



For Immediate Release
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Inaugural All-Party Co-operative Caucus meeting held at Queen's Park

TORONTO – Yesterday marked the inaugural meeting of the first All-Party Co-operative Caucus at Queen's Park. Legislators from all political parties were invited to attend.

The Ontario Co-co-operative Association (On Co-op) and the Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario (CCO) co-hosted this event with the three co-chairs: Ernie Hardeman (PC, Oxford) Percy Hatfield (NDP, Windsor—Tecumseh) and Marie-France Lalonde (Lib, Ottawa—Orléans).

The purpose of the All-Party Co-operative Caucus is to discuss and support policies directly affecting co-operative enterprises. The objectives of the All-Party Caucus are to promote the co-operative movement, to contribute to its development and to facilitate exchange and dialogue between representatives at Queen's Park and co-operative sector stakeholders.

"There is a clear need for a non-partisan co-operative caucus in the Ontario Legislature to help raise awareness of this thriving sector" said Mark Hamel, Chair, On Co-op.

On Co-op and CCO have offered to resource this caucus and it will work closely with the All-Party Caucus to represent the provincial co-operative movement.

"This first meeting has generated a great deal of interest among MPPs from all parties", added Lucie Moncion, President, Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario. "The Ontario co-operative sector continues to play a major role in the provinces economy and social fabric and we hope that this caucus will help to promote the co-op advantage."

The Caucus hopes to hold monthly meetings beginning with one in November.

About the Ontario Co-operative Movement

On Co-op and CCO represent more the 1.4 million members from 1,300 independent organizations. These co-ops operate in more than 1,900 locations in over 400 communities across the province-

Co-ops provide goods and services in more than 25 key sectors of the Ontario economy including transportation, local food, communication, social services, financial services, housing, childcare, agriculture and arts & culture. The Ontario co-operative sector accounts for almost \$6 billion of the province's GDP, 57,000 jobs (full time equivalent), \$3.3 billion in employment income, and \$1.3 billion in taxes to all levels of government.

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