

Work quality, collusion risks and sustainable development
**The Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec suggests improvements to Bill 66 on the
acceleration of public infrastructure projects**

Montreal, October 27, 2020 – During the consultations today at the National Assembly, the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (OIQ) presented its recommendations for improving Bill 66, *An Act respecting the acceleration of certain infrastructure projects*.

“The OIQ understands the need to accelerate construction or repair projects in the interest of helping the economy recover. However, the risks are greater when a number of projects are carried out simultaneously, and it is our collective duty to mitigate them. To succeed, we believe that public bodies must be able to rely on solid internal expertise, review the lowest bidder rule, and provide proper protection to whistleblowers,” stated OIQ President Kathy Baig, Eng., MBA, ASC. The President also pointed out that the government has taken into account the main concerns expressed by stakeholders about Bill 61 since it was tabled in the spring.

Work quality and collusion prevention: take concrete actions

To promote quality work and minimize the risks of collusion when carrying out several large projects, the OIQ’s brief recommends that certain concrete actions be taken:

- extend the powers granted by the bill to the Autorité des marchés publics (AMP) to include all public contracts and subcontracts;
- provide proper protection to whistleblowers, especially individuals who send information to the AMP;
- provide public bodies with enough internal expertise to ensure that contracts are soundly managed whenever projects are fast-tracked;
- review the contract award process to replace the lowest bidder rule with an approach based on multiple criteria and appropriate weighting for these criteria;
- maximize the potential participation of bidders.

Work supervision: ensure a suitable level

Public infrastructure work is generally supervised while it is carried out. However, since the quality of the work can be affected when it is fast-tracked, the OIQ recommends that public bodies dedicate a suitable number of resources to supervise the work, which could also be helpful in ensuring compliance with environmental standards.

Since private projects and smaller-scale projects than those specified in the bill will also help the economy rebound, the OIQ also encouraged MNAs during the consultation to send a clear message about construction quality in Quebec by making the supervision of work mandatory. The OIQ is currently in talks with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Régie du bâtiment du Québec (RBQ) on this very issue.

Promote sustainable development

The OIQ—which just announced [its sustainable development commitments](#)—recommends that priority be given to improving staffing and work processes at the Ministère de l’Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques when projects are accelerated in order to reduce processing times for authorization applications. In 2019, the average time was 185 days. Shorter processing times would

not only be beneficial for the public projects contemplated in the bill, but also for all public or private infrastructure projects.

Furthermore, the OIQ believes that projects carried out in wetlands or bodies of water should still require an authorization, given the sensitive character of these types of environment. Therefore, it recommends that MNAs amend section 23 of the bill.

In addition, the OIQ recommends that the Minister responsible for the Environment exercise a great deal of caution before limiting public consultations, which serve to ensure citizen participation in economic development.

Finally, the OIQ believes that public bodies should apply LEED certification or similar standards to the building construction or renovation projects they manage.

The brief submitted to the National Assembly's Committee on Public Finance includes all of the OIQ's recommendations and comments concerning this bill. [Click here](#) to read it.

About the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec

The Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec turns 100 years old in 2020. It has a membership of some 65,000 engineering professionals in all fields, except forest engineering. Its mission is to regulate the practice of engineers and support the development of the profession in the interest of protecting the public. For more information, go to oiq.qc.ca.

– 30 –

Source: Patrick Leblanc
Senior Public Affairs Advisor
Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec
Tel.: 514 441-3697 (cell)

For a quick update on OIQ news, join its virtual communities:

- Facebook: facebook.com/oiq.qc.ca
- Twitter: twitter.com/OIQ
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/ordreingenieursqc/
- YouTube: youtube.com/user/ordredesingenieurs
- Instagram: instagram.com/ordreingenieursqc/