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AMO Update: 2020 Federal Throne Speech Lays Out Priorities Including Climate Action, Expanding Rural Broadband, Improved Housing Access, Child Care and Long-Term Care Standards

Her Excellency, Governor General Julie Payette, delivered the Trudeau government's [Speech From The Throne](#) today in the Senate. Throne Speeches lay out broad directions and priorities the government proposes to implement through legislation, policy, spending and other actions during the coming Parliamentary session. Prime Minister Trudeau will address Canadians regarding the priorities in the Speech later this evening.

The federal government is in a minority government situation and a Throne Speech requires the confidence of the House of Commons. This means that the government will require the support of opposition members to pass the Speech. The government and opposition parties will now be assessing the ability to pass the Speech.

Headline Speech commitments include expanding COVID-19 testing capacity to reduce delays; targeted financial support in the event of future localized lockdowns; and creation of 1 million jobs.

Significant commitments of interest to Ontario municipal governments include:

- Keeping the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) into 2021 and changing Employment Insurance in the long-term to include gig workers, the self-employed;
- Keeping supports such as the Canada Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the creation of a new disability benefit;
- Investments in infrastructure such as public transit and active transportation; flooding and fire prevention; clean energy and building energy efficiency upgrade supports; affordable housing and reduction of homelessness – including recent initiatives for rapid housing;

- Rural broadband expansion through “accelerating the timelines and ambitions” of the Universal Broadband Fund;
- Action on long-term care with national standards, supports for ageing in place and “*Criminal Code* amendments to explicitly penalize those who neglect seniors under their care;”
- Investing in a childcare and early learning system as well as creating a strategy for women in the economy;
- Banning single use plastics next year and improving recycling as well as creating a Canadian Clean Water Agency;
- Modernizing the *Environmental Protection Act* and legislating the goal of net-zero energy emissions by 2030 as well as expanding electric vehicle charging; and
- Targeted support for travel and tourism, cultural and performing arts, and hospitality industries that have been hardest hit from the pandemic.

Of specific interest to municipal governments, the Speech promised action to continue municipal ability to ban handguns; expanding urban parks and access to greenspace and changes to improve civilian oversight of policing including the RCMP as part of its priority to reduce systemic racism.

Many of the items included in the speech were [proposed by AMO](#) to the federal and provincial government as investments that could help communities recover from the economic fall out of the pandemic. Municipal officials are encouraged to [watch or read the Throne Speech](#) to assess items of interest for their own communities. AMO will continue to analyze the Speech and monitor the progress of commitments made within it and report to members on relevant developments.