

8.

**CONSENT
AGENDA
ITEMS FOR
INFORMATION
PURPOSES**

March 17, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office
Room 281, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education
5th Floor
438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

via email: premier@ontario.ca
minister.edu@ontario.ca

RE: Request for Provincial Consultation and Transparency Regarding Potential Changes to English Public School Board Governance

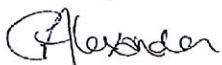
Dear Premier Ford and Minister Calandra,

At their regular scheduled meeting of March 16, 2026, Council of the Municipality of Bluewater received correspondence from Michael Bannerman, Board of Trustees Chair for the Avon Maitland District School Board regarding the potential changes to the English Public School Board Governance and passed the following resolution:

MOVED: Councillor Harris **SECONDED:** Councillor Walden
THAT Council of the Municipality of Bluewater supports the Avon Maitland District School Board in their request to the Government of Ontario to undertake a comprehensive, province-wide consultation process before moving forward with any changes to the governance structure of English public school boards; and

THAT this resolution be circulated to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Education, MPP Lisa Thompson all Ontario municipalities. **CARRIED.**

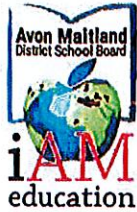
Sincerely,



Chandra Alexander
Acting CAO/Manager of Corporate Services/Clerk

Encl: Letter from Avon Maitland District School Board Trustee Chair

cc: Michael Bannerman, Chair, Board of Trustees
MPP Lisa Thompson
All Ontario Municipalities



Avon Maitland District School Board

Education Centre

62 Chalk Street North, Seaforth, ON N0K 1W0

Telephone: (519) 527-0111 • 1-800-592-5437 (Ontario)

Fax: (519) 527-0222 • www.amdsb.ca

March 2, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier's Office
Room 281, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A5

And

The Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Education, Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Re: Request for Provincial Consultation and Transparency Regarding Potential Changes to English Public School Board Governance

Dear Premier Doug Ford and Minister Paul Calandra,

On behalf of the Trustees of the Avon Maitland District School Board, I am writing to respectfully request that the Government of Ontario undertake a comprehensive, province-wide consultation process before moving forward with any changes to the governance structure of English public school boards.

Recent public statements indicating that the Ministry is considering eliminating the role of democratically elected English public school trustees have generated significant concern among school boards, families, and communities across the province. Trustees serve as an essential democratic link between local communities and the public education system. Any proposal to fundamentally alter or remove this role would represent a major shift in the governance of education in Ontario and warrants careful study, thoughtful analysis, and open dialogue.

Given the magnitude of this potential change, we respectfully ask the government to clearly demonstrate how it has arrived at its current thinking. Specifically, we request that the Ministry make public the research, evidence, data analysis, policy reviews, stakeholder input, and performance evaluations that have informed its consideration of altering or eliminating the role of elected trustees. Transparency regarding the rationale, objectives, and anticipated outcomes of this proposal is essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring informed dialogue.

The Trustees of the Avon Maitland District School Board believe that decisions of this significance must be supported by transparent research and meaningful engagement with stakeholders. We respectfully request that the government initiate a formal consultation process that includes school boards, parents, educators, students, First Nations representatives, and the broader public. Such a process would help ensure that any future governance model is grounded in evidence and reflects the needs and priorities of Ontario's diverse communities.

As a board serving a large and predominantly rural geographic area, we also wish to emphasize the critical importance of the democratically elected trustee role in ensuring that rural perspectives are represented in education decision-making. Trustees provide an essential local voice for communities whose priorities and challenges may differ significantly from those experienced in larger urban centres. Issues such as student transportation, long travel distances, rural school viability, access to programming, and community connectivity are often best understood by locally elected representatives who live and work in those communities. Preserving avenues for rural representation helps ensure that provincial education policies reflect the realities of students and families across all regions of Ontario.

We are also concerned that removing English public school trustees could have unintended consequences for representation and accountability within the system. In many boards, legislated First Nations representation and student trustees play an important role in ensuring diverse voices are heard in decision-making. The loss of elected trustees could impact these mechanisms that currently provide important perspectives at the governance table.

We are aware that the Waterloo District School Board has written to the Ombudsman's Office to request an investigation into the fairness, transparency, and accountability of the process used to implement changes to the school board governance model, and we are in full support of this request.

The Trustees of the Avon Maitland District School Board remain committed to working collaboratively with the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Government of Ontario to support a strong, transparent, and responsive public education system. We believe that transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and meaningful consultation will best serve students, families, and communities across the province.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in any consultation process or discussion regarding the future governance of Ontario's public education system.

Sincerely,



Michael Bannerman
Chair, Board of Trustees
Avon Maitland District School Board

cc: AMDSB Trustees
MPP Lisa Thompson
MPP Matthew Rae
Local Municipalities
Local Media Outlets
Ontario Public School Boards' Association and Member Boards
AMDSB Parent Involvement Committee
AMDSB Special Education Advisory Committee
AMDSB Parent Councils Chairs

8.2

From: FONOM Office/ Bureau de FONOM
Sent: March 21, 2026 5:04 PM
Subject: FONOM Update – Board Meeting in Kirkland Lake

Good morning everyone,

Please find attached a media release summarizing the discussions and outcomes from the recent FONOM Board meeting held in Kirkland Lake on March 20th.

The meeting focused on several key priorities for Northern Ontario, including highway safety and capacity, housing, health care, and ongoing municipal sustainability challenges. We also had the opportunity to hear directly from local leadership in Kirkland Lake, as well as from several guest presenters who provided valuable insights into housing innovation, regional health care, and federal perspectives on infrastructure.

As you will see, the Board continues to advance advocacy efforts on issues that matter most to our communities, including the ongoing push for improvements to Highways 11 and 17 and preparations for the upcoming FONOM Conference in Timmins this May.

We will continue to keep you informed as these files progress and welcome any feedback you may have.

Mac

Best regards,

Talk soon, Mac.

Mac Bain
Executive Director
The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
665 Oak Street East, Unit 306
North Bay, ON, P1B 9E5
Ph. 705-498-9510

For Immediate Release

March 21, 2026

FONOM Board Advances Northern Priorities at Meeting in Kirkland Lake

KIRKLAND LAKE, ON – The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) Board of Directors convened in Kirkland Lake on March 20, 2026, to address key priorities impacting Northern Ontario communities, including highway safety, housing, health care, and municipal sustainability.

The Board was welcomed by **Mayor Stacy Wight**, along with **CAO Alan Smith** and **Clerk Jennifer Montreuil**, who met with FONOM members on Thursday evening to share local best practices, current challenges, and preparations for the upcoming municipal election cycle. The discussion provided valuable, on-the-ground insight into municipal governance in Northern Ontario.

“FONOM greatly appreciates the opportunity to meet directly with local leadership in Kirkland Lake,” said **Dave Plourde, President of FONOM**. “These conversations ensure that our advocacy is grounded in the real experiences of Northern municipalities and reflects the diverse challenges communities are facing.”

Key Discussions and Advocacy Priorities

During the Board meeting, members continued to advance several key advocacy files:

- **Northern Highway Safety and Capacity:** FONOM reaffirmed its strong commitment to the multi-laning of Highways 11 and 17, including twinning and 2+1 models. The Board discussed ongoing efforts to secure provincial and federal commitments and emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum on this nation-building corridor.
- **FONOM Conference 2026 – Timmins:** Preparations are well underway for the upcoming annual conference, taking place May 11–13, 2026, hosted by the City of Timmins. The event will bring together municipal leaders and partners from across the North to discuss shared priorities and opportunities.
- **Continued Advocacy Efforts:** The Board reviewed progress on **Queen’s Park** advocacy, federal engagement, and strategic communications efforts aimed at elevating Northern Ontario priorities on a provincial and national stage.

