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## Town of Rainy River

September 9, 2024

*sent via email*

Minister Paul Calandra  
Municipal Affairs and Housing  
777 Bay Street  
College Park 17<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
[minister.mah@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mah@ontario.ca)

Dear Minister Calandra:

I am writing to you as the Chief Administrative Officer at the Town of Rainy River and as the municipal officer responsible for the administration of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* in support of AMCTO's recommendations calling for the comprehensive changes to *MEA*.

AMCTO members, as municipal leaders, support the interests and well-being of 235,000 municipal employees across all municipalities in this Province.

Local election administrators care about running fair and accessible elections. We care about ensuring that candidates, voters, and third-party advertisers understand their responsibilities. We care that those that may knowingly break the rules are held to account. We care that the *MEA* and the accompanying *Education Act* and *Assessment Act* are complicated pieces of legislation on their own, and more so read together.

That is why AMCTO reviews the *Act* after every local election and why the Province should be making the necessary changes to make election administration easier and the *Act* clearer to follow for candidates and voters within the timelines AMCTO has set out.

Never has there been a more important moment to ensure the *Act* is working well, closes gaps and provides the right enforcement tools and mechanisms to safeguard our local electoral processes from threats of foreign interference, misinformation and bad actors. Local clerks need support and guidance on how to manage these threats and deal with potential events, especially considering the federal government's recent legislation on foreign interference (Bill C-70).

AMCTO convened a group of municipal staff with experience and expertise in administering local elections to present you with several recommendations for making improvements to *MEA* and calling for an overhaul of the *Act* in the long-term.

I support AMCTO's recommendations and call on you to update the *MEA* with priority and secondary recommendations by mid-2025 ahead of the 2026 election so that I can make the necessary adjustments for planning and implementation well ahead of statutory timelines imposed upon me to administer an election.

There is a provincial interest in ensuring the health of local democracy and the time to act is now – proactively instead of reactively. Election administrators face several uncertainties as we look ahead to 2026. We observe that in other jurisdictions with elections there is an increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technology to spread misinformation. There are increased levels of electoral interference. Even in Canada, we are seeing reports of more candidates and elected officials stepping back from public life because of concerns for their safety and reputations.

There also is a provincial interest for reducing administrative and operational burdens to help free up staff time to focus on other critical statutory and operational tasks such as those related to planning and development processes, municipal governance, as well as service innovation, in support of provincial priorities.

I look forward to seeing legislation introduced to update the *MEA* in the coming months to address current challenges, streamline processes, and make legislation easier to understand and administer.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Veldron Vogan  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Town of Rainy River

cc: Paul Shipway, President, AMCTO [president@amcto.com](mailto:president@amcto.com)  
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
[martha.greenberg@ontario.ca](mailto:martha.greenberg@ontario.ca)



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## Town of Rainy River

### RESOLUTION

MOVED BY \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: September 9, 2024

SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION: 24-033

“**WHEREAS** elections rules need to be clear, supporting candidates and voters in their electoral participation and election administrators in running elections.

**WHEREAS** legislation needs to strike the right balance between providing clear rules and frameworks to ensure the integrity of the electoral process,

**WHEREAS** the legislation must also reduce administrative and operational burden for municipal staff ensuring that local election administrators can run elections in a way that responds to the unique circumstances of their local communities.

**WHEREAS** the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) will be 30 years old by the next municipal and school board elections in 2026.

**WHEREAS** the MEA sets out the rules for local elections, the *Assessment Act, 1990* and the *Education Act, 1990* also contain provisions impacting local elections adding more places for voters, candidates, and administrators to look for the rules that bind the local democratic process in Ontario.

**WHEREAS** with rules across three pieces of legislation, and the *MEA* containing a patchwork of clauses, there are interpretation challenges, inconsistencies, and gaps to fill.

**WHEREAS** the Act can pose difficulties for voters, candidates, contributors, and third-party advertisers to read, to interpret, to comply with and for election administrators to enforce.

**WHEREAS** while local elections are run as efficiently and effectively as can be within the current legislative framework, modernization and continuous improvement is needed to ensure the Act is responsive to today’s needs and tomorrow’s challenges.

**WHEREAS** to keep public trust and improve safeguards the Act should be reviewed considering the ever-changing landscape which impacts elections administration including privacy, the threats of foreign interference, increased spread of mis/disinformation and the increased use of technologies like artificial intelligence and use of digital identities.

**WHEREAS** the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) reviewed the Act and has provided several recommendations including modernizing the legislation, harmonizing rules, and streamlining and simplifying administration.

**AND WHEREAS** AMCTO put forward recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2026 elections and longer-term recommendations for amendments ahead of the 2030 elections.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River calls for the Province to update the MEA with priority amendments as outlined by AMCTO before Summer 2025 and commence work to review and re-write the MEA with longer-term recommendations ahead of the 2030 elections.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution will be forwarded to all municipalities in Ontario for support and that each endorsement be then forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing ([minister.mah@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mah@ontario.ca)), the Minister of Education ([minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)), the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery ([todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca](mailto:todd.mccarthy@ontario.ca)), Minister of Finance ([Minister.fin@ontario.ca](mailto:Minister.fin@ontario.ca)) the Premier of Ontario ([premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)), Kenora-Rainy River MPP and AMCTO ([advocacy@amcto.com](mailto:advocacy@amcto.com)).”

ABSTAIN \_\_\_\_\_  
AYES \_\_\_\_\_  
NAYES \_\_\_\_\_

CARRIED  \_\_\_\_\_  
DEFEATED \_\_\_\_\_

D. ARMSTRONG \_\_\_\_\_  
D. EWALD \_\_\_\_\_  
J. HAGARTY \_\_\_\_\_  
B. HELGESON \_\_\_\_\_  
N. IVALL \_\_\_\_\_  
M. KREGER \_\_\_\_\_  
G. PROST \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR OR ACTING MAYOR

