



## **PEO Government Liaison Program (GLP)**

### **2021 Annual Report**

### **PEO GLP Has Another Great Year**

Despite COVID-19, the PEO Government Liaison Program (GLP) adapted its strategy and format and continued to build relationships with MPPs to help regulate the practice of professional engineering in Ontario.

The Government Liaison Committee, (GLC) which provides oversight and support to the program, met regularly throughout the year to:

- create and execute a work plan
- provide advice and feedback on the direction of government relations activities
- consult with stakeholders
- monitor trends
- develop and issue GLP Information Notes to brief spokespeople on regulatory issues,
- and organize a record number of training initiatives for over 100 GLP representatives, including five virtual training academies in April and May alone.

The GLP plays an important role in ensuring the voice of the professional engineer related to regulatory issues is heard in the government.

These relationships provide PEO with the ability to:

- effectively reach and communicate with MPPs when needed regarding regulatory concerns,
- provide visibility and knowledge to MPPs of who the regulatory body is for engineers, and the knowledge of who to reach out to with regulatory concerns or
- to work together to co-regulate.

Here are some of the highlights:

### **Attorney General speaks at PEO Annual Meeting**

In May, Attorney General Doug Downey MPP (PC, Barrie – Springwater – Oro Medonte) was a virtual guest speaker at the PEO Annual Meeting, which was attended by over 600 people. This was particularly helpful to PEO as it was the first time the Attorney General had spoken at a PEO Annual Meeting in many years. It allowed the Minister to see the good work that PEO is doing to regulate the profession in the public interest.

### **PEO Past president speaks at Nikola Tesla Day at Queen's Park**

On July 10, PEO past president **Marisa Sterling, P.Eng.**, on behalf of PEO, was a keynote speaker at Queen's Park in celebration of the establishment of Nikola Tesla Day in Ontario. It was hosted by Humber River-Black Creek NDP MPP **Tom Rakocevic**. This was especially useful in raising the profile of PEO and drawing attention to the value of PEO's role in regulating the profession in the public interest. It also was important to build the relationship with the official opposition and another relatively new MPP.

### **PEO President guest speaker at PEO GLP Meet and Greet with 75 reps**

PEO President **Christian Bellini, P.Eng.** was the guest speaker at a virtual Meet and Greet for PEO GLP Reps and members of the Government Liaison Committee on July 22. Over 75 GLP representatives participated. The value of having President Bellini there was he was able to see the breadth and the experience of the new reps and better understand the value of the program.

### **GLC adds new members**

The Government Liaison Committee added new representatives to the group including East Toronto representative **Tracy Garner, P.Eng.** and Windsor-Essex representative **Asif Khan, P.Eng.** Both have been long-time participants in the Ontario political scene. The value of new representatives on the GLC brings added knowledge and fresh thinking to the committee to better understand PEO's role in protecting the public interest.

### **PEO president meets with Attorney General**

PEO President Christian Bellini, P.Eng., met with Attorney General **Doug Downey, MPP** on November 22, 2021. This was the annual meeting between the PEO President and the Attorney General where they discussed important issues relevant to PEO.

Also in attendance were:

- PEO's CEO/Registrar **Johnny Zuccon**, P.Eng.,
- VP, Legislation and Policy **Dan Abrahams**, LL.B,
- Manager, Government Liaison Programs **Jeannette Chau**, P.Eng. and
- Minister Downey's Director of Policy **Nicko Vavassis**, and Executive Assistant **Duncan Walsh**.

The delegation briefed Attorney General Downey on current PEO activities, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the Anti-Racism and the Anti-Discrimination Exploratory Working Group (AREWG).

Minister Downey was supportive of PEO's work and sent a follow-up supportive letter. See [link](#)

### **Other Meetings with Ministers and MPPs held throughout year**

A number of other meetings were held, including:

- 15 formal online MPP meetings, including two with government ministers. They were Government House Leader **Paul Calandra**, MPP (PC-Markham-Stouffville) and **Caroline Mulroney**, MPP (PC-York-Simcoe), Minister of Transportation and Minister of Francophone Affairs.
- 32 informal MPP interactions via online community or chapter events, plus
- an online Take Your MPP to Work Day

There were a total of 48 MPP interactions with PEO that were held throughout the year.