Presentations Inform Board Discussions

FONOM welcomed three guest presenters who provided valuable insights on critical issues:

- **Patrick Chouinard, Element5**, presented on the use of **mass timber and panelized construction** as an innovative solution to address housing shortages in Northern Ontario, including opportunities tied to the forestry sector and mining development.

- **David McNeil, President and CEO of Health Sciences North**, shared regional health care data, highlighted current and future system pressures, and emphasized the importance of collaboration across Northern hospitals. He also expressed a willingness to work closely with FONOM to support improved health outcomes across the region.
- **MP Gaétan Malette (Kapusksing–Timmins–Mushkegowuk)** discussed federal perspectives on infrastructure and introduced his resolution supporting improvements to Northern highways, reinforcing the need for coordinated federal and provincial action.

Resolutions Reflect Municipal Priorities

The Board considered and supported a wide range of resolutions brought forward by member municipalities, addressing issues such as:

- Sustainable and equitable **policing funding**
- **Highway safety** and reclassification of Highways 11 and 17
- **Health care access**, including concerns related to laboratory services
- **Housing affordability** and homelessness
- **Municipal infrastructure pressures**, including water systems and public health levies
- **Telecommunications and connectivity**
- **Environmental and recycling policies**

“These resolutions reflect the priorities and pressures being felt across Northern Ontario,” added Plourde. “FONOM will continue to amplify these voices and work collaboratively with all levels of government to deliver meaningful solutions.”

Looking Ahead

FONOM will continue its advocacy efforts in the lead-up to the 2026 Annual Conference in Timmins and remains committed to advancing policies that support strong, resilient, and connected Northern communities.

Media Availability

Dave Plourde, President,
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
705-335-1615 | fonom.info@gmail.com

8.3

From: FONOM Office/ Bureau de FONOM

Sent: March 21, 2026 5:04 PM

Subject: FONOM Update – Highway 11/17 Provincial Announcement & Media Release

Good morning everyone,

Following the Province of Ontario's recent announcement regarding increased enforcement and safety measures along the Highway 11/17 corridor, FONOM has issued the attached media release outlining our response.

While we are encouraged to see continued investments aimed at improving safety and reliability, FONOM remains focused on ensuring that longer-term enhancements to this critical corridor continue to move forward.

Highways 11 and 17 are essential to our communities, our economies, and to Canada's broader supply chain. We will continue to advocate for practical, meaningful improvements that reflect their importance to Northern Ontario.

We welcome any feedback you may have and will continue to keep you informed as this file progresses.

Talk soon, Mac.

Mac Bain
Executive Director
The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
665 Oak Street East, Unit 306
North Bay, ON, P1B 9E5
Ph. 705-498-9510

For Immediate Release

March 21, 2026

FONOM Supports Provincial Highway 11/17 Safety Measures While Calling for Continued Progress

Latchford, ON – The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) welcomes the Province of Ontario’s recent announcement outlining new safety and enforcement measures along the Highway 11/17 corridor—an essential transportation link for Northern communities, industries, and Canada’s national supply chains.

The Province’s plan includes increased enforcement, expanded inspection capacity, improved signage, and continued design work for future highway improvements.

FONOM recognizes these actions as important steps that respond to long-standing concerns raised by municipalities across Northern Ontario.

“FONOM is pleased to see continued investments aimed at improving safety and reliability on Highways 11 and 17,” said Dave Plourde, President of FONOM. “These are important and necessary steps for northern communities that rely on this corridor every day.”

A Shared Northern Priority

Municipal leaders across Northern Ontario have consistently identified Highway 11, Highway 17, and the shared corridor as critical infrastructure requiring sustained attention, modern design standards, and ongoing investment.

FONOM continues to work alongside municipal partners and stakeholders to advance practical improvements that enhance safety while supporting economic activity and supply chain reliability.

Progress Made—More Work Ahead

While encouraged by the Province’s actions, FONOM notes that recent incidents on Northern highways underscore the importance of maintaining momentum.

“We continue to see serious collisions and highway closures across the North,” added Plourde. “While the measures announced will help, they also reinforce that more work remains to be done to ensure these highways meet the expectations of the people who use them.”

FONOM continues to advocate for:

- **Enhanced safety measures and enforcement**

- **Expanded passing opportunities**, including 2+1 and four-laning where appropriate
- **Improved rest areas and winter reliability**
- **A coordinated provincial and federal commitment** to long-term corridor improvements

A Corridor of National Importance

Highways 11 and 17 are vital parts of Canada’s Trans-Canada Highway system, supporting economic development, resource industries, and the movement of essential goods across the country.

“As conversations continue, we will remain focused on supporting long-term enhancements that reflect the significance of these highways—not just to Northern Ontario, but to Canada as a whole,” said Plourde.

Looking Ahead

FONOM remains committed to working collaboratively with the Province of Ontario, the federal government, and municipal partners to advance meaningful improvements that improve safety, reliability, and economic connectivity across Northern Ontario.

“We appreciate the Province’s engagement and look forward to continuing this work together,” said Plourde. “Northern municipalities are ready to be part of the solution.”

Media Availability

Dave Plourde, President,
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
705-335-1615 | fonom.info@gmail.com



8.4.

4800 SOUTH SERVICE RD.,
BEAMSVILLE, ON L3J 1L3
905-563-2799

March 25, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL: graham.mcgregor@pc.ola.org

Hon. Graham McGregor
Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
10215 Kennedy Rd. N
Brampton, ON L6Z 0C5

RE: Town of Lincoln Resolution – Request to the Province of Ontario to Extend the Deadline for Notices of Intention to Designate Listed Heritage Properties

Please be advised that Council of the Corporation of the Town of Lincoln at its Committee of the Whole Meeting held on March 23, 2026, passed the following resolution:

Resolution Number: PED-2026-22
Moved by: Councillor Lynn Timmers

WHEREAS amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act under the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 introduced timelines requiring municipalities to issue Notices of Intention to Designate for properties listed on municipal heritage registers as of December 31, 2022, originally requiring action by January 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS the Province subsequently amended the legislation through the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024 to extend the deadline to January 1, 2027 in response to concerns raised by municipalities and heritage stakeholders; and

WHEREAS municipalities require sufficient time and resources to undertake research, documentation, consultation, and evaluation to determine whether listed properties warrant designation under the Ontario Heritage Act; and

WHEREAS the removal of listed properties from municipal heritage registers if the prescribed timelines are not met may place cultural heritage resources at increased risk of demolition or irreversible alteration before municipalities have the opportunity to properly evaluate their cultural heritage value or interest; and

WHEREAS many municipalities, including the Town of Lincoln, do not have dedicated heritage planning staff and must rely on volunteer Heritage Advisory Committee members or external heritage consultants to undertake property evaluations, which can result in additional financial and administrative pressures; and

WHEREAS municipalities across Ontario are facing significant workloads associated with evaluating listed properties; and

WHEREAS the Town of Lincoln Heritage Advisory Committee, at its meeting of March 12, 2026, recommended that Council advocate to the Province of Ontario for a further extension to the current deadline;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Council of the Town of Lincoln endorse the recommendation of its Heritage Advisory Committee and respectfully request that the Province of Ontario further amend the Ontario Heritage Act to extend the January 1, 2027 deadline for issuing Notices of Intention to Designate for properties listed on municipal heritage registers as of December 31, 2022; and
2. The Province consider extending the deadline to January 1, 2030, or another reasonable timeframe that would provide municipalities with adequate time to complete heritage evaluations and make informed designation decisions; and
3. This resolution be circulated to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the local Member of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Municipal Heritage Committee Association, and all Ontario municipalities for their information and consideration.

