



Ontario Announces Investment to Improve Broadband Access, Provides COVID-19 Update

November 4, 2020

Today, Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Infrastructure, Laurie Scott, [announced](#) an investment of nearly \$1 billion over six years to improve and expand broadband and cellular access across the province. The \$1 billion investment announced today includes \$315 million previously announced in [Up to Speed: Ontario's Broadband and Cellular Action Plan](#), plus an additional \$680 million in new funding. Funding will be used for shovel-ready projects starting in 2019-20, will create jobs, and connect unserved and underserved communities.

Premier Ford and Minister Scott were joined by Minister of Finance, Rod Phillips, and President of the Treasury Board, Peter Bethlenfalvy. Following this afternoon's announcement, Premier Ford and Minister Phillips responded to questions from media regarding tomorrow's upcoming provincial budget and Ontario's ongoing response to COVID-19.

Further Details

Questions from Media

Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework

Premier Ford was asked about criticism that the province's new [Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework](#), released yesterday, introduces too high a threshold for a region

to be subject to the most stringent public health measures (“Control” or “Lockdown” levels). In response, Premier Ford emphasized that the focus of the framework is on early intervention and prevention by enacting less restrictive public health measures earlier, in order to avoid a scenario where a region must enter a more restrictive level.

Provincial Testing Capacity

When asked about testing capacity, Premier Ford assured Ontarians that the province has sufficient capacity to process up to 50,000 tests per day and has caught up on earlier backlogs. He suggested that the province’s failure to hit testing levels of 50,000 over the past several days is a result of Ontarians not wanting to be tested, rather than a lack of capacity. Premier Ford also urged anyone showing symptoms to be tested.

Ontario Provincial Budget

In response to questions about Ontario’s 2020 Budget, which will be released tomorrow, November 5th, Minister Phillips explained that the Budget will contain three key pillars: protect, support, and recover. Specifically, the Budget will lay out a plan for the province to continue providing support for Ontarians while also beginning to consider economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Minister Phillips reassured Ontarians that no new taxes or charges on individuals or businesses will be included in Budget 2020.

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