

**Emily Lutz**

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**From:** AMO Policy <policy@amo.on.ca>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 5 December 2024 4:57 pm  
**To:** Emily Lutz  
**Subject:** AMO Policy Update – Pre-Budget Submission, Advocacy on Water, Recent Bills and Building Officials

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## **AMO Policy Update – Pre-Budget Submission, Advocacy on Water, Recent Bills and Building Officials**

### **AMO 2025 Pre-Budget Submission Preview**

AMO understands that the provincial-municipal fiscal framework is broken. Municipalities across Ontario are facing immense pressure this budget season, largely created by growing costs in areas of provincial jurisdiction. For almost a year, AMO has been calling for a Social and Economic Prosperity Review. Unfortunately, the provincial government has not come to the table. However, we know the problem remains and we are evolving our strategy.

AMO sent a [letter](#) to all elected AMO members, CAOs, and Treasurers highlighting the key elements of our upcoming 2025 pre-budget submission. That submission will be released in mid-January and will call for provincial action in three key areas that would support municipal fiscal sustainability and improve quality of life for Ontarians:

- Long-term and predictable provincial investments in municipal infrastructure

- Reducing the province’s reliance on municipal property taxes to fund health and social services
- Addressing the root causes of homelessness, building off an ambitious research project on homelessness that AMO and key partners will release in January

We know our sector is strongest when speaking with one unified voice. AMO will be following up in the coming weeks with a variety of communications tools to support member’s participation in ROMA delegations, and advance municipal fiscal sustainability and homelessness priorities.

## **\$1 Billion Loan Program for Water Systems**

The province recently announced a new Infrastructure Ontario financing program for water infrastructure projects that enable the construction of more homes.

This program will complement the existing provincial infrastructure funding programs that AMO has advocated for to achieve the province’s ambitious goal of 1.5 million new homes by 2031. This new financial tool for municipalities offers the following features:

- Flexible borrowing terms with deferred interest payments during construction
- Longer debenture repayment terms of up to 40 years
- More flexible repayment terms, and
- Lower administration costs

Applications will be open in early December and more details are available in a short newsletter.

## **Omnibus Red Tape Reduction Bill**

Bill 227, Cutting Red Tape, Building Ontario Act, 2024 was introduced on November 20 and includes a broad range of proposals from most ministries. Those impacting municipalities the most include:

- A new allowance for minor errors on forms and changes to prevent delays in decision-making could help reduce the Landlord and Tenant Board backlog
- Providing credit agencies access to Landlord and Tenant Board orders related to missed payments, which could help landlords make more informed decisions about prospective tenants
- Recent regulatory changes in support of Ontario One Call streamlined the dedicated locator model for broadband projects, potentially speeding up implementation and reducing costs. In response to feedback from our sector, some municipal underground infrastructure owners can now conduct their own locates instead of the broadband project owner. The province is seeking input on implementing these changes
- Proposals to streamline the release of Ontario Heritage Trust lands without heritage value and the approval process for brownfield development could help unlock more land for development. AMO has long advocated for the province to review its own processes and approvals to enable development and welcomes these efficiencies

Many other proposals are housekeeping amendments or have no direct impact on the municipal sector.

The bill was fast-tracked, bypassing public hearings. AMO will be commenting on some elements of the bill posted to the Environmental Registry.

## **Environmental Bill**

Bill 228, Resource Management and Safety Act, 2024, was introduced on November 25 including a range of environmental proposals along with a proposal to help attract more surveyors to the profession in support of building safe and affordable housing options.

AMO will comment on elements of the Bill posted in various Environmental Registry proposals, focusing on:

- Changes that could impact municipalities' activities in wildland fire management and require new resources. AMO will advocate for the province to absorb any new costs
- Commending the province for taking action on climate change with its proposal for commercial carbon storage projects. AMO will support the proposed municipal role in decision-making for these projects
- Support for protecting communities from the hazards of deteriorating oil and gas wells

## **Support for Removing Barriers for Qualified Building Officials**

AMO supported the government's proposal to streamline the process for qualified Manitoba building officials to work in Northern Ontario in its Environmental Registry [comments](#). AMO also continued to advocate for measures that will attract and retain building officials to address the shortage across the province.

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

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