



# Ontario Regional Director's **RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **1. Keep Hydro Public**

Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government of Ontario are proceeding with the ill-conceived, counterproductive betrayal of Ontario citizens, consumers and workers through the privatization of Hydro One.

The government has now completed the first sale of 15% of Hydro One shares. However the overwhelming majority of Ontarians continue to oppose this privatization, and it is still not too late for the Wynne government to change course.

I therefore recommend:

1. Ontario locals support the Keep Hydro Public coalition and make use of the petitions, social media graphics and suggested letters found at [www.keephydropublic.ca](http://www.keephydropublic.ca) and continue to attend rally's and town hall events organized by KHP and our other allies, including the Ontario Federation of Labour.
2. Ontario locals immediately support the letter campaign and petitions to the Ontario Energy Board requesting public hearings.
3. The ORC calls on Premier Wynne and her government to stop further sales of Hydro One shares, and to maintain majority public ownership of Hydro One, and to ensure that it retains a public interest mandate with oversight by Ontario's Auditor General and Ombudsperson.
4. That the ORC calls on Premier Wynne to fund transit infrastructure through new funding agreements with the federal government, not through the sale of public assets and continue to participate in the Keep Hydro Public coalition as well as any initiatives on this from the Ontario Federation of Labour.

## **2. The Ontario Changing Workplaces Review and the Gender Wage Gap Review**

The Ontario Ministry of Labour is conducting two inter-related reviews concerning employment standards, labour law and gender based discrimination.

The Changing Workplaces Review will make recommendations on the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act. Initial submissions from labour, business and community are presently before the Advisors to this process and a preliminary report is expected in early February 2016.

Unifor has been organizing meetings and consultations with community organizations, business groups, Ministry of Labour and government policy advisors in support of our comprehensive submission. Unifor ORC will lead a lobby to Queen's Park on our CWR submissions on December 7 and 8.

The Gender Wage Gap Review is a parallel process by the Ministry of Labour and Ministry Responsible for Women's Issues to "examine the causes and effects of the gender wage gap on women, of all ages, backgrounds and abilities,

across the economic spectrum.” This process will receive submissions from labour, business and the public and will report by the autumn of 2016 on policies that will address “conditions and barriers that lead to the gap.” The Pay Equity Act, Employment Standards Act and the Human Rights Act are all included in this review.

Public hearings for the Gender Wage Gap Review have commenced and will continue until February 2016. Public hearings ahead include: Dec 9, 2015 – Peterborough; Dec 17, 2015 – Sudbury; Jan 25, 2016 – London; Feb 16, 2016 – St. Catharines; Feb 22, 2016 – Brampton.

These processes offer an extraordinary opportunity to make changes to the world of work for Ontario workers and women. I therefore recommend:

1. Ontario Unifor locals circulate and discuss our proposals to the Changing Workplaces Review.
2. Ontario locals support our December 7 and 8 lobby to Queen’s Park to build political support for labour law and employment standards changes.
3. Ontario locals organize meetings, consultations and discussions with community, faith or business groups with a view to explaining our proposals and securing endorsements of part or all of our submissions, including a willingness to continue a dialogue towards labour law and employment standards reforms.
4. Ontario locals circulate and discuss our submission and proposals to the Gender Wage Gap Review.
5. Ontario locals and women activists participate in the remaining Gender Wage Gap Review hearings with coordination of our participation through the Unifor National Women’s and Skilled Trades Departments.
6. That throughout the Gender Wage Gap Review process in 2016, the Ontario Regional Council, women’s committee and local unions use Unifor’s submission to generate the widest possible discussion on gender equity in Ontario.

### **3. Political Action and Ontario Good Jobs Campaign**

Ontario played a decisive role in the defeat of the Harper Conservative government. In Ontario, the Harper Conservatives lost 40 seats and earned 1,700,000 less votes than in 2011, despite the overall votes in Ontario increasing by 1 million and Ontario having 15 additional seats.

Unifor played an important role in the defeat of the Conservatives, especially by exposing Harper’s economic record as the worst of any Prime Minister since WWII, and by focusing attention on the economic harm to Ontario that could be inflicted by the Trans Pacific Partnership.

Austerity under the Harper decade has been bad for Ontario. In 2013, the Mowat Centre calculated that there was an \$11 billion gap between what Ontarians pay to the federal government and what they receive back. This gap is almost entirely a result of federal spending and program decisions that leave Ontarians receiving less than their per capita share of spending and transfers.

With the defeat of the Conservatives and the election of a new government with new policies and many election promises affecting Ontario’s economy, it is time to grow Ontario’s economy around a “Ontario Good Jobs Agenda.”

I therefore recommend:

1. The Ontario Regional Council, local unions and industry councils articulate and fight for an Ontario Good Jobs Agenda which includes, but not limited, to the following:
  - a. The renewal of a Canada Health Accord to provide increased, stable funding for the Ontario health care system and to put an immediate stop to health care funding shortfalls and layoffs at Ontario hospitals.