CARRIED

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Regards,



Julie Kirkelos
Town Clerk

jkirkelos@lincoln.ca

JK/dp

c.c. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Niagara West Member of Provincial Parliament
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Community Heritage Ontario
All Ontario Municipalities
Manager of Planning and Development
Chair of the Heritage Advisory Committee



Box 608, Little Current, POP 1K0
705-368-3500

Please see below a Resolution passed by the Council of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands.

If your Council supports this motion please share with the appropriate Ministries and Organizations.

Thank You

Resolution No. 75-03-2026

Moved by: B. Wood

Seconded by: P. Aelick

Whereas the Town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands, like many municipalities, utilizes chip-and-tar surface treatment on a significant portion of its road network; and

Whereas the Town has observed a substantial decrease in the length of time these treated roads remain in acceptable condition; and

Whereas the quality and durability of the oil used in the surface treatment appears to be a contributing factor; and

Whereas the Ministry of the Environment amended its regulations several years ago, permitting only lighter-grade oils for environmental considerations; and

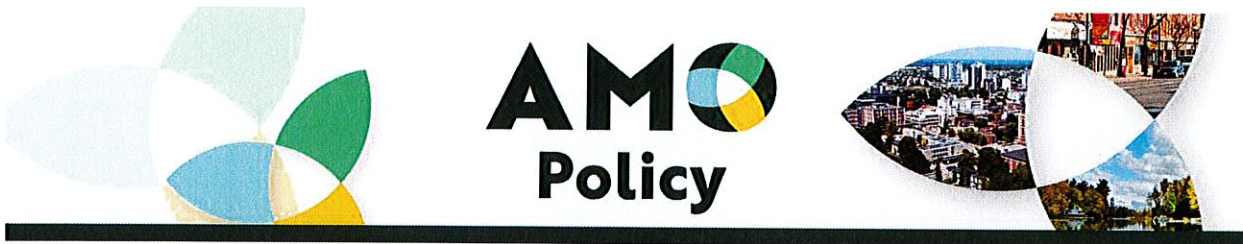
Whereas the reduced durability of the lighter-grade product has resulted in more frequent resurfacing cycles and has consequently led to increasing maintenance costs;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands respectfully requests that the Ministry of the Environment reconsider its decision regarding the lighter grade of oil, taking into account the increased number of applications required, as well as the associated additional time, energy, and financial burden placed on municipalities or develops a better alternative oil.

And Further that this motion be forwarded to the Ministry of Environment, AMO, Good Roads, FONOM, MPP Bill Rosenberg, and all other municipalities.

Carried

From: AMO Policy <policy@amo.on.ca>
Sent: March 26, 2026 9:36 PM
To: CAO <CAO@calvintownship.ca>
Subject: AMO Policy Update – Provincial Budget Spending Priorities and Build Canada Homes Operational Funding



AMO Policy Update – Provincial Budget Spending Priorities and Build Canada Homes Operational Funding

Top Insights

- Provincial budget provides new funding for supportive housing, core and recreational infrastructure, and extends HST exemption for all new homes.
- AMO is calling on the provincial government to work with the federal government to commit operating funding to fully leverage federal Build Capital Homes capital investments in supportive and transitional housing.

Provincial Budget Stays The Course and Includes Millions in Municipal Infrastructure Funding

Ontario's Fiscal and Economic Outlook

Ontario's Minister of Finance introduced the 2026 Ontario Budget, [A Plan to Protect Ontario](#). The economic backdrop of this year's budget is largely unchanged from last year. Heightened trade and geopolitical tension, along with slower economic and population growth will contribute to a softer labour market in 2026. Economic growth is projected to be on par with last year, with real GDP forecasted to reach 1.1%. Inflation continues to trend down from its COVID peak and is now within the Bank of Canada's target of 2%. The deficit is projected to increase by \$1.5 billion to \$13.8 billion as part of the province's

plan to create a fiscal buffer to absorb potential softening of the economy. As a result of these spending decisions, a balanced budget isn't anticipated until 2028.

\$244 Billion in Program Spending and Tax Holiday for New Housing

Against this economic backdrop, the province is staying the course in its spending priorities, which totals \$244 billion (an increase of \$10 billion from last year). Many spending priorities are a continuation of commitments made in the [Fall Economic Statement](#). The focus now is on getting funding out the door and into the hands of families, businesses, and municipalities. To address cost-of-living and housing affordability concerns, which continues to be top of mind for Ontarians, the province is holding the line on taxes and program spending cuts. The province's proposal to exempt all new housing from the HST, for a one-year period, is action on its commitment to make housing more affordable.

The proposal comes into effect on April 1st and will remain in place for one year. The 8% tax vacation builds upon the [government's October 2025 proposal](#) to exempt or reduce the provincial portion of the HST for first time homebuyers that are purchasing homes valued at \$1.5 million or less. Wednesday's proposal extends to all new homes valued up to \$1.85 million and now includes existing homeowners.

The federal government is also proposing to cost-share in this tax holiday by covering the federal 5% portion of the HST. The province estimates this \$2.2 billion in tax relief could create an additional 8,000 housing units, support up to 21,000 jobs and grow Ontario's GDP by \$2.7 billion.

Budget Supports Some of AMO's Priorities

In our pre-budget submission, [Partnering to Protect Ontario's Communities](#), AMO called on the province to continue prioritizing housing-enabling infrastructure spending, paying its share of health and social services that are provincial responsibilities, and taking concrete actions to end chronic homelessness.

Today's budget includes some important funding for our sector. This is a step in the right direction for improving municipal fiscal health. Supportive housing is getting a \$53 million injection over 3 years. Funding for existing programs for core, recreation, and transit infrastructure is increasing by \$360 million.

While \$2.3 billion in net new spending is going towards hospitals, home and community care, and long-term care, there are no corresponding changes to local share requirements for hospital development.

New Spending Breakdowns By Areas

Infrastructure:

- \$15 million in annual funding for the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund, to enable investments in core assets such as roads and bridges.
- A \$15 million top-up over three years for the Ontario Transit Investment Fund.
- A \$300 million top-up over six years for the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund to repair, upgrade or build new sports and recreation facilities.

Health and Social Services:

- Spending growth on hospitals (\$1.1 billion), home and community care (\$1.1 billion over three years), and long-term care (\$139.4 million) but no changes to local share requirements for hospital development.
- \$53 million over 3 years for supportive housing. While this is a good start, AMO has advocated for the province to provide matching operational investments to fully leverage federal capital funding for supportive and transitional housing through Build Canada Homes.

Emergency and Protection Services:

While the budget did not include any significant announcements that would help municipalities manage the rapidly growing costs of emergency services, it did include some targeted investments:

- Fire Protection Grant – Maintaining the \$20 million in enhanced funding for the 2026-27 grant cycle. The funding is aimed at supporting municipal fire departments to access the infrastructure and protective equipment they need to respond to local needs.
- Basic Constable Training – Extending the removal of tuition fees for the program at the Ontario Police College for an additional three years to

support police services in their efforts to recruit and train more police officers.

Unlocking Build Canada Homes Funding for Transitional and Supportive Housing

AMO and municipal partners have [called](#) on the province to provide the operational funding needed to unlock federal capital from Build Canada Homes.

The federal government has earmarked \$1 billion nation-wide to create new supportive and transitional housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. If Ontario received its per capita share, this could result in more than 1,200 new units in Ontario. Realizing this opportunity requires a provincial commitment of \$62 million in annual operating investment. Because Build Canada Homes requires operating funding guarantees at the application stage, a firm provincial commitment is the essential 'key' to unlocking this federal capital.

