



Restoration Report

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Seminar Presentation

Housing Minister Gerretsen insists that rent controls are needed even as apartment rents moderate and vacancies increase



Gerretsen speaks to Seminar

Addressing the Building and Concrete Restoration Association's final seminar of the year, on May 10, Ontario Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Gerretsen made it clear that the provincial government was going to proceed with its commitment to revise the Tenant Protection Act (TPA) and impose a regime of "real protection for tenants".

Gerretsen said that after the consultations carried out by his Parliamentary Assistant, Brad Duguid, MPP (Scarborough Centre), were completed on June 15, the consultations would be analyzed and legislation drafted over the Summer. He expects that the new rental reform legislation will be introduced this Fall.

The seminar took place at "Stop 33" at the Sutton Place Hotel, on Bay Street, and was attended by over seventy members of the Association and their guests.

Gerretsen insisted that "vacancy decontrol", an important component of the TPA, would no longer be part of the new legislation, following up on the Liberal party's pre-election commitment. He also mentioned a variety of options being considered by the government.

Among these options: decontrolling rents when vacancy rates exceed 3 per cent "over a period of time"; changing the calculation of the annual index; and implementing housing allowances for 35,000 of Ontario's lowest income renters. Gerretsen also said that the government wants to "encourage proper maintenance of rental housing and the construction of new rental units."

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Editor: Peter Regenstreif

**CONCIATORI, MUZIN, PEKIC,
 JOIN B&CRAO BOARD OF
 DIRECTORS**

The B&CRAO Board of Directors has seen three changes in its membership over the last year. There is still one seat vacant pending an election or reappointment.

The following have resigned: **David Cousins**, Davroc; **Dan Hilliard**, Sika Canada; **Hank Staresina**, Bakor; **Glenn Tench**, W.R. Meadows of Canada; and **Paul Tomkinson**, SST Contracting.

Their replacements are: **Eliseo Conciatori**, DeGussa Building Systems Inc.; **Gary Muzin**, Construction Distribution & Supply Company Inc.; and **Dan Pekic**, Morrison, Hershfield Ltd.

Tomkinson resigned because he left SST to begin his own company, Norquest Contracting Group. He has reapplied to be a Board member but a new candidate from SST is contest the seat as well so there will be an election for the vacant seat. Any others interested in running for this seat should put their names forward.

The term of an individual Board member is two years, renewable if the member wishes to continue. The position is subject to election if there is more than one candidate. Members wishing to serve on the Board of Directors are asked to notify President Sam Evangelista or the Association Office.

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Seminar Presentation
Evangelista Concerned about TPA Changes



Evangelista opening the Seminar

The purpose of inviting the Mr. Gerretsen is to learn about the Ontario government's proposals and, at the same time, to voice our industry's concerns over the proposed changes to the Tenant Protection Act.

B&CRAO in an industry association comprised of Contractors, Consultants and Material Manufacturers and Suppliers. We were founded in 1985 and our mission is to encourage quality and integrity through education, networking and the exchange of ideas for the development of the highest standards within the restoration industry, as well as protecting the broad interests of the industry.

Many people in the room tonight will remember the Fall of 1990 when the NDP government passed legislation that devastated our industry. Lost jobs, lost tax revenue for the government and an aging building stock not being attended to.

This is why we are concerned, Minister. Let's look at the realities of the industry today. We have high vacancies. The vacancies are stemming from a couple of factors: the tenant protection law which is generating new investment and increasing supply of rental apartments; and low interest rates which have generated a hot condominium market. These new condominiums are really an important part of the new rental supply. This is creating a meaningful market system for tenants for the first time in memory. The competition for tenants and the TPA are motivating landlords to upgrade their rental stock and provide better quality housing for tenants. Upgraded and new apartments and condominiums are providing tenants with more amenities.

This is resulting in jobs for our members, growth in our industry and ultimately more tax revenue for a provincial government in need of money. We in this association will tell you, Minister, that rather than stifling the current market which restrictions would bring, the prudent course would be to either leave well enough alone or remove any sort of controls all together. The timing is right.

We realize that you are concerned about tenants who cannot afford their housing. We would recommend that the government use a system of housing allowances to help those in need rather than hamstringing an entire critical economic sector.

The cynics will say that imposing a stringent system of rent controls is an easy promise for your challenged government to keep as it doesn't cost the government anything. However, the people in this multi-million dollar a year industry will tell you that the costs of lost jobs and lost revenue for our members will translate into lost revenues for your government.

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“Housing Minister” continued...

Gerretsen mentioned a \$10 million provincial rent bank program to assist low-income people who miss rent payments “due to unforeseen circumstances”. He also referred to a federal-provincial housing program to create 20,000 “affordable housing units” across the province.

Responding to the Minister’s remarks, members of the audience questioned why the province was intent on instituting controls when current conditions call for the opposite. Questions focused on the relatively high level of vacancies and the success of the TPA in driving capital improvements for buildings and attracting new investment in the industry. Some apartment owners in the audience also pointed out that vacancies were so high that it was becoming increasingly difficult for landlords to cover their costs.

The overwhelming consensus was that the government should not be considering changes in the TPA. “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” and “leave well enough alone” were heard several times during the evening from the audience.

Excerpt of Gerretsen speech

Your industry is vital to the strength of our province. The construction industry, together with the automotive industry, are the top two industries in Ontario

When our government was seeking election last year, a primary component of our platform was our pledge to grow strong communities ... We are acting on our promise to provide more affordable housing to more Ontarians and ensure real

protection for tenants. We cannot have strong communities when some of our citizens do not have access to safe, affordable decent housing. Our government has long recognized that the rent regulation system imposed by the previous government is unhealthy for our communities.

