

January 5, 2022

AMO Policy Update – New Year Calls to Action and other issues of municipal concern

Call to Action – Joint and Several Liability

In 2018, Premier Ford committed to reviewing the matter of municipal joint and several liability. This review was conducted in 2019 with AMO and municipalities fully participating. Unfortunately, the results of this provincial review have not been released and municipalities are still awaiting news of how the Attorney General will address this important matter.

As municipal leaders are aware, liability and risks are one major driver of exponentially increasing insurance costs. However, managing risk and liability also has environmental impacts such as road salt application affecting wetlands and water quality in our lakes and streams.

To help drive the policy discussion, AMO submitted “*Towards a Reasonable Balance – Addressing Growing Municipal Liability and Insurance Costs*” in October 2019 that provides a refresh on the municipal argument to find a balance to the issues and challenges presented by joint and several liability, including implementing full proportionate liability and a cap on economic loss awards. It provided seven straightforward recommendations for actions to deal with this problem.

AMO is now asking for municipal councils to lend their support to the 7 recommendations contained in the AMO submission to re-establish the priority for provincial action on this issue. Councils are encouraged to pass a resolution when you next meet to ask the government to work with us to on a plan for resolution before the end of its current mandate.

Please send your supportive resolutions to the Attorney General, the Honourable Doug Downey at attorneygeneral@ontario.ca and copy the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Steve Clark at minister.mah@ontario.ca as well as the AMO President, Jamie McGarvey, at amopresident@amo.on.ca.

Call to Action – CN Rail and Drainage

AMO has prepared a [template letter](#) (also available for download in [.docx](#) format) for municipal Councils that are experiencing issues with drainage maintenance work, construction of new drains, and the collection of assessed costs to Railways for the *Drainage Act*. The template letter, which can be modified by each municipal Council, is intended to amplify support of the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)'s [letter](#) dated December 23, 2021. As the Minister states in her letter, "Given that federally regulated railways are indeed subject to the *Drainage Act*, we expect CN Rail to pay its costs as assessed under the *Drainage Act* and not to hinder the progress of these projects or others in the future."

Municipal Councils are encouraged to send the letter to each of the recipients copied in the letter and forward a copy to policy@amo.on.ca.

***Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors and Building More Beds Act* Receives Royal Assent**

On December 9th, the *Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors, and Building More Beds Act, 2021*, received [Royal Assent](#). The legislation will repeal the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* and replace it with the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021*. This new Act establishes in law the commitment to provide an average of four hours of direct care per resident per day by March 31, 2025, with increasing interim goals to increase care; establish new compliance and enforcement tools, including doubling the fines on the conviction of an offence; and align the Residents' Bill of Rights with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and recognize the role caregivers play in resident health and well-being. The legislation also makes changes to the *Retirement Homes Act, 2021*.

AMO provided both a [written submission](#) to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and presented to the Committee our feedback on the Bill. The legislature made a revision to include emotional needs in the preamble of the Act, but not as a fundamental principle as was advocated for by AMO and other organizations. The government is set to propose and publicly consult on regulations for the two Acts in the coming months. AMO will continue to provide input and advocate for increased funding for municipal homes to implement emotion-focused models of care.

Call for Ideas: Housing Accelerator Fund and Rent-to-Own Program

The federal Minister of Housing and Diversity has launched a Call for Ideas for two of the federal government's priorities outlined in the Speech for the Throne. The Housing Accelerator Fund would aim to remove barriers and help municipalities build housing more quickly in an ambitious and innovative manner, while the Rent-to-Own program would aim to help make it easier for renters to work towards home ownership. Municipalities, provinces and territories, Indigenous governments, organizations and communities, private and non-profit housing sectors, and Canadians are invited to share their ideas on how these programs could be most effective.

Ideas can be submitted until January 31, 2022 at <https://www.placetocallhome.ca/callforideas>.

AMO Submission to the Ministry of Health on Municipal-OHT Engagement

AMO has submitted [recommendations](#) to the Minister of Health that will improve and standardize the relationship between Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), municipal governments, and District Social Service Administration Boards (DSSABs). Currently 50 OHTs have been established in the province; however, of the 42 OHTs that were approved prior to September 17th, 2021, only 40% have listed a municipality as a partner or member.

The integration of municipal governments and District Social Service Administration Boards into Ontario Health Teams' (OHTs) decision-making across the province has been inconsistent and inappropriate for an order of government. AMO has long called upon the province to mandate a municipal voice into health care service planning and decision making. AMO's submission calls on the Ministry to implement these recommendations and ensure that municipal knowledge is integrated into local system planning and management of the health care system.

Municipal Cannabis Resources Available

AMO has assembled resources and key messages for municipalities to consider when addressing personal and designated medical cannabis grows in their communities and in their provincial and federal cannabis advocacy. [The Municipal Resources](#) have been assembled to provide examples of how Ontario communities have addressed issues related to medical cannabis grows. They do not reflect any requirements but

offer examples of possible tools for municipal governments to consider.

The [Key Messages for Municipalities](#) offer messaging that municipal governments may choose to consider in their provincial and federal cannabis advocacy. Both resources have been compiled based on the input and contributions of AMO's Personal and Designated Medical Cannabis Grows Staff Working Group.

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources](#) page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.

*Disclaimer: The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is unable to provide any warranty regarding the accuracy or completeness of third-party submissions. Distribution of these items does not imply an endorsement of the views, information or services mentioned.