



April 7, 2021

VIA E-MAIL

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office, Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Hon. Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
5th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Re: Construction Workers in Phase 2 of Ontario's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

I am the Business Manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 793 ("IUOE Local 793"). IUOE Local 793 represents more than 17,600 crane and heavy equipment operators in the construction, industrial and mining sectors in Ontario and Nunavut.

Construction workers have been considered essential workers throughout this pandemic and have invariably been recognized as such in provincial legislation and regulations, including provincial state of emergencies. IUOE Local 793 members cannot work from home, and together with the thousands of other building trades workers, have been the backbone of Ontario's economy during this challenging past year.

The Province's failure to include construction workers as a priority group in Phase 2 of Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan is a mistake.

Phase 2 of the plan is intended to cover, among other groups, essential frontline workers who cannot work from home. Construction workers fit squarely within this category. Construction workers continue to play an absolutely essential role in building and maintaining Ontario's infrastructure and must physically show up at projects throughout the province to help ensure that critical infrastructure work continues. They are vulnerable and must be protected. The failure to include construction workers in Phase 2 of the vaccination plan is also inconsistent with the Province's Ethical Framework that places a priority on protecting those at greatest risk of illness due to occupational factors and which helps protect our critical infrastructure.

We strongly urge you to correct this oversight immediately and include construction workers as a priority group in Phase 2 of Ontario's vaccination plan so this essential and critical group of workers can continue supporting the people of the province in the safest manner possible.

IUOE Local 793 has area offices and other facilities available throughout the province. We are fully prepared to work with the province and make these resources immediately available to the government to facilitate the vaccination of our members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Mike Gallagher
Business Manager
International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 793

cc. *Dr. Homer Tien, Chair, COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force*