

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Ontario co-operatives gaining momentum at Queen's Park

**Guelph ON. May 16, 2017.** Close to seventy individuals representing 36 unique co-operative organizations gathered at Queen's Park on May 10, to help raise the profile of Ontario's co-operatives to the Provincial Government. The event was a great success, with 46 government officials from across the three major parties in attendance, including 14 Ministers, 24 MPPs and a number of their assistants.

Peter Cameron, Acting Executive Director and Co-op Development Manager with the Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) notes: *"This extraordinary turnout of government representatives – one of the highest we've seen in years – is a testament that our message is being heard. They are recognizing the validity of and contributions made by co-operatives to the communities in which they exist, and the need to make changes that will better equip them to grow and succeed."*

The highlight of the evening were the speeches by Finance Minister Charles Sousa (MPP, Mississauga South), and the three All-party Co-op Caucus Co-Chairs, Minister Marie-France Lalonde (MPP, Ottawa – Orléans), MPP Ernie Hardeman (Oxford) and MPP Percy Hatfield (Windsor – Tecumseh), each of whom recognized the benefits that co-operatives provide and their commitment to supporting the sector moving forward. Co-op delegates were also delighted that Minister of Consumer and Government Services, Tracy MacCharles, (MPP, Pickering-Scarborough East) attended to meet and greet them.

Hosted by [On Co-op](#) in partnership with the Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario ([CCO](#)), the Reception took place within weeks of learning that the 2017 Ontario Budget included a commitment to consolidate the incorporation process for co-operatives with those currently in place for other types of Ontario businesses – one of the three key sector [recommendations](#) that the two organizations have been advocating for a number of years.

Throughout the day, members of the joint Government Relations Committee, along with representatives from [Brown and Cohen Communications & Public Affairs](#) - the consulting firm hired by the two organizations to assist with getting momentum within Government on the sector recommendations - participated in a series of pre-arranged, strategic meetings with MPPs and their staff. Earlier in the day, Minister Marie-France Lalonde introduced several of the co-op delegates in the legislature, recorded in section 4240 of the [Queen's Park Hansard](#).

Adds Cameron: *"There has been a lot of momentum in recent weeks in getting our key asks through to government, and we need to keep it moving forward. We are very grateful for all the time and effort that has been put into this process by our volunteer Committees, consultants, our sponsors, and to all those individuals that came to Queen's Park on May 10 to showcase the strength and diversity that is the Ontario co-operative movement."*

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On Co-op and CCO would like to thank the nine organizations who graciously supported this event through their [Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze](#) sponsorships, as well as the [Donors and Suppliers](#) who provided a variety of products made or sold at co-operative businesses throughout Ontario.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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The Ontario Co-operative Association exists to strengthen and unite the co-operative movement in Ontario. We believe that co-operatives are the solution to creating stronger communities, which help to build a better world.

Our members are organizations that believe in the co-operative principles and are invested in the future of the movement. With their commitment, we are able to deliver co-operative research, education, advocacy, networks, tools and resources, that support the success and sustainability of all co-operatives and the movement as a whole.

On Co-op is an information and resources network with a mission to *lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives*. Visit [www.ontario.coop](http://www.ontario.coop). [facebook.com/oncoop](https://facebook.com/oncoop). [twitter.com/ontariocoops](https://twitter.com/ontariocoops).