



AMO Policy Update - AMO responds to the Speech from the Throne and launches health sector survey

Correction: This Policy Update now contains the correct list of points under the Bill 2 section.

AMO Responds to the Speech from the Throne

Yesterday, the Lieutenant Governor delivered the Speech from the Throne, opening the first session of the 44th Parliament of Ontario.

Key commitments relevant to the municipal sector include:

Removing inter-provincial trade barriers to recognize inter-provincial labour force credentials and improve free trade within Canada.

Advancing mega-projects like pipelines, railways, highways, airports, seaports while at the same time committing to “historic” investments in housing-enabling municipal infrastructure

Investing in other transportation infrastructure including a tunnel under Highway 401, expanding subway and GO train service, and resuming the Northlander passenger train.

Introducing new legislation to expedite approvals processes for the Ring of Fire and other areas likely to have multiple critical deposits while building new processing capacity in Northern Ontario.

Further streamlining environmental assessments and evolving Conservation Authorities’ role.

Investing in energy production, transmission and storage, including new nuclear capacity.

Working with municipalities to lower Development Charge fees. Also standardizing and increasing transparency in Development Charge fees, study requirements, and Building Code permit approvals.

Re-introducing encampment legislation and using whatever legal tools might be needed to end encampments.

Connecting all Ontarians to primary care within the next four years and invest billions in hospital and long-term care expansion.

AMO will continue to closely review all proposed legislation and new government announcements for municipal impacts. In particular, AMO will continue work with the provincial government on key municipal interests, including:

New investments in municipal infrastructure and social housing as the best ways to stimulate the economy and save Ontario jobs.

Predictable and sustainable long-term funding sources for municipal infrastructure, including development charges.

Determining how requirements to use Ontario and Canadian construction materials will impact municipal infrastructure projects.

AMO Launches Municipal Health Survey

Building on the successful release of our homelessness report earlier this year, AMO is continuing to expand our focus on evidence-based advocacy with the launch of a survey to understand the challenges municipalities face around access to health.

We know many municipalities are filling gaps in the health care system with significant investments from the property tax base. To better understand this evolving challenge, AMO is conducting a survey of Ontario municipalities about the specific contributions you are making to health services in your communities.

Heads of Council and municipal treasurers have received an email with more information shortly. The success of the project is dependent upon the gaining insights from all municipalities in Ontario. For more information about the project, please contact Daniela Spagnuolo, Policy Advisor at dspagnuolo@amo.on.ca.

Intake Launch for \$175M Health and Safety Water Program

The province is launching [Health and Safety Water Stream](#) applications on April 17. This infrastructure program aims to address aging water infrastructure and protect communities from extreme weather events. AMO and MOI will be hosting webinar for the municipal sector to support strong applications in the coming weeks. This is one of the few provincial infrastructure programs that focuses on asset renewal.

Ontario Introduces Procurement Restriction Policy

The province has released a [Procurement Restriction Policy](#) which applies to provincial ministries, agencies, Ontario Power Generation, the IESO, and broader public sector organizations subject to the BPS Procurement Directive. This policy requires affected organizations to exclude US businesses from procurements unless the procurement cannot be delayed, and a US business is the only viable source for the good/service. Notably, subsidiaries of US businesses are captured by this policy if they have fewer than 250 full-time employees in Canada.

While this policy does not apply to municipalities, it is responsive to AMO's call for the province to provide clarity on the intent and scope of the province's approach to banning US suppliers from government procurement.

Ontario Introduces Bill 2 – *Protect Ontario Through Free Trade Within Canada Act*

On April 16, Premier Ford was joined by Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston and New Brunswick Premier Susan Holt [to announce the introduction of a bill](#) intended to reduce inter-provincial trade barriers, and make it easier for skilled workers from other provinces to work in Ontario. The proposed legislation would:

- Remove Ontario's exceptions under the Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)
- Enable mutual recognition of goods and services regulated by other provinces and territories as acceptable for sale and use within Ontario
- Remove labour mobility barriers to allow skilled workers – including health care workers - certified in other provinces and territories to begin work in Ontario “as of right” while completing a streamlined registration process

The province will also begin consultations to allow American health professionals such as doctors and nurses to work in Ontario under the same “as of right” rules. As part of the announcement, Minister Fedeli announced a new \$50 million [Ontario Together Trade Fund](#) to help Ontario's businesses re-shore critical supply chains, and develop new markets.

AMO will continue to work closely with the province to ensure that Ontario's residents, communities, and industry leave this time of uncertainty even stronger and more economically resilient.

This Policy Update is also available on the [AMO Website](#).