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From: AMO Policy <policy@amo.on.ca>
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To: Emily Lutz
Subject: AMO Policy Update – NDP Motion on Municipal Fiscal Sustainability, Mental Health and Addictions, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure

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AMO Policy Update – NDP Motion on Municipal Fiscal Sustainability, Mental Health and Addictions, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure

NDP Motion Calling for a New Deal with Ontario’s Municipalities

Yesterday, the NDP tabled a motion calling on the provincial government to reach a new deal with Ontario municipalities to address downloaded provincial costs in areas such as housing and healthcare.

AMO welcomes this acknowledgement that the current provincial-municipal fiscal framework does not support sustainable communities or the quality of life of their residents. AMO has been calling for a Social and Economic Prosperity Review to update our fiscal relationship. Municipalities need a provincial partner that will:

- **Sustainably invest in public infrastructure** to support growth, improve transportation, and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

- **Reduce the province's continued reliance on municipal revenues** to fund provincial programs, like health and social services, so municipal tax dollars can go toward supporting thriving communities.
- **Take action on the root causes of homelessness** through investments in mental health and addictions programming and improved income security that allows people to keep a roof over their heads.

Response to Provincial Bike Lanes Legislation

Yesterday, AMO's Executive Director Brian Rosborough presented remarks to the legislature highlighting concerns with Bill 212, *the Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act*.

AMO views the provincial proposal to remove and block bike lands in specific locations as misguided and an ineffective way of addressing congestion. The development of a balanced transportation network that includes a broad mix of roads, cycling paths, sidewalks, and public transit options is an exercise best left to municipalities, based on their in-depth understanding of municipal infrastructure, community needs, and long-term growth plans.

AMO also submitted written comments to the Committee calling on the province to abandon the proposal.

Bill 223, *Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act*

Minister Kerzner tabled Bill 223, *Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act*, which includes previously announced changes to supervised consumption sites in Ontario. The legislation would:

- Prohibit any supervised consumption site from operating within 200 metres of a school, childcare centre, or EarlyON centre. This change would close 10 sites currently operating in Ontario.
- It would also require municipalities to seek provincial approval before requesting federal approval or renewal of supervised consumption site or funding for safer supply programs. This means that supervised consumption sites not currently impacted by the 200m limit could be impacted once provincial approval for renewal is required.

- Municipalities would also require provincial approval to publicly support, including through by-laws or resolutions, any other organization seeking to open a supervised consumption site or safer supply program.

As outlined in AMO's July Report, The Opioid Crisis: a Municipal Perspective, tackling a problem as complex as the opioid crisis requires a comprehensive approach, including harm reduction supports that make sense for local communities. Municipalities – in collaboration with health, police, and other partners – are best positioned to decide whether supervised consumption sites are right for their communities.

Ontario Expanding Mental Health Supports for Public Safety Personnel

As employers of first responders, municipalities are faced with the financial obligations associated with work-related mental health injuries. AMO was pleased to see a \$32 million investment through a new Mental Health Supports for Public Safety Personnel program and the creation of an Anti-Stigma Strategy for first responders and public safety personnel.

The program will include a web portal to access core services, access to a 24/7 call-line and other trauma-informed mental health services. Grants for employers will also be provided to help subsidize the costs of these additional programs and services. A call for applications, inviting organizations to apply for funding under the grant, will be rolled out in early 2025.

Proposed Integrated Energy Plan for Ontario

AMO presented to the legislature in support of Bill 214, *Affordable Energy Act*, that makes progress on a plan to grow clean and affordable electricity capacity in Ontario. Key priorities include:

- Urging to the province to commit to a 2050 net-zero emissions target;
- Endorsing community benefit agreements between municipalities and energy proponents as part of procurement processes related to generation, storage and transmission projects;
- Ensuring the costs and risks of new last mile energy infrastructure are not transferred to municipalities or local distribution corporations.

AMO also submitted comments supporting enhanced funding to municipalities and local distribution corporations (LDCs) to implement local energy efficiency measures.

Cyber Security and MFIPPA

AMO submitted comments to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on Bill 194, *Strengthening Cyber Security and Building Trust in the Public Sector Act*. The bill proposes changes that would establish a cyber security framework for broader public sector entities including municipalities, school boards, and hospitals.

AMO highlighted the need to balance strong data and privacy protection with the flexibility needed to allow municipalities to put systems in place, and act quickly when cyber-threats are identified. AMO also commented on the long-standing need to update MFIPPA, particularly around frivolous and vexatious requests.

This policy update is also available on [AMO's Website](#).

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