



## Media Release

### Engineering Regulator Dismayed at Ontario Government's Unwillingness to Improve Workplace Safety

Toronto – (June 9, 2016) – Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), the body that licenses and regulates professional engineering in Ontario to protect the public interest, is extremely disappointed with the government's decision, first announced last fall and confirmed with the introduction yesterday of the *Burden Reduction Act, 2016*, to halt proclamation of the repeal of section 12(3)(a) of the *Professional Engineers Act*, often referred to as the industrial exception. The industrial exception allows unlicensed people to carry out engineering work on machinery or equipment in manufacturing.

"It's interesting that the government also had third reading yesterday of *An Act to proclaim a Workers Day of Mourning*. We simply cannot understand why, under such circumstances, the government would not honour its commitment to the repeal, which would improve worker safety, improve profitability of Ontario manufacturers, bring Ontario in line with other provinces, and ensure work requiring specialized design and problem-solving knowledge is done by professionals with obligations to the public interest – in the guise of reducing red tape," PEO President George Comrie, MEng, P.Eng., CMC, FEC, said.

"The government has described red tape as regulatory requirements that are 'unclear, outdated or costly' and do not protect public interests or promote safety. The repeal of the industrial exception simply does not fit this definition."

In fact, the repeal:

- would eliminate confusion about engineering activities that have always required a professional engineer and would standardize Ontario with the rest of the provinces;
- is not outdated or redundant, as the currently required Pre-start Health and Safety Reviews under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* occur after the design process is completed and serious potential equipment design issues may no longer be evident; and
- is not a costly requirement, as there are potential cost savings to businesses from reducing worker injuries and competitive advantage through innovative design solutions to production problems. PEO estimates that the impact to industry of proclaiming the repeal would be only \$1 million to \$1.9 million, whereas the value of one life saved is immeasurable.

"The repeal would have been implemented without any expense to taxpayers and little cost to employers, since PEO had committed to offsetting almost half of the licensing fee of anyone required to be newly licensed as a result of the repeal," Comrie said. "PEO had also put in place a regulation to enable employers to transition over a one-year period."

"The Ontario government's troubling decision to reverse its previous commitment to repeal section 12(3)(a) of the PEA leaves a gap in PEO's ability to regulate acts of engineering and continues to put workers at risk," said PEO Registrar Gerard McDonald, P.Eng. "Engineers are committed to public safety and are professionally accountable by law for all acts of professional engineering. Not requiring engineers to carry out work in this narrow area is not a red tape reduction. It is a significant missed opportunity to protect the public."

PEO is committed to working with governments and industry to achieve a stable and prosperous economic future for Ontario, which it continues to believe would be enhanced through the repeal of section 12(3)(a) of the *Professional Engineers Act*.



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## **About Professional Engineers Ontario**

Under the authority of the *Professional Engineers Act*, PEO governs over 85,000 licence and certificate holders and regulates professional engineering in Ontario. PEO's mission is to regulate and advance the practice of engineering to protect the public interest. Its vision is to be the trusted leader in professional self-regulation. Professional engineering safeguards life, health, property, economic interests, the public welfare and the environment. Professional engineers can be identified by the P.Eng. after their names. Holders of limited licences can be identified by LEL or LET after their names.

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