

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release  
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### **LOCAL 793 CALLS ON FORD GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER HALTON REGION COURTHOUSE PROJECT**

**OAKVILLE** – Local 793 of the International Union of Operating Engineers, one of Ontario’s largest construction unions, is extremely disappointed with the Ontario Government’s wrongful decision to cancel the procurement for the Halton Region Consolidated Courthouse project and asks that the decision be reversed.

“IUOE Local 793 calls on the Ford Government to reconsider the project right away and invest in the infrastructure and jobs that are a vitally needed shot-in-the-arm stimulus for our economy,” Local 793 Business Manager Mike Gallagher said.

Scheduled to begin construction in early June, the shovel-ready project would have an immediate beneficial impact by creating jobs and stimulating the province’s economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“One could, in the face of uncertainty, find some hope that our government could agree that projects like the \$500 million-plus Halton Courthouse would not only realize all political party recognition of the need for justice facilities in one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, but which timing is perfect to help get jobs moving again,” Gallagher said.

He stated that the cancellation will only begin to undermine confidence in the province’s infrastructure program at a time when the government wants to get the economy going.

“Canada and Ontario are not some backwater jurisdiction that replaces years of planning and a job tendering process with knee-jerk decisions that make us appear to be so unreliable that no contractors could waste their time and energy on bidding jobs here,” Gallagher warned.

The decades-old Milton courthouse has been facing challenges for years. Progressive Conservative MPP Ted Arnott delivered a message in the Ontario Legislature in 2015, stating it was time for the government to commit to building a new Halton courthouse. “The current Halton Courthouse is aging, overcrowded, unsafe, and inadequate to meet the needs of our rapidly growing region.”

Ontario Superior Court Justice Peter Daley said on November 19, 2018: “In excess of \$2 million has been spent on mould remediation at the Milton Courthouse thus far, with an additional \$600,000 forecasted to be spent on further mould remediation.”

Building a new courthouse is an expensive endeavor but given the age and physical condition of the Milton courthouse, no plan to renovate or expand the facility will address these issues.

The provincial government said it will direct its resources for the courthouse project toward developing ways of delivering justice remotely and online, which will raise concerns over privacy and transparency.

“It is unfathomable that the Attorney General’s office would cancel the hundreds of jobs needed and a project two years in the planning with the absolutely ridiculous notion that ‘virtual justice’ could replace the real justice that courtrooms with juries, judges and the legal profession bring to ensure that justice is not denied,” Gallagher concluded.

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*Local 793 of the International Union of Operating Engineers represents more than 16,000 highly-skilled crane and heavy equipment operators across Ontario and Nunavut. The union has a head office, banquet hall and training campus in Oakville, and another training campus in Morrisburg, Ontario. Canadian locals of the International Union of Operating Engineers represent more than 50,000 operators and have hundreds of millions of dollars invested in equipment at training centres across the country.*

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