Since rent controls have been weakened, some tenants have faced unfair and excessive rent increases. They have not had the equitable process they need to respond to evictions. And Ontario is at risk of losing rental units due to demolition and conversion.

Our government is committed to introducing legislation that would repeal the current Tenant Protection Act and replace it with fair and balanced legislation ... (that) would provide real protection for tenants; effectively balance landlord tenant relations; and ensure the proper maintenance and growth of rental housing in Ontario.


More importantly, we want to decontrol rents when vacancy rates are higher than 3 per cent over a period of time. We want to ensure that this province has the healthy housing market it needs to promote strong communities and a quality of life second to none. We value the role that landlords have in Ontario’s economy and society and we want to encourage and strengthen that role while, at the same time, ensuring fairness for landlords and tenants

Our goal is clear. There are more than 1.1 million tenant households and 20,000 landlords in Ontario. We want to be sure their interests are balanced and that they mutually benefit from the rental system to be put in place. We believe that decent and

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B&CRAO Annual Golf Tournament is on September 22nd at Carrying Place

B&CRAO's sixth annual Golf Tournament is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22nd at Carrying Place Golf and Country Club.

Notices have already gone out and, as usual, a full house is expected. Members are warned to get their reservations in early as the shotgun format means that no more than 144 players can be accommodated. There will be awards and a prize table. The day will conclude with a barbecue supper which can be booked separately.

To reserve, please call 416-922-8381 or fax your requirements to 416-922-4295.

Gerretsen speech (cont'd)

affordable rental housing is key to the prosperity of Ontarians, and imperative for the growth of strong and healthy communities...

During the time our consultation review our intention is to introduce a legislative amendment to the Tenant Protection Act. This amendment, if passed, would remove the automatic two percent base from the annual rent increase guideline. In stead, the guideline would be based solely on the Rent Control Index which determines increases based on operating costs.

It is important for you to know that we are keeping the option in place for landlords to have above-guideline increases in order to

recoup costs for building renovations and restorations. This interim step would give us time to consider the way in which the guideline is calculated, as well as its fairness to both landlords and tenants. And it will be legislation that provides long-term balance and protection to both landlords and tenants.

Markets go up and down. And right now, no doubt about it, the market is down. But it won't stay that way forever. It is our intention to provide balanced protection, no matter how the market changes.

A key element of our consultations will be hearing your views on how much rents should be allowed to increase on a vacant unit. We believe allowing landlords to charge unlimited rent increases when a tenant vacates an apartment has had a major impact on the affordability of units. What we need to talk about is encouraging more landlords to invest in and maintain their properties and ensuring that those who do so are properly recognized and compensated

Alongside rent reform, our government continues to move forward in new and innovative ways... most recently, we delivered on a key promise and announced a \$10 million provincial rent bank program. This is a novel and compassionate approach to assisting low-income people who are forced to miss a rental payment due to unforeseen circumstances. It gives them access to funds to make the payment and stay in their homes. This program is recognized as a distinct benefit to both landlords and tenants, since it effectively prevent evictions and all the disruptions they can cause.


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B&CRAO to launch Web site this Fall

The B&CRAO Board of Directors have decided to launch a Web site this Fall. Designed by Christopher Chong, President of Christopher Chong Productions, the site will contain: a Home Page with logo and description of the Association; an Events Page; a list of the Board of Directors; Members of the Association; Applications for each of the membership categories under a "Join Us" heading; links to other Associations such as OBEC and SWA; and links to companies in the industry (for which a modest yearly fee will be charged).

The site will be used for articles of interest as well as an on-going *Restoration Report* instead of copies appearing every few months. Fees for links and advertising charges for member companies have yet to be determined.

Gerretsen speech (cont'd)

We also recently announced the development of more than 2,300 affordable housing units in municipalities across Ontario through the CanadaOntario Affordable Housing program. This is part of a five-year commitment that will create a total of 20,000 affordable housing units across the province.

We will also implement, during the term of our mandate, housing allowances for 35,000 of Ontario's lowest income recipients. And we continue to encourage the proper maintenance of rental housing and the construction of new rental units in communities across Ontario.

DRE Celebrates 20 years

DRE Industries, founded in 1983 as a supplier of high quality water repellents and waterproofing products, celebrates its twentieth year this year. Specializing in Division 3, 7 and 9, DRE continues to promote only highest quality products – offering a full range of waterproofing products including Volclay Bentonite Waterproofing, Chem-Trete Silane Sealers, Protectosil Corrosion Inhibitor Iso-Flex Urethane Traffic Membranes, Neogard Epoxy Flooring, anti-graffiti coatings and remedial grouts.

DRE offers support at all stages of construction, including specifications, installation and warranty registration. Please see www.dre.ca.


Modu-Scaf Purchases Aluma Systems Swingstage Division

Modu-Scaf Inc. has recently purchases Aluma Systems' Swingstage Division. In the last decade, this division has become a leader in the GTA in providing quality equipment and service.

Roger Marland, President of Modu-Scaf, said, "We plan to continue providing the same high level of service that was expected from Aluma, a World leader in construction equipment. In addition, we plan to expand our inventory to provide a one-stop shop for our customers, including scaffolding and shoring equipment."

Modu-Scaf is now located at a larger and more modern facility at 19 Delta Park Blvd., Brampton, and can be contacted at 905-494-2121.

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