

TECHNATION^{CA}

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Fall 2020 ONTARIO PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

Investments in Canadian Technology:

A key to COVID-19 recovery

Friday, October 16, 2020

About TECHNATION

The timing for a bolder position as a national tech association with impact is quite frankly mission-critical. TECHNATION unites Canada's technology sector, governments and communities to enable technology prosperity from coast to coast.

We promote growth by connecting Canadian scale-ups with global tech leaders; engaging the global supply chain; filling the technology talent pipeline; and providing advocacy, professional development and networking opportunities across industry and government.

We develop solutions to achieve both the national and global goals that Canada's \$184 Billion technology industry shares with governments of all levels.

Technology prosperity that benefits everyone relies on a strong partnership between the private and public sectors.

For more information visit www.technationcanada.ca

OCTOBER 2020 TECHNATION BUDGET SUBMISSION

Pre-COVID-19, Ontario's digital economy saw impressive growth and investments from domestic and global players, with several of the largest tech companies in the world conducting research and development (R&D) within the Province. Undoubtedly, the crisis has shaken the way the tech industry is operating, resulting in a sudden loss of sales, revenue and a complete disruption of supply-chains, and hitting small businesses and scale-ups especially hard. The tech industry is not only crucial to the Province's pandemic response, but also to Ontario's recovery and future.

To that end, TECHNATION offers the following considerations for the Government of Ontario:

1. Digital Government and Procurement

TECHNATION supports the Government's *Making Government Smarter* initiatives and is encouraged by its continued focus on digital government.

The biggest consumer of technology across Canada is the public sector, at all levels. However, public sector IT procurement processes have long been acknowledged as a barrier that limits participation from small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), slowing deployments of innovative, home-grown technologies that improve services to citizens, and increasing costs for both government and industry.

We commend Ontario for starting the work of transforming the procurement process, including the SMART Digital Procurement and Supply Chain Centralization. However, there is more work to be done.

TECHNATION's [Innovation Adoption Program \(IAP\)](#) offers an opportunity to leverage governments' purchasing power to improve services and stimulate businesses. We encourage all governments to consider technology procurement as vital to economic recovery, including leveraging [CANADA'S DIGITAL MARKETPLACE powered by TECHNATION](#).

The best way government can support Canada's tech sector, is to be a practical customer resulting in a modernized, service-oriented digital government.

2. Virtual Health

For decades, industry has called on governments to work with healthcare professionals to capitalize on modern technology adoption. With the rapid implementation of virtual healthcare technologies during COVID-19, we now have evidence that this can be done. TECHNATION calls on the Government of Ontario to make virtual healthcare the norm post-COVID-19 as it will greatly improve patient

access to healthcare, decrease wait-times and save the system money. As an example, monitoring and sensor technologies can help keep seniors in their homes longer and out of long-term care facilities, as well as equip the government with data to fight future health crises.

3. Workforce Development

The tech sector faced a talent shortage pre-COVID-19. Since, the problem has been exacerbated and this will impact recovery. In response, TECHNATION calls upon the Government of Ontario to:

- Work closer with industry to identify workforce gaps;
- Identify and communicate 'low friction' learning and career pathways, helping displaced workers explore potential of tech;
- Continue to work with federal government to expand high speed internet services to rural communities;
- Work with rural SMEs to identify opportunities to expand / enhance their capability in the digital economy; and,
- Identify remote learning opportunities for individuals seeking tech sector employment to reskill / upskill, while remaining within their communities.

COVID-19 has drastically reshaped the way *all* businesses operate. As part of its recovery plan, TECHNATION recommends that Ontario should leverage its purchasing power to invest in digital government and services, including health-tech, and develop the technological infrastructure and workforce to support long-term growth.

TECHNATION would welcome the opportunity to present its recommendations to the Ministry of Finance and the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

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