

Harmonizing the PST and GST

The government's move to harmonize the provincial sales tax (PST) and federal goods and services tax (GST) is cause for considerable concern. The single sales tax will be administered by the Canada Revenue Agency and the Canada Border Services Agency on behalf of Ontario. It goes into affect July 1, 2010.

More than 1,200 provincial employees administer the PST. The province has said it will provide OPSEU with an estimate of the impact on our members, no later than June 30, 2009.

The majority of OPS employees working on PST administration are based in Durham and Oshawa, a part of the province hit hard by the downturn in the automotive industry.

OPSEU is not satisfied with a statement by the federal and provincial finance ministers that "the best possible arrangements for employment at the CRA" will be negotiated for OPS members. Nor is it comforting to read that federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty will exercise his "best effort" to maximize employment opportunities in Ontario in the federal public service for PST employees who do not find work in the CRA.