



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

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September 21, 2015

NEWS RELEASE

Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Weighs in on Provincial Infrastructure Consultations

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) submitted a comprehensive brief last Friday, September 18 to the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure in response to the Province's infrastructure consultations, entitled "*Moving Ontario Forward – Outside the GTHA Consultations.*"

The Province of Ontario is seeking input from various stakeholders regarding the allocation of approximately \$15.5 billion in provincial funds for infrastructure outside the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA). The EOWC in its 50-page brief submitted last week made the case for a \$3.78 billion share of the provincial funding. The EOWC represents approximately 750,000 people across the 13 County and Single Tier Municipalities of rural Eastern Ontario, and manages roughly \$10 billion in municipal infrastructure.

The submission continues the EOWC tradition of conducting extensive research prior to expressing its view. The submission also supports past positions taken by the EOWC on infrastructure, which have been presented to the Province through a series of White Papers developed over the last few years, in addition to three regional analyses on transportation, economic development, and a digital strategy (undertaken in conjunction with other regionally-minded organizations).

The focus of the consultation document is multi-faceted – namely, that regions are best positioned to determine their own needs, that rural areas carry a heavy infrastructure load, that a new, integrated and strategic approach to infrastructure investments is warranted, and that stable, permanent and predictable and stable funding is essential to success.

"Infrastructure is vital to our communities, and I'm very pleased that the province has sought extensive input into the allocation of infrastructure dollars outside of the GTHA. The EOWC has put forth a very well thought out and researched document, with a view to assisting the Province develop guidelines for the disbursement of funds," stated Eric Duncan, Chair of the EOWC and Warden of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

"We are proud of the document, and look forward to continued productive dialogue to ensure that infrastructure dollars are invested strategically and wisely throughout our region. We also want to ensure a fair allocation of funds throughout the Province," continued Chair Duncan.

"Over the years the EOWC has worked hard to offer good evidence for our recommendations and proposals and as noted this submission follows that tradition", said Rick Phillips, Warden of Hastings County. "We know the challenge is significant but with a true partnership between municipalities and the Province we can tackle our infrastructure needs," he added.

The infrastructure consultation brief is available in its entirety on the EOWC website, at <http://eowc.org/en/briefingnotes/2015.asp>.

The EOWC is comprised of the Heads of Council of the 13 County and Single Tier municipalities of Eastern Ontario. It focuses its advocacy efforts on rural Eastern Ontario, developing positions based on research and the interests of its taxpayers. Priority issues for the EOWC in 2015 are equitable infrastructure funding, closing existing cellular coverage gaps (broadband coverage to facilitate better business and emergency response communication), and access to natural gas for rural residents.

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Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

September 22, 2015

Backgrounder

EOWC Response to:

Moving Ontario Forward – Outside the GTHA Consultations

WHY:

The Province of Ontario launched a province-wide consultation seeking input into how the Government should invest approximately \$15 billion over the next 10 years in infrastructure.

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus has prepared a detailed submission that was sent to the Province last Friday, September 18th, 2015. It contains a series of recommendations and proposals along with a specific amount for Eastern Ontario municipalities (exclusive of the City of Ottawa).

WHAT:

The EOWC is recommending that the Province direct a total of **\$3.78 billion** over the next 10 years to the region consisting of:

- ✓ \$0.83 billion in the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund
- ✓ \$0.11 billion in the Small Communities Fund
- ✓ \$0.10 billion in the Connecting Links Program
- ✓ \$0.25 billion in Southern Highways projects
- ✓ \$0.03 billion in expanding Natural Gas to rural communities
- ✓ \$1.23 billion in Additional Infrastructure Investments to Support Economic Growth
- ✓ \$1.23 billion for Additional Infrastructure Investments to Support Transportation

NEED:

Eastern Ontario municipalities, excluding the City of Ottawa, have significant needs for provincial financial support evidenced by:

- ✓ Ownership and responsibility for approximately \$10 billion in infrastructure including roads, bridges, water, wastewater, landfill, social housing and other types of facilities

- ✓ Responsibility for 93,400 lane-kilometers of road and 8,500 bridges. Rural Eastern Ontario owns 75% of all the roads and 60% of all the bridges. That is more than twice what the City of Ottawa owns.
- ✓ An infrastructure deficit of more than \$4 billion just to maintain the existing infrastructure of which \$3 billion is for roads and bridges alone.

REGIONAL IN SCOPE:

The EOWC submission is regional in nature, as suggested by the Province, but also recognizes the need for greater financial support for local municipal infrastructure needs by proposing to significantly increase the amounts available under the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund to \$2.5 billion from the \$1.00 billion identified by the Province.

The EOWC has provided its guidance and recommendations on a series of regional projects that the Province could consider including:

- ✓ Regional highway integration projects to upgrade and connect 200 kilometers of roads and bridges to 400 series and other provincial highways as well as to key regional assets like ports, airports and intermodal hubs;
- ✓ Developing a network of facilities and services to provide an integrated, efficient system of moving goods from production facilities (particularly in the agricultural, forestry and manufacturing sectors) to markets outside of the region.
- ✓ Developing and embedding Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into the transportation system of Eastern Ontario to improve the safety of the business and travelling communities along with making good use of improved mobile broadband and cellular services;