

OREA Video Town Hall Questions and Answers

Note – these questions are being presented as written by participants in OREA's July 2017 Video Town Hall.

- 1. Institutes like OREA and Tarion are being changed dramatically, is the government movingj towards deregulating the real estate industry? What else is coming? Impact to OREA?**

Thanks to Ontario REALTOR® advocacy, the province has announced a two-phase review of the *Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002* ("REBBA"). At present, OREA is not aware of any plans to deregulate the real estate industry in Ontario. In fact, the goal of the review is to make Ontario a leader in North America when it comes to professional standards and education in real estate. Although there is always a risk of deregulation, such as what happened to British Columbian REALTORS®, OREA's advocacy efforts have given us a commitment from the Government for a full review of REBBA.

To learn more about the different outcomes between British Columbia and Ontario, you can watch our informational video [here](#).

- 2. Please discuss Tax Fairness for REALTORS® and any progress with allowing us to incorporate.**

OREA has made a lot of progress to achieve tax fairness for REALTORS® but there are still big challenges ahead. OREA worked with PC MPP Todd Smith, NDP MPP Catherine Fife and Liberal MPP Mike Colle to introduce Bill 104, the Tax Fairness for REALTORS® Act, 2017. It was the first time the Bill received tri-party support. If passed, Bill 104 would permit personal real estate corporations in Ontario.

The Bill passed 2nd reading unanimously and has been referred to committee – the furthest its ever gotten at Queen's Park. OREA is currently working with the Ministry of Finance to build support for the Bill to move forward to 3rd and final reading and get our proposed changes included in a government bill.

To help support the Bill through 1st and 2nd reading, OREA launched the Tax Fairness for REALTORS® campaign. Over 9,500 REALTORS® sent a letter to their local MPP urging them to support the Bill. It was one of OREA's most successful campaigns.

3. Will this live town hall be available for viewing after it is over?

Yes. Please visit www.orea.com/townhall to see the full broadcast.

4. Any competition between OREA and Humber College real estate on training and or certification?

No. After a rigorous Request for Proposal (RFP) process, Humber and NIIT Canada were selected to design, develop, administer and deliver RECO's new education program. OREA is working to facilitate a smooth transition to the new education provider which will be completed by 2020.

5. Who regulates information on house selling; sellers; posing as potential REALTORS®?

RECO is a Delegated Administrative Authority (DAA) who is charged by the Government of Ontario to administer REBBA and its associated Regulations.

6. Has OREA looked at REALTOR ownership of Teranet?

No, we have not. Teranet is owned by a Borealis Infrastructure Management Inc. which is an investment unit of OMERS, one of Canada's largest pension plans with more than \$52 billion in net assets. Borealis bought Teranet in 2008 for \$1.5 billion. It's a bit out of our price range!

7. Update on REBBA review?

The review has been announced and will proceed in two phases. The first phase is focused on multiple representation. The province is expected to announce changes resulting from the first phase of the review in the Fall of 2017. The second phase of the review will look at all of REBBA and its associated regulation and extend into 2018. OREA is launching a broad member consultation on phase two that will engage thousands of REALTORS® in a conversation about the future of the laws and regulations that govern our industry.

8. TREB being the largest board in the country can take on the lobbying at provincial level. Why not eliminate OREA so that REALTORS® can save the dues?

TREB has a great government relations team who does an outstanding job at City Hall and with local MPPs and MPs. As the provincial association representing every member in Ontario, OREA can hold itself out at Queen's Park as THE voice of REALTORS® in Ontario. That's important when you're speaking with a Minister who is from Sault St. Marie or Windsor or Ottawa. The REALTOR® voice is stronger because it represents every corner of our province.

9. Why do we need Boards such as TREB, etc. if OREA can effectively represent all REALTORS®?

All three levels of organized real estate have a role in representing REALTORS®. The challenge for organized real estate is deciding who does what best, eliminating wasteful service overlap and keeping open lines of communication so we're working well together for individual members. It's so important that we identified it as a priority in our new 5-year strategic plan!