Each meeting was positively received by ministers and MPPs because most had not had a chance to formally meet with PEO previously. Each meeting was focused and very helpful. With Ministers Mulroney and Calandra, it was the first time they had a chance to hear of PEO's new 124 rep system. It allowed each to have their own riding representatives versus dealing with a GLP chair for York Chapter who had a responsibility for nine ridings.

### **Establishing Relationships with Local MPPs**

Chapters continue to maintain relationships with all 124 MPPs.

In 2021, chapters continued to host virtual licence ceremonies where MPPs had the opportunity to tune in live, pre-record greetings or present certificates. Other online events such as meet and greets and introductory meetings of new GLP representatives to their local MPP were also held.

Participating in MPP events looked a little different in 2021, but nonetheless most of the 36 PEO chapters tuned in to online town halls, New Year's Levees and discussions.

Following the event, they would send the Minister/MPP a note letting them know of their participation, encouraging them to stay in touch over the pandemic and inviting them to be involved in a chapter event when COVID-19 is over.

### **Other Benefits to PEO**

Each of the MPP meetings were also beneficial to PEO for the following reasons:

- They educated the minister or MPP on the regulatory mandate of PEO
- They educated MPPs on the specific roles of each engineering organization they may interact with by providing them with a GLP info note on the rules and responsibilities of each organization
- They introduced the Minister or MPP to the new GLP structure that provides them with a specific contact in their riding for engineering regulation issues
- Finally, they each were helpful in building a relationship between the local chapter and the local MPP

### **Virtual Take Your MPP to Work Day**

A virtual Take Your MPP to Work Day event was held by Oakville Chapter on September 8, 2021 with Oakville PC MPP **Stephen Crawford**. The host company was IPEX Inc, a plastic piping manufacturer.

This was the first time a Take Your MPP to Work Day has been held virtually. The event went very well.

Take Your MPP to Work Days are a great way to show MPPs the work of professional engineers first hand and the role of PEO, as well as build a relationship between the chapter and local MPP.

### **Government Liaison Committee (GLC) shows leadership**

The Government Liaison Committee (GLC) oversaw the GLP activities of the chapters, including holding quarterly hour-long conference calls with all GLP Chairs across the province.

The GLC continues to meet monthly to discuss GLP activities, regulatory issues, MPP outreach, and communications.

In 2021, the GLC also devoted time to developing a transition of the current Chapter GLP system to one rep per riding through the GLP Representative Selection, Training and Succession Working Group.

This was in response to both the GLP audit recommendations to better develop the local relationship with MPPs and to the expressed desire of MPPs to liaise with representatives who lived in their riding. Extensive training and a standardized test was given to all GLP reps to ensure they are professional and knowledgeable.

This year's chair was **Vicki Hilborn**, P.Eng, chair of the Brantford Chapter.

### **Publications to keep informed**

The GLP Weekly e-newsletter continues to be sent to all 124 MPPs across Ontario, to keep them and PEO licence holders informed on government relations activities.

Each issue covers chapter meetings and events with MPPs and important PEO news such as Council updates, GLC meeting recaps and regulatory news.

For a good overview please see the GLP Weekly 2021 Year-in-Review [here](#).

### **PEO President and Government House Leader share views on GLP with Weekly Times**

President Bellini shared his thoughts on the Government Liaison program in an interview in July in the GLP Weekly Times, as did Government House Leader **Paul Calandra**, MPP (PC-Markham-Stouffville) who shared his views in an exclusive interview in August.

### **Seasonal Talking Points**

Seasonal Talking Points were also prepared and circulated to Chapter Chairs.

Even in a year like 2021, interaction was possible via online meetings and it was important to make sure GLP representatives were equipped with the knowledge and training to hold conversations with MPPs.

### **In Conclusion**

2021 really taught PEO the importance of maintaining all relationships.

The PEO Government Liaison Program did an excellent job of:

- reaching out to MPPs better by moving to a new structure of one GLP rep per MPP;
- creating a training program and standardized test for all GLP reps to ensure they are adequately trained, knowledgeable, professional and able to represent PEO well;
- keeping communications flowing through the GLP Weekly, GLP Info Notes, Seasonal Talking Points and Quarterly GLP Rep calls;

- pivoting events to an online format and actively participating in online MPP discussions; and
- ensuring that the profile and voice of PEO as the regulatory and licensing body of professional engineering is heard in the government.