An online version of this Policy Update is also available on the [AMO Website](#).

*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.

Association of Municipalities of Ontario

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155 University Ave Suite 800 | Toronto, ON M5H 3B7 CA

For Immediate Release

March 26, 2026

FONOM Welcomes Key Northern Investments in Ontario Budget and NORDS Extension

NORTHERN ONTARIO – The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) acknowledges the Province of Ontario’s 2026 Budget and welcomes several measures that will support communities, economic growth, and quality of life across Northern Ontario.

FONOM is encouraged to see the continued commitment to the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support (NORDS) program, which has been extended for an additional three years at \$15 million annually.

FONOM has consistently advocated for the continuation of NORDS, recognizing its importance in supporting municipalities experiencing growth and pressures related to resource development.

“FONOM appreciates the Province’s decision to extend the NORDS program for an additional three years,” said **Dave Plourde, President of FONOM**. “This program provides important support to Northern municipalities, helping to address infrastructure pressures and enabling communities to plan for growth and respond to development opportunities.”

“The ability to stack funding over multiple years remains a key strength of the program,” added Plourde. “It allows municipalities to move forward with larger infrastructure projects and provides greater certainty for municipal financial planning.”

FONOM will continue to advocate for the program to be made permanent and to expand eligibility to include agriculture alongside mining and forestry as recognized sectors within NORDS.

Supporting Northern Communities and Economic Growth

FONOM also highlighted several additional budget measures that will have positive impacts across Northern Ontario:

- A historic reduction in the small business corporate income tax rate from 3.2 per cent to 2.2 per cent, supporting local businesses and economic activity
- An additional \$300 million over six years through the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund, supporting youth development and community infrastructure
- Continued investment through the \$20 million Fire Protection Grant for 2026–2027, supporting forest fire preparedness and response in Northern Ontario
- \$1.1 billion in additional funding for home and community care services, helping seniors remain in their communities
- \$284 million over four years to support small, rural, and Northern post-secondary institutions, addressing higher costs and French-language service needs

“These investments reflect an understanding of the unique needs of Northern Ontario communities,” said **Maggie Horsfield, First Vice-President of FONOM**. “From supporting local businesses and youth development to strengthening health care and education, these measures will help build stronger and more resilient communities across the North.”

Supporting Growth and Housing Affordability

FONOM also welcomes the Province’s continued efforts to improve housing affordability, including measures to remove the provincial portion of the HST on eligible new homes. These changes are expected to reduce costs for families and help stimulate new housing development across Ontario.

“These housing measures are positive and will help make new home construction more attainable,” added **Dave Plourde, President of FONOM**. “This is particularly important in Northern Ontario, where communities are working to attract and retain residents and support workforce growth.”

Continued Advocacy on Northern Highways

FONOM reiterated that improving the safety and capacity of Highways 11 and 17 remains a top priority.

“Highways 11 and 17 are critical to our communities, our economy, and Canada’s supply chains,” said **Plourde**. “We will continue to work with both the Province and the federal government to advance long-term solutions that improve safety, reliability, and capacity along this corridor.”

FONOM noted that continued progress will require coordinated action between both levels of government and reaffirmed its commitment to advancing this issue as a national priority.

Looking Ahead

FONOM remains committed to working collaboratively with all levels of government to support economic development, improve infrastructure, and strengthen Northern communities.

“Today’s budget includes several positive steps for Northern Ontario,” said **Plourde**. “We look forward to continuing to work with the Province and federal partners to build on this momentum and ensure our communities have the tools they need to grow and succeed.”

Media Availability

Dave Plourde, President,
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
705-335-1615 | fonom.info@gmail.com



88
MUNICIPAL FINANCE
OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
OF ONTARIO

PROVINCIAL ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE 2026: A PLAN TO PROTECT ONTARIO

Date: March 26, 2026

1. ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Click here for the 2026 [Provincial Economic and Fiscal Update](#), [Highlights](#), and [News Release](#).

2. PROVINCIAL ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE 2026 PRIORITIES

The economic and fiscal update stresses a number of themes:

- Protecting workers and businesses from tariffs and economic uncertainty
- Building a more competitive, resilient, and self-reliant economy
- Building Ontario
- Keeping costs down
- Protecting communities, borders, and public safety
- Protecting Ontario's public services

3. MUNICIPAL HIGHLIGHTS

The economic and fiscal update includes summaries of prior commitments as well as some new announcements.

HOUSING

- Enhance the HST New Housing Rebate and New Residential Rental Property Rebate for one year, which would remove the full 8% provincial portion of the HST for eligible buyers of new homes valued up to \$1M, a maximum rebate of \$80K for homes valued between \$1M and \$1.5M, and a reduced rate for homes valued above \$1.5M (p. 117).

INFRASTRUCTURE

- A new ongoing \$15M annual investment to extend the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund, which will help Northern municipalities invest in core assets such as roads and bridges, access new economic opportunities through resource development and help mitigate the impacts of resource development on local infrastructure (p. 72).
- As previously announced, the Province has increased funding to the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program – Health and Safety Water Stream by \$700M for a total of \$875M (p. 102).
- An additional \$300M over six years for the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund, bringing the total program funding to \$500M. The fund supports the repair, upgrade or construction of new sport and recreation facilities (p. 103).

TRANSIT

- As previously announced, the Province will engage with rideshare operators, the taxi sector, and municipalities to explore the standardization of rideshare guidelines across the province, starting with a proposed pilot rideshare framework along the Northlander corridor (p. 99).
- An additional \$15M over three years in the Ontario Transit Investment Fund, doubling the total program funding to \$30M over three years to support the startup and growth of transit services in rural communities (p. 99).
- As previously announced, the Province will introduce legislation that will see the province provide compensation to take ownership of the City of Toronto's lands around the Billy Bishop Airport (p. 100).
- Extension of the One Fare program for an additional two years (p. 120).

PROPERTY TAX AND ASSESSMENT

- Streamline municipal Education Property Tax (EPT) remittances so that beginning in 2028 municipalities would remit EPTs directly to the Province who will distribute payments to school boards, which will effectively reduce the number of transactions municipalities and school boards have to manage (p. 122).

OTHER

- As previously announced, the Province will amend Ontario's conservation authority system to the new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency. Dedicated funding has been approved to support the transition (p. 104).
- Proposed changes to the *Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025* to allow special constables working on public transit to direct individuals using drugs to stop or leave the public space or face charges (p. 113).
- The Fire Protection Grant will maintain its \$20M funding for the 2026/27 grant cycle to help municipal fire departments expand cancer prevention initiatives, improve responses to lithium-ion battery-related incidents and support critical upgrades (p. 114).
- Proposed amendments to remove the requirement for retail businesses to close on Family Day and Victoria Day, while maintaining the authority of municipalities to set their own retail closure by-laws. However, municipalities would not have the authority to pass or maintain local by-laws requiring retail business establishment closures on these two holidays (p. 140).

4. OTHER INITIATIVES

HEALTHCARE

- As previously announced, provincial funding for Consumption and Treatment Services is ending for active drug injection sites across the province, initiating a 90-day wind-down period (p. 113).
- \$325M in additional investment to further expand primary care bringing the total four-year investment to \$3.4B (p.123).
- \$1.1B in additional hospital funding for 2026/27, which includes a 4% increase in base and targeted hospital funding (p.125).
- \$1.1B in additional funding over three years to support patients with more home and community care services (p. 125).
- \$53M over three years to expand supportive housing initiatives for vulnerable populations and enhance access to mental health services and housing supports (p. 126).
- \$124.2M over three years for clinical training and education funding to increase college and university training capacity for nurses (p. 127).