10. Elevate the REALTOR® brand? That's CREA's role. After education taken away from OREA, why is OREA required?

The real estate profession is chiefly regulated at the provincial level in Canada, the provincial association – OREA – has a critical role to play in advocating for REALTORS® and homeowners at Queen's Park and with RECO. Going forward, OREA will focus more on advocacy to ensure that we are supporting a regulatory environment in Ontario that supports a strong real estate market. OREA will also continue to deliver high quality services to our members such as standard forms and leadership training.

To learn more about the exciting future ahead, you can download a copy of OREA's Strategic Plan by visiting www.orea.com/townhall.

11. If OREA is doing less. Will the annual dues decline as well?

OREA dues are \$110/member/year. Going forward, OREA will be doing fewer things but doing them better. Any group, person or business who tries to do one hundred things, will do zero things well. That is why we are focusing on strengthening our core member services like standard forms and areas where we can get the biggest bang for our buck like advocacy. For example, OREA's research indicates that our campaign to stop the spread of the MLTT will save each REALTOR® working outside of Toronto about \$9,000 a year That's a pretty good return on a member's dues investment.

To learn more about OREA's focus on core services, download the Strategic Plan by visiting www.orea.com/townhall.

12. A plan to be RECO's watch dog and to push on topics like tougher education is likely to have more conflict. What is the plan to manage this conflict?

OREA and RECO have a strong working relationship. We meet regularly and communicate often on a whole host of issues. While OREA will be more aggressive in holding RECO accountable, we'll continue to collaborate and work together on issues like strengthening consumer protection and real estate education.

13. How are you going to better communicate with the member on the street?

Using modern technology of course! The video town hall was the first of many new initiatives OREA is looking into to connect with more grassroots members. We're launching a communications audit of our association to ensure we're using best practices for communicating with our members on the street. OREA is also focusing on enhancing our social media to better engage with members. We are already experiencing success with this, our social media engagement has increased by 400 percent.

14. What is OREA's position on "double ending"? Elimination will potentially adversely affect our business model in my humble opinion.

Phase one of the REBBA Review is looking at multiple representation which can sometimes take the form of 'double ending'. The OREA Board of Directors established a special Task Force made up of industry leaders from across Ontario to assist OREA in reviewing this issue and formulating a position on the matter. OREA has adopted a position which favors moving to a model of designated representation with the ability to enter into what's called transaction brokerage. You can read more about our submission [here](#).

15. What is the timeline for government's review and update of REBBA 2002? Is the move to designated agency a done deal within this rewrite of the Act??

See answers above for timelines. It is likely that the province will move forward with designated agency. OREA is working hard to ensure the model implemented in Ontario reflects an emerging national best practice that maintains a consumer's ability to work with the REALTOR® of their choice.

16. Are there any thoughts on changing the ability for multiple representation?

We have lots! Check out our submission [here](#).

17. Is the OREA group that is meeting with REBBA review going to consult with members as well as the review committee?

You bet we are. Stay tuned for a big consultation with members launching August 15th.

18. We have good standards and Acts in place. It seems the big issues is enforcement of current rules. Should you focus on that more vs re-inventing the wheel?

Enforcement is a big issue. RECO needs better enforcement tools like increased fines and suspension or elimination of licenses. Fines were set back in 2002 when average home prices were less than half of what they are today. They should be doubled. That being said, RECO can and should do a better job of using the tools at its disposal to go after rule breakers.

19. We ourselves police our industry by reporting those bad actors whenever we come across them. How can we encourage REALTORS® to report bad apples?

By reminding them what's on the line. Consumer trust is critical to the success of our industry. If that trust is eroded because of a few bad apples who are giving the overwhelming majority of ethical REALTORS® a bad name, that's a problem. When you report a rule breaker, you're likely protecting a consumer who has put their life savings on the line to achieve their dreams of home ownership.

20. What are the key issues that OREA is lobbying the government on at the moment?

Where to start? Our GR team is very busy protecting your business and the Canadian Dream of Home Ownership at Queen's Park. At any given time, we have 8-12 issues that we are lobbying on. The big ones currently are mandatory home energy audits or HER&D, personal real estate corporations, increasing housing supply, REBBA Review, marijuana legalization and its impact on Ontario homes, and stopping the spread of the Municipal Land Transfer Tax.

21. Professionalism and higher standards are industry buzz words yet very little change is ever made. When will we know more specifics on how we will accomplish this?

We have some ideas and we'll be sharing those as part of our REBBA Review consultations. We want your feedback. Stay tuned!