- b. A Canada-Ontario infrastructure program commencing in 2016 with new funding commitments in Ontario for mass transit, high speed rail, green energy, seaway and inland canals; parks, culture and Canadian heritage; and
  - c. The Ontario infrastructure program incorporate the following features: local and provincial procurement, skills training and upgrading, a Canada-Ontario living wage policy, and a community benefits program to ensure that marginalized workers and communities are beneficiaries of public investment.
  - d. Targeted federal-provincial assistance to Ontario manufacturing sectors.
  - e. Continued support for Ontario's film and television industry and CRTC regulations that keep local television news in all markets, including ethnic communities.
2. That Ontario local unions contact MPs of all parties who are most relevant to the local membership on a community and industry sectoral basis to open lines of communication and to emphasize the importance of an Ontario Good Jobs Agenda.
  3. That Ontario locals respond as needed to join in the Unifor lobby on Parliament Hill in February 2016.

#### **4. Ending Violence Against Women**

On December 6, 2015, Unifor recognizes the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. We remember the 14 women who were singled out and murdered on this day in 1989 at the École Polytechnique. We also reflect on the terrible absence left by all women who have died as a result of gender-based violence.

It is unacceptable that violence against women still permeates our society. Violence against women and girls is a devastating consequence of gender inequality. As people gather in communities across Canada to remember those who have died as a result of gender-based violence and to reflect on those still living with the daily reality of violence in their lives, Unifor recommits to taking concrete action to eliminate violence against all women and girls. As part of this, we are highlighting the connection between patriarchy, sexism and violence.

I therefore recommend:

1. Unifor locals continue their activism to eliminate violence against women in all its forms.
2. Delegates participate in Unifor's "spot the sexism" campaign by sharing on social media and local websites and starting conversations based on the messages in the campaign.
3. Locals support the "It's Never Okay" initiative of the Ontario government including its proposed changes to the Occupational Health & Safety Act (Bill 132) strengthening employer obligations and inspector powers.
4. Locals support Unifor's "domestic violence leave" proposal contained in our Changing Workplace Review submission.
5. Locals continue to put pressure on the federal government to fulfill its promise to hold an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.
6. Locals participate in vigils and actions on December 6th and continue to challenge patriarchy, sexism and misogyny throughout the year.

## 5. Auto Policy and the TPP

Ontario's automobile industry is at a critical turning point when public policy and corporate decisions must come together to provide a secure future for what is once again Canada's most important export industry.

Job security and automobile production in Ontario will be defining issues of auto bargaining in 2016.

The proposed Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement lowers regional content requirements from 62.5% to 45% for vehicles, and from 60% to as low as 35% for parts. It phases out Canadian tariffs on imported autos faster than any other TPP country (in just five years, versus up to 30 years for the U.S.). It will exacerbate our existing one-way trade imbalance with Asia in auto products (including our \$5 billion auto trade deficit with Japan), with no meaningful opportunity to sell significant volumes of Canadian-made products anywhere in Asia. There are no meaningful limits on one-way trade imbalances, nor on the active manipulation of currencies to attain advantages in trade.

Of course, in addition to these auto-related concerns, there are many other problems with the TPP text, agreed to by the Harper government, with no public consultation, in a desperate attempt to get re-elected. It will cause major damage in dairy, poultry, and food processing. It maintains the anti-democratic practice of investor-state dispute settlement (whereby corporations can sue governments, in their own private kangaroo court system, for virtually anything that undermines their profits). It extends monopoly protection for brand-name drugs, costing billions for Canadian consumers and governments. It threatens the integrity of the internet, and Canadian content in our media. Unifor will carefully review all aspects of the deal, with an eye to its many impacts on Unifor members and other working people, and will participate energetically in the federal government's upcoming consultations.

I therefore recommend:

1. Ontario locals circulate and promote Unifor's auto policy materials, and be prepared to respond to the call for action from the Unifor Auto and IPS Councils as they coordinate a campaign to defend the industry.
2. Unifor and the ORC call upon the federal Liberal government to hold a comprehensive review of the impacts of the TPP on auto, dairy and other Ontario sectors, including public hearings by the appropriate Parliamentary Committees, and including hearings in Ontario auto communities or communities with other impacted sectors.
3. Unifor and the ORC call on the federal government to renegotiate the most destructive aspects of the TPP text, including its auto provisions, to ensure that any future trade deal in the Pacific region works for working Canadians instead of against us.
4. The ORC calls on the provincial Liberal government to clarify and emphasize its opposition to any trade deal that would harm Ontario's OEM and parts sectors.
5. The ORC calls on the federal and Ontario provincial governments to declare their opposition to Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions in TPP or any trade agreement.
6. The ORC calls for significant new federal-provincial initiatives, consistent with Unifor's auto policy vision, to retain and attract new auto investment, address the challenge of globalized production, improve Canadian technology and infrastructure, and take other measures to ensure the continued recovery and growth of the auto and auto parts industries in Ontario.
7. The ORC and Ontario locals work with the Auto Council to bring these concerns to Ontario communities and municipalities, building on the active role already being played by Ontario's auto mayors, and secure their support for a vigorous Ontario auto strategy.