIFS contractors, who are represented by a rival trade union.

“This is happening at a time when the industry has been declared an essential service by government and we are struggling to keep pace with the demand for new housing in the face of COVID-19-related challenges,” says [Richard Lyall](#), president of the [Residential Construction Council of Ontario \(RESCON\)](#). “As a result of the union’s illegal actions, thousands of homes will not be completed on time.”

On March 4, the OLRB ruled that Local 183 threatened an unlawful strike and committed acts that would lead bricklayers to engage in an unlawful strike, by illegally threatening builders with removing bricklayers from jobsites if they contracted stucco contractors not bound to a Local 183 collective agreement. Builders have no obligation to use a Local 183 stucco contractor to complete their houses. The union was ordered to cease and desist from such activities and post a copy of the board’s declarations on relevant notice boards, its website, notify builders and contractors directly or post in the Daily Commercial News.

The ruling was made in an unlawful strike application filed by the Toronto Residential Construction Labour Bureau (TRCLB) against Local 183 and the Masonry Contractors’ Association of Toronto.

However, Local 183 continues to disrupt the industry and not allow bricklaying contractors to perform work for builders if there is a non-Local 183 contractor on site. The union’s actions have forced delays in housing completions, preventing workers from earning a living. Delayed home closings are causing hardship for homebuyers. They need their new home as shelter for their families.

“The actions of Local 183 are very disturbing and selfish, given the negative impact on homebuyers and workers within the residential construction industry,” says Ron Johnson, executive director of the Interior Systems Contractors Association (ISCA). “Local 183’s continued actions contravene the OLRB’s order and continue to negatively affect homebuyers.”

Gary Campacci, president and one of the owners of Woodbridge, Ont.-based DuROCK Alfacing International Ltd., which manufactures exterior insulation finish systems (EIFS), says the union has stopped work for EIFS and masonry contractors despite the ruling.

“This has resulted in essential workers not being able to go to work to support their families,” he says. “After months of litigation, there are many builders still not able to complete their homes, resulting in closing delays.” All this, even though the labour board has already ruled the union’s activities are illegal.

The dispute comes at a time when Ontario is in the midst of a housing shortage and builders are trying to make up for lost time while dealing with COVID-19. Reports suggest the industry needs to build 75,000 new homes per year over the next 24 years just to keep up with demand, but is short 12,000 units per year.

“Contractors continue to build much-needed housing during this pandemic, but Local 183 is now throwing a wrench into the works,” states Michael DeGasperi, president and CEO of Arista Homes. “The actions by Local 183 are shameful acts of unlawful intimidation and interference without apparent regard to the thousands of new home buyers affected by late closings.”

Local 183 must stop interfering and delaying the construction of new homes and abide by the OLRB ruling.