TAXATION

- The Province will cut the small business CIT rate from 3.2% to 2.2%, effective July 1, 2026 (p. 54).
- The Province intends to allow businesses to accelerate the income tax deduction for the cost of depreciable assets, in parallel with changes announced by the federal government:
 - Immediate 100% writeoffs for manufacturing and processing (M&P) machinery and equipment, M&P buildings, greenhouse buildings, certain clean technology assets and zero-emission vehicles;
 - Immediate 100% writeoffs for productivity-enhancing assets;
 - Immediate 100% writeoffs for capital expenditures for R&D;
 - Accelerated depreciation for liquefied natural gas equipment and related buildings;
 - Accelerated depreciation from 4% to 10% for purpose-built rental housing; and
 - Accelerated first-year deductions of up to three times the regular amount for most other depreciable assets.
 - These measures would take effect following the passage of federal legislation for corresponding measures (p. 55).

CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION

- \$95M to maintain access to tools, resources and support for students in areas of math, early childhood reading, online course options and mental health services (p.131).
- \$5M to develop learning resources that reflect the French language and Francophone culture (p. 131).
- \$20M to launch the Liam Riazati Memorial Fund to help keep children safe in childcare by supporting community-based licensed facilities to install concrete barriers that protect these centres and their outdoor play spaces (p. 132).
- Establishing a new long-term funding model that will bring an additional \$6.4B into the sector over four years and raise annual operating funding to \$7B (p. 135).
- \$6M over three years to provide scholarships for Ontario postsecondary students through the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program (p. 135).

LONG-TERM CARE

- \$139.4M in additional funding to support high-quality resident-centered and sustainable long-term care, which includes:
 - \$95.3M starting in 2026/27 to maintain existing services, and
 - \$44.1M starting in 2026/27 to maintain average per resident levels of direct care and from nurses and personal support workers, and care from allied health professionals (p. 129).

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

- \$24M over three years to renew the Life Science Scale Up Fund, which supports Ontario's SMEs in the human health sciences sector to commercialize market-ready productors, scale operations, strengthen competitiveness, and prepare for procurement opportunities (p. 49).
- In summer 2026, the Province will launch a coordinated plan that will support the scale-up of Ontario-based AI firms, expanding access to sovereign compute and data resources and ensure the province has the digital and grid-ready energy infrastructure required.
 - The strategy will aim to increase adoption and deployment across communities and businesses in key sectors, with a focus on Ontario-made technology and talent.
 - The government will further advance the safe and responsible use of AI by establishing clear governance frameworks and enhancing AI literacy (p. 66).
- An additional \$107M over three years to renew the Critical Technology Initiatives program to target projects that accelerate the development, commercialization and adoption of critical technologies (p. 67).
- An additional \$117.1M over three years through the Ontario Research Fund-Research Infrastructure, targeted to improving cutting-edge research facilities for critical projects across priority sectors (p. 67).
- \$26M over three years to maintain existing and planned levels of support for Ontario's research institutes (p. 68).
- \$50M over three years into Agricultural Research and Innovation Ontario, which includes \$41M in previously announced investments, to support the province's network of strategic agri-food research infrastructure (p. 94).

MINING AND MINERALS

- As previously announced, the Province will overhaul and modernize Ontario's Critical Minerals Strategy to the *Fortifying Ontario's Economy: A Plan to Accelerate Responsible Resource Development*. The new strategy also includes expanding the critical minerals list to add high-purity iron and aluminum (p. 43).
- As previously announced, the Province has released a plan to accelerate construction of the all-season roads to the Ring of Fire, with construction planned to start in June 2026 and roads beginning to open in November 2030 (p. 45).
- An additional \$30M over the next three years for the Ontario Junor Exploration Program to support early-stage mineral exploration (p. 48).

SMALL BUSINESSES

- \$9.4M over three years to renew grants for the Summer Company and Starter Company Plus programs delivered through the Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBECs) network, as well as \$3M over three years to support SBECs expansion (p. 76).
- \$2M annually over three years in Futurpreneur, which helps entrepreneurs aged 18-39 launch and grow their businesses by providing mentorship, in-person programming, and up to \$75,000 in loan capital (p. 77).

- \$5M in the Digitalization Competence Centre to help small businesses modernize and grow through the adoption of digital technologies (p. 77).
- \$750,000 over three years to support Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario (p. 77).

PENSIONS

- The Province is proposing legislation to enable certain pension plans – defined contribution plans or plans with voluntary contributions – to offer a new option for retirees called a Variable Life Benefit (VLB), an alternative to a locked-in account or an annuity that would provide a monthly benefit for life. Enabling regulations would be required before a pension plan could offer VLB in Ontario, with a January 1, 2027, target date for when eligible plans could offer VLBs (pp. 81-82).
- Proposed changes to increase flexibility for pension funds transferred to a locked-in account offered by financial institutions.
 - Account holders who have reached early retirement age under the terms of their pension plan would be able to fully unlock their funds, as would account holders under age 55 whose total locked-in balances are below a prescribed amount (\$29,840 in 2026) that would be indexed annually (p. 82).
- Relieve pension plan administrators of costs related to unlocatable plan members aged 100 and above (p. 82).
- Proposed changes to the Pension Benefits Guaranteed Fund (PBGF) to double the guarantee limit from \$1500 to \$3000 per month for all eligible plan beneficiaries, at no increased cost to employers or the government. The changes would be effective on or after March 26, 2026 (p. 81).

POLICING AND CRIME PREVENTION

- An additional \$8.3M for the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant program to support police services in ensuring that high-risk, repeat and violent offenders comply with bail conditions (p. 107).
- The Province is engaging law enforcement, industry, public health and First Nations partners to explore additional opportunities to address contraband tobacco and its links to organized crime, including examining options to potentially enhance police authorities under the *Tobacco Tax Act* (p. 112).
- An additional \$11M to support the Provincial Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation on the Internet Grant (p. 114).
- \$32.5M for Operation Deterrence 2.0 to involve and further integrate local police services in border protection and security:
 - Establish both the Border Security Grant to enable municipal and First Nations police services to acquire specialized assets, such as drones, marine vessels and surveillance technologies; and
 - Establish the Border Integrity Investigation Fund to provide targeted operational

funding to police services to address border-related enforcement gaps, with an emphasis on unmonitored general aviation fields and other vulnerable entry points (p. 106).

OTHER

- \$21M in additional annual operating funding support for the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Ontario Museum (p. 75).
- Establish a \$4B Protect Ontario Account Investment Fund which will partner with a private investment manager to identify and execute on opportunities that will advance Ontario's long-term economic and strategic priorities (p. 25).
- As previously announced, the Province will announce new consumer protection measures to cap live event tickets to be resold for more than their original total cost, plus permitted fees and charges on resale (p. 121).
- \$186M in new funding for the Ontario Autism Program to bring the 2026/27 program investment total to \$965M (p. 136).
- \$407M in additional funding over three years to help community organizations manage rising operations costs (p. 137).
- \$5.5M in 2026/27 for the Women's Economic Leadership and Legacy (WELL) fund to create more opportunities for women to gain skills, grow their careers and take on leadership roles as well as supporting Indigenous women and help survivors of human trafficking (p. 137).
- Increasing the Ontario Trillium Benefit Lump-Sum Payment threshold from \$360 to \$500 beginning with the 2026/27 year, which would increase the number of recipients who receive their full benefit up front (p. 227).

5. PROVINCIAL ECONOMY

OVERVIEW

- Ontario's economy continued to grow in 2025 as the province navigated the changing trade landscape (p.151).
- The provincial economy faces a number of challenges including: slower growth in home resales in 2025 and 2026, a moderating but still elevated interest rate environment, and ongoing geopolitical and trade-related uncertainty (p.150, p.160).
- Under the government's planned projection, Ontario is budgeted to return to a surplus position of \$0.6B in 2028/29 (p.173).