22. Any new requirements coming in order to get a real estate license? I started with TREB at around 6000 Realtors and now we are at around 40,000 - diploma mill?

We will be publishing a white paper on proposals to strengthen real estate registration education in October. Stay tuned!

23. What are we doing at the municipal and provincial level to curb this crack down on landlords and increased rent control legislation?

OREA opposed rent control in the lead up to the release of the Fair Housing Plan. Unfortunately, it has come into force. Thankfully, the province has maintained vacancy de-control going forward; a small but important victory for landlords. OREA will continue to work with our friends at the Federation of Rental Housing Providers to lobby for additional changes to the new rent control rules.

24. As tech innovation is at the forefront of priorities, will OREA take the lead on providing REALTORS® with one streamlined platform for loading/managing listings?

We have no plans to take that on.

25. Many regions overlap with local Boards fighting for dues revenue and data control, leaving Realtor needs on the sideline?

OREA is committed to structured collaboration with local boards, in particular, the Toronto Real Estate Board, since it represents the vast majority of Ontario REALTOR®, with a view to focusing on the activities that we can and should be leading.

26. What is the future of obligatory education for Real Estate Agents?

We'll find out once RECO, NIIT and Humber College release details about the new curriculum and program. OREA will keep pressure on the parties for higher educational standards, to create a more demanding curriculum.

27. Much of the member representation is from large and massive brokerages. Can small brokers and sole proprietors be protected?

OREA is fighting hard for all member brokerages large and small. Our solution to the government's proposed consultation paper on multiple representation was designed to work for sole proprietors as well as large brokerages. Check out our submission [here.](#)

28. Doubling fines is just the cost of doing business for high volume producers. At what point, should RECO look at rescinding registration for repeat offenders?

This will be a big part of our upcoming white paper on Enforcement and RECO. Stay tuned for its release on August 15th and please give us your feedback.

29. Do you see a future in doing away with agency and having REALTORS® be a transaction facilitators instead? Could this solve the Multiple representation issue?

We have seen the future and it involves you checking out our submission on phase one of the REBBA review on multiple representation. You can check out our submission [here](#).

30. Will OREA start communicating directly with the members via email in order to reach more members?

Yes. We currently communicate directly with members via email but we're looking at ways to make it more effective. OREA is also doing a lot to engage members via social media. Our social media engagement has increased over 400 percent.

31. Is OREA wanting to reduce the number of Boards in the province?

It's a local board decision to amalgamate – not OREA's.

32. How can a member be involved in OREA's future?

There are lots of ways! Volunteer on a committee. Take our award-winning Leadership Courses. Attend one of our outstanding events. Join the Ontario REALTOR® Party. The possibilities are endless. Reach out to us at info@orea.com and let's find out how we can help!

33. Being the watch dog for RECO is likely going to have backlash from RECO do you foresee any negative outcomes for OREA if RECO and OREA don't harmonize?

See Question #11.

34. Does OREA have any plans to assist at association level with some of the difficulties they are experiencing (i.e. MLS)?

OREA helps our 39 local boards in many ways but we aren't in the MLS business.

35. Will OREA oppose any new land transfer tax initiatives by the province if they allow municipalities to charge one?

Yes. Full stop. We'll fight tooth and nail any attempt by the province to permit the spread of the MLTT. OREA members were highly engaged in our MLTT campaign

36. Was the reason to outsource to NIIT purely financial or was there more to it?

We're not sure. You'll have to follow up with RECO. We do know, OREA offered award winning education for many years. It's too bad we lost the contract but are excited about the opportunity to move forward on our new vision and strategic plan.

37. Why is there no ombudsman for RECO? Who does a Realtor complain to if they feel RECO is overstepping their authority?

Check out our Enforcement white paper on August 15th. The ombudsman role is discussed in the paper. Give us your thoughts when it's online!

38. Some of my investor has problem with the Tenants and whenever they apply in the landlord and tenant board, so always board favour the Tenant. Why?

The landlord/tenant legislation in Ontario is biased against property owners. Legislation is needed to ensure the rental process is fair and balanced so that renters are treated fairly and property owners are encouraged to invest in their properties, allowing for better consumer choice. It's an issue we've raised with government in the past and our Government Relations Committee will revisit it going forward.