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Subject: AMO Breaking News - Province Proposes Provincial Oversight of Municipal Government
Date: March-06-14 10:25:57 AM

TO THE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF THE CLERK AND COUNCIL

Wynne Government Embraces Provincial Oversight of Municipal Government

Today, Ontario's Premier, Kathleen Wynne, stated that her government intends to create new municipal accountability measures and assert greater Provincial oversight over municipal government.

Municipalities would be required to either create new processes to review complaints about service delivery, or choose to have service complaints investigated by the Office of Ontario's Ombudsman, Andre Marin. Furthermore, municipal service complaint processes and investigations carried out by anyone other than the Provincial Ombudsman, could be subjected to "review" by his office.

We will share further details about these proposals as they become available.

AMO fully supports efficient and credible oversight of municipal services and governance. Public trust, accountability, transparency and integrity strengthen municipal government. However, AMO rejects the Wynne Government's vision of how best to achieve it.

The Ontario Government would layer Provincial oversight and new administrative processes on municipal government. It represents duplication and inefficiency, and importantly, it suggests that Wynne's Government does not trust in the capacity of municipal government to expose and address questions about performance and integrity.

No one knows what it would cost municipal government to fulfill these new responsibilities. But new costs are inevitable, the administrative burden is likely to be substantial, and municipalities and their citizens should expect more red tape.

Assigning oversight authority to the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman, a provincial appointee who is based at Queen's Park and who reports to Ontario's Legislature, has the effect of transferring local municipal accountability to the Province. AMO is curious to see whether the opposition Conservatives and New Democrats will support that, or reject the invitation to micromanage municipal government.

Municipalities are committed to accountability and transparency. Public trust is one of our greatest assets. A municipal government that lacks public trust has every reason to earn it, and good government is best served when local municipalities meet that goal independently.

Over the past decade, the Ontario Government and municipal governments have respected one another as willing, able and capable partners. AMO wants the Wynne Government, and opposition leaders, to be clear about their vision for future provincial and municipal relations, and the capacity of municipal government. Our vision has not changed: municipalities are looking for leadership that partners with municipal government, respects them, and believes in them.

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