INFLATION (P. 162)

- Inflation is expected to reach 2.1% in 2026.

%	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
CPI inflation	2.4	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0

INTEREST RATES (PP. 160-161)

- The Bank of Canada has indicated that heightened geopolitical uncertainty, and the upcoming review of the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), pose significant risks to the economic outlook.
- Private-sector forecasters expect the monetary policy easing cycle to be nearing its end.
- The Government of Canada three-month treasury bill rate was 2.6% in 2025 and is projected to decline to 2.3% in 2026. The rate is then expected to rise to 2.6% in 2027, ease to 2.5% in 2028 and return to 2.6% in 2029.
- The Government of Canada 10-year bond rate is projected to slightly increase from 3.2% in 2025 to 3.3% in 2026, then rise further to 3.5% in 2027, and remain stable through 2028 and 2029.

%	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
3 Mo. Treasury Bill rate	4.3	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.6
10 Yr. Canada Bond rate	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.5

GDP (P. 162)

- Ontario's real GDP rose by 1.2% in 2025 and is projected to rise by 1.0% in 2026, 1.7% in 2027, 1.8% in 2028 and 2.0% in 2029.
- Nominal GDP grew by 4.2% in 2025 and is projected to rise by 3.2% in 2026, 3.9% in 2027, 3.7% in 2028 and 3.9% in 2029.
- Private-sector forecasters are projecting that Ontario's real GDP will grow by 1.1% 2026, 1.8% in 2027, 1.9% in 2028 and 2.1% in 2029 (p.154).

%	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Real GDP	1.6	1.2	1.0	1.7	1.8	2.0
Nominal GDP	5.1	4.2	3.2	3.9	3.7	3.9

EMPLOYMENT (PP.162-163)

- Slower economic and population growth due to changes in federal immigration policy, along with ongoing trade conflicts and related uncertainty affecting investment and hiring, are projected to contribute to a softer labour market in 2026.

- As these effects are projected to ease, employment growth is projected to rise to 0.7% in 2027, 0.8% in 2028 and 1.1% in 2029.

%	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Employment Growth	1.7	1.0	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.1

HOUSEHOLD INCOME (P.162)

- Compensation of employees in Ontario is projected to moderate from 4.0% growth in 2025 to 3.2% in 2026, before gradually strengthening to 3.8% by 2029.
- Nominal household consumption growth is projected to slow from 4.0% in 2025 to 3.3% in 2026, before gradually strengthening to 3.7% by 2029.

CANADIAN DOLLAR (P. 161)

- The Canadian dollar was 71.6 cents US in 2025 and is expected to increase to 73.2 cents US in 2026, and average 76.1 cents US from 2027 to 2029.

6. PROVINCIAL FINANCES

DEBT (P. 174)

- The net debt-to-GDP ratio in 2025/26 was 36.8%.
- Net debt-to-GDP is projected to be 37.7% in 2026/27, before increasing to 38.5% by 2027/28.

DEFICIT (P. 174)

- Ontario is projecting a \$12.3B deficit in 2025/26. Over the medium-term, the government is projecting deficits of \$13.8B in 2026/27.

Medium-Term Fiscal Plan and Outlook (\$B)

Tables 3.1 (Adapted)
(p. 174)

	Actual Outlook 2024/25	Interim Outlook 2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	% change 2026- 2029
Revenue	226.2	226.6	231.9	243.4	254.1	9.6%
Expense						
Programs	212.1	222.4	227.0	229.0	231.3	1.9%
Interest on Debt	15.1	16.0	17.2	18.6	19.7	14.5%
Total Expense	227.3	238.4	244.2	247.5	251.1	2.8%
Reserve	-	0.5	1.5	2.0	2.5	66.7%
Surplus/(Deficit)	-1.1	-12.3	-13.8	-6.1	-0.6	95.6%
Net Debt (as % of GDP)	35.7	36.8	37.7	38.5	38.2	1.3%
Accumulated Deficit (as % of GDP)	20.6	20.8	21.2	na	na	na

Percentage column added

Accumulated Deficit row taken from pp. 198-199

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8.9

Sent Via Email

March 27, 2026

**The Regional
Municipality of
Durham**

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**Alexander Harras
M.P.A.
Director of
Legislative Services
& Regional Clerk**

The Honorable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON, M7A 1A1.

Dear Premier Ford:

RE: Correspondence from Mike Bradley, Mayor, City of Sarnia to The Premier of Ontario regarding Requesting the Province to consider giving municipal councils more authority to adjust Police Service Budget Proposals to reduce Municipal Financial Vulnerability, Our File: A00

Council of the Region of Durham, at its meeting held on March 25, 2026, adopted the following resolution:

That Council Correspondence CC 08 from Mike Bradley, Mayor, City of Sarnia to The Premier of Ontario regarding requesting the province to consider giving municipal councils more authority to adjust police service budget proposals to reduce municipal financial vulnerability be received for information and endorsed.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Correspondence for your information.

Alexander Harras

Alexander Harras, M.P.A.
Director of Legislative Services & Regional Clerk
AH/nb

c: Hon. Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
Hon. R. Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. P. Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
Heads of Council for Municipalities across Ontario
B. Bailey, MPP Sarnia-Lambton
E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
N. Pincombe, Commissioner of Finance
A. Burgess, Director, Communication and Engagement

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact Legislative Services at clerks@durham.ca or at 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

February 19, 2026

Re: Mayoral Authority and Municipal Police Budget Sustainability

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing to express concern regarding the province's current position that limits a mayor and council's ability to meaningfully reduce or amend police service budget proposals once they have advanced through local police governance structures.

Municipal leaders across Ontario are operating within an increasingly constrained fiscal environment. Escalating administrative costs, combined with sustained growth in police budgets, are placing significant pressure on municipal finances. Without the tools to influence or moderate these expenditures, municipalities are left financially vulnerable, undermining long-term stability and responsible budget planning.

Mayors and members of council are accountable to residents for overall municipal fiscal health. However, under the province's current interpretation, they lack sufficient authority to address one of the fastest-growing areas of local spending. This creates a clear imbalance in accountability, where elected leadership bears responsibility for budget outcomes without the ability to manage risk, respond to local conditions, or ensure alignment with broader municipal priorities.

You have recently noted that education costs have become unsustainable, and the Minister of Finance has expressed similar concerns regarding health care expenditures. Policing costs present the same challenge, with the added constraint that mayors are now unable to intervene. This limits a municipality's capacity to balance competing service demands, invest in preventative and social supports, and respond flexibly to emerging community priorities, including housing. Over time, this approach risks crowding out essential services and capital projects while placing increased pressure on taxpayers.

In Sarnia, veto authority was used for the first time, and only with respect to capital funding. The operational police budget, which has increased by 40% over the past four years, was left untouched. The mayoral veto removed a proposed \$5 million capital item that would have committed the municipality to a long-term financial obligation estimated to reach \$120 million. Allowing such exposure without intervention would have been fiscally irresponsible and inconsistent with the principles of responsible municipal governance. The existing building was reported to be suitable for upgrades and maintenance at a cost of approximately \$5 million; however, the Sarnia Police Board and Chief have insisted that the Cadillac of all buildings is required. Proceeding with this option would saddle the taxpayers with substantial long-term debt and sustained tax increases for decades to come.


After 21 years of carrying municipal debt, the City of Sarnia has just recently achieved the distinction of being one of the few debt-free cities in Ontario. Under the current framework, renewed debt will become unavoidable, with financial impacts extending to future generations.

While this issue may not yet have arisen in every municipality responsible for funding and overseeing its own police service, the experience in Sarnia illustrates a challenge that other mayors may reasonably face in future budget years. As policing and capital costs continue to escalate, circumstances will emerge where elected municipal leaders are required to intervene to protect long-term fiscal sustainability. This is a critical issue that warrants careful reconsideration. I have therefore copied Heads of Council for municipalities across Ontario to unite in encouraging an approach that better aligns accountability with decision-making and supports more sustainable municipal governance across Ontario.

Given the practical implications for municipal budget deliberations and fiscal planning, I believe this matter should be addressed in advance of the next municipal council taking office. I respectfully urge the province to engage with municipalities on this issue and to explore legislative or policy adjustments that would provide local elected leaders with the tools necessary to manage fiscal pressures responsibly, transparently, and in the best interests of their communities.

I appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to the province's consideration of next steps.

Sincerely,



Mike Bradley
Mayor, City of Sarnia

Cc: The Honourable Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
Heads of council for municipalities across Ontario
Bob Bailey, MPP for Sarnia-Lambton
Sarnia City Council

Encl.: [CBC News February 18, 2026 - Province tells Ontario mayors they can't use 'strong powers' on police budgets | CBC News](#)

[CTV News February 18, 2026 - Sarnia Police Board weighing options in efforts to build new headquarters](#)


London

Province tells Ontario mayors they can't use 'strong powers' on police budgets

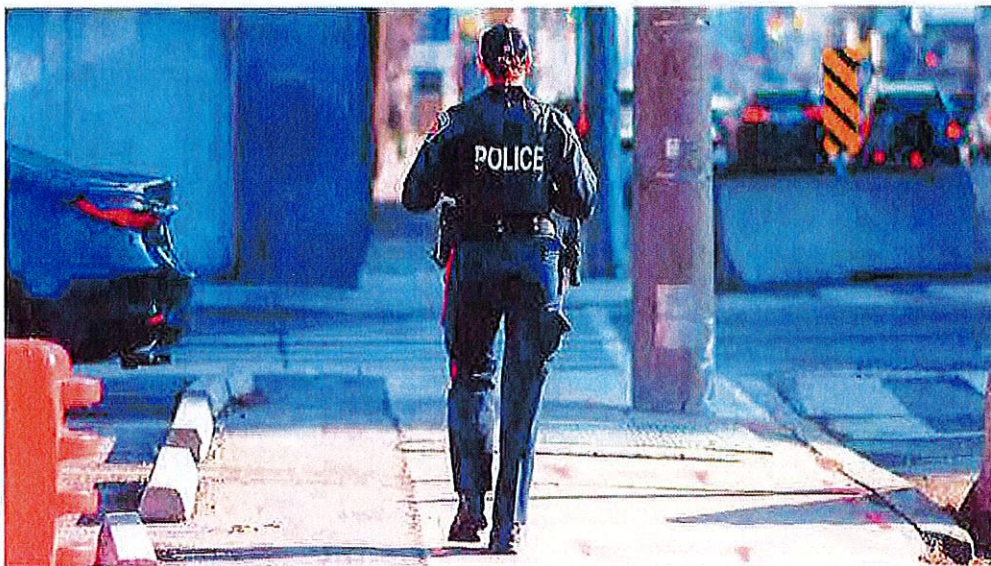
Finance expert says province needs to review fiscal relationship with municipalities to keep up with costs

Isha Bhargava · CBC News · Posted: Feb 18, 2026 5:00 AM EST | Last Updated: February 18



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A file photo of a police officer walking in downtown Hamilton, Ont. (Bobby Hristova/CBC)

The Ontario government is reminding municipal leaders that they cannot use their provincially granted "strong mayor powers" to challenge or limit police budgets.

This comes two months after Sarnia's mayor vetoed his city's police budget request of \$5 million for a new police headquarters, in what's led to an ongoing battle over the city's police funding.

In a letter sent to mayors and police board chairs in January, the province reiterated that municipalities are required to provide police boards with "sufficient funding" to comply with the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA).

"The Head of Council's strong mayor budget powers do not include the power to limit police service board budget increases or veto estimates submitted by police service boards," Solicitor General Michael Kerzner and Municipal Affairs Minister Rob Flack wrote in their Jan. 12 letter.

"Although municipalities are not required to adopt the board's estimates as submitted, they cannot approve or reject specific line items within the estimates."

- **Less than half of 'strong mayors' were using powers before Ontario expanded system: reports**

Municipal budgets include estimates of amounts required during the year and includes various boards, the letter explains. A police service board must submit their operating and capital costs to municipalities, which then establish the service's overall budget.

Premier Doug Ford's government created the strong mayor system in 2022 and it now applies to 216 mayors. The powers give the leaders control over appointments, the ability to hire and fire most city staff, vetoes over some council votes and the ability to pass some bylaws with support of only a third of council support.

'We can't chop public safety' says Premier

When asked by CBC about the issue of strong mayor powers relating to police budgets on Tuesday, Ford said investments in public safety need to be a top priority.

"We can't chop safety and protecting communities," Ford told reporters. "We need to make sure our priority is keeping our community safe because right now people don't feel safe. So we have to continue investing in our police, give them the tools they need to keep our community safe."

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley disagrees arguing the legislation prevents municipalities from balancing the needs of police and taxpayers. He said Sarnia police has received a 45 per cent operational increase over the last four years, and he only vetoed one capital spending item which the city cannot afford this year.



Sarnia's Mayor Mike Bradley says police budget increases in recent years have led to spending cuts in other city projects. (Facebook)

"The province has just wiped out our ability to control spending in our own communities. In most cases [police budgets] run from 30 to 40 per cent of the

municipal budget, so what the Ford government is saying is that councils and mayors cannot touch it," he said.

"So the message is, police boards who are unaccountable, can now just set the budget and the taxpayers have to pay. That's a pretty shocking statement from Queens Park."

Bradley argues he has supported increasing police budgets for frontline services, which have been substantial over the years and have led the city to cut back on spending for other projects.

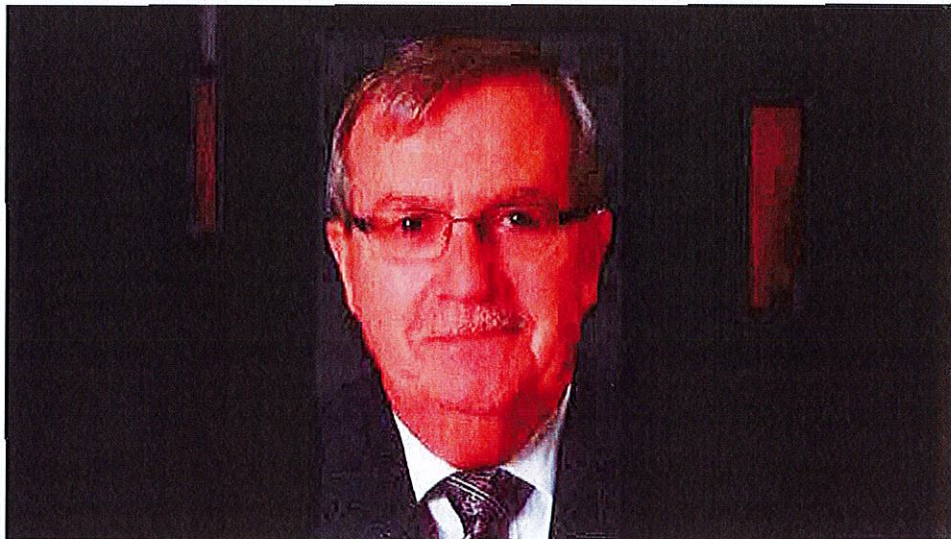
In its letter, the province clarifies that there are dispute resolution mechanisms under the CPSA, namely arbitration, when a council disagrees with a police board's budget request.

Municipalities limited in challenging police budgets

However, proving a case against the police can be difficult for municipal councils who don't often have the capacity or technical knowledge to offer a challenge, said Nigel Bellchamber, a London, Ont., consultant specializing in municipal finances.

"It's a high bar that the municipality has to meet in order to succeed in an arbitration," he said, noting that municipalities are tasked with funding a variety of services whose costs outpace inflation.

"As a result, there are some significant challenges and tough decisions being made as to prioritizing capital expenditures in municipal budgets. So councils and municipal staff, whether you're in a strong mayor situation or not, they're all caught in a very difficult situation."



Nigel Bellchamber is a consultant in London, Ont., who specializes in municipal finances (Nigel Bellchamber/LinkedIn)

Bellchamber said the provincial and municipal fiscal relationship hasn't been properly reviewed in about 25 years and it needs to be revisited to respond to changing economic demands.

London's Mayor Josh Morgan agrees. His council approved a historic \$672-million investment in police spending during the last four-year budget, and while he's satisfied with the results of crime trending lower in the city, ballooning police budgets are a concern for municipalities, he said.

"Obviously when the largest portion of your budget is increasing by a fair amount, that's concerning in multiple ways," said Morgan.

"It's difficult for a municipality to shoulder all of the necessary investments in public safety that we need to make with all of the other things that we're obligated to do, and with the revenue streams we have available to us."

Morgan said it's important for municipalities to partner with provincial and federal governments to seek "broad-based, stable multi-year support for public safety funding."

In London's case, Morgan notes the police returned more than \$2.3 million to city coffers in the budget's first two years.

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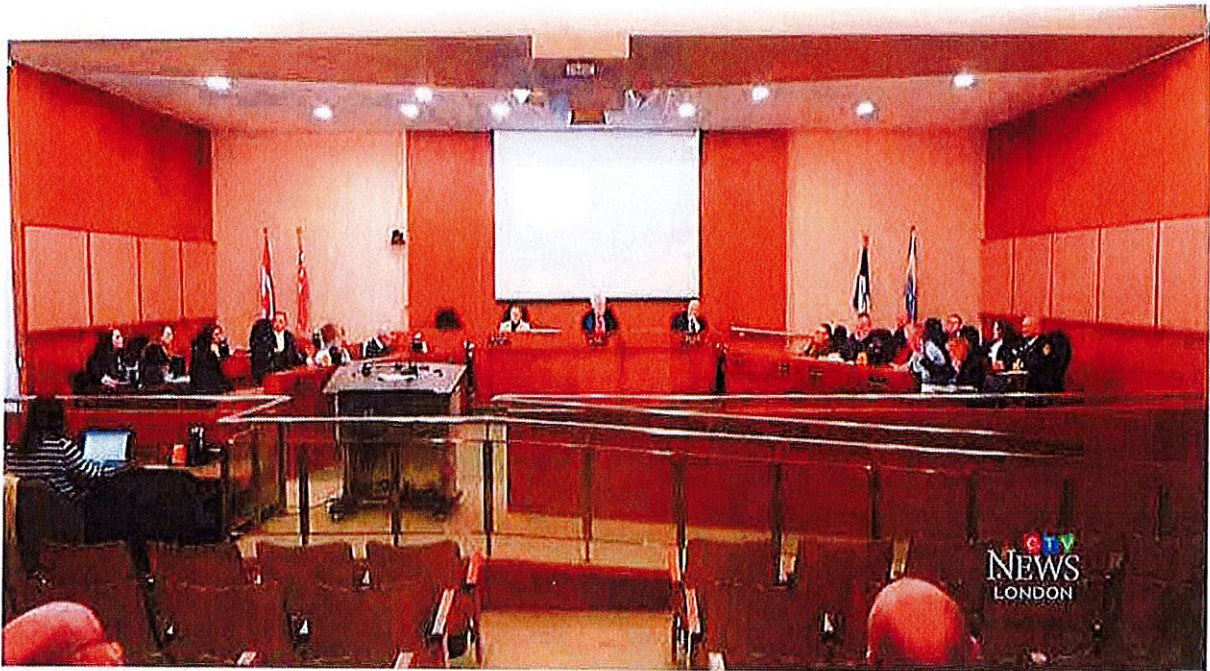


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Questions of 'strong mayor' veto powers remain after province attempts to clarify police budgets

By [Bryan Bicknell](#)

Published: February 18, 2026 at 5:14PM EST



The provincial government says municipalities can't use strong mayor powers to limit police budgets. CTV's Bryan Bicknell visits local reaction.

The chair of the Sarnia Police Service Board says the board is still weighing options in its bid to build a new police headquarters.

The comments follow a letter from Ontario's Solicitor General to municipalities that mayors cannot use so-called strong mayor powers to challenge police budgets.

"We sent the letter to council requesting that the veto to be vetoed, basically, and that the five million [dollars] be added back into the budget," explained Board Chair Kelly Ash. "We are re-evaluating, looking to see what we can get accomplished with the funds that we do have, while still hoping that council does deliberate over the \$5 million so that we can get started."



© 2024

Sarnia Police Board Chair Kelly Smith speaks to CTV 22.1 via a Zoom on Friday, Feb. 20, 2025. (Byron Bickell/CTV 2 News Ontario)

Late last year Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley vetoed the city's police budget request of \$5 million to begin work on a new police headquarters. Bradley insists he's not about to reopen the city budget

"This idea that police boards now, without any accountability, they're not elected and they don't report to the public and you can't remove them, will now be able to say to any town, 'This is how much money we want each year, and govern yourself accordingly. You're going to have to find money or kill other projects that are really important to your community because we're number one,'" he said.

In London, the police budget has also been a sensitive item.



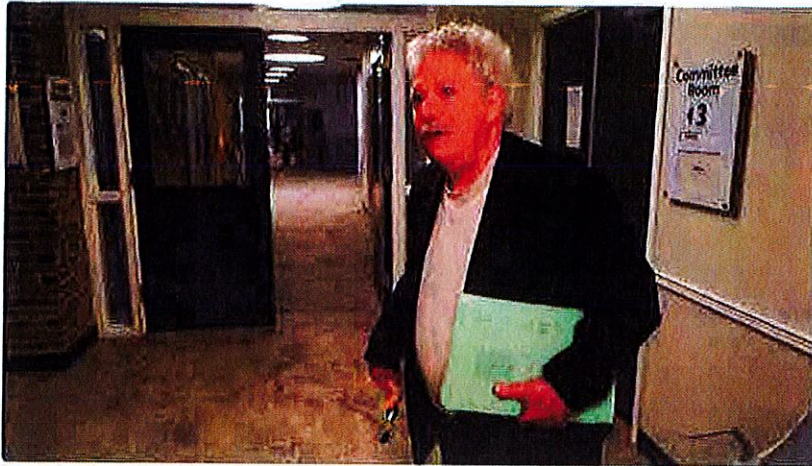
London Mayor Josh Morgan speaks to CTV 22.1 via a Zoom call. © 2024 (Byron Bickell/CTV 2 News Ontario)

The most recent police budget passed two years ago in the city's four-year budget cycle increased police spending by \$672 million.

The London Police Service has since returned \$2.3 million in a bid to keep municipal property taxes at bay, explains London Mayor Josh Morgan.

"It's a pretty high bar to set for a municipality to not supply the budget, which is why my approach has been to work closely with the police board as a member of the board. And this board has returned dollars for the past two years," Morgan said.

Introduced in 2022 for Ontario's largest urban centres, strong mayor powers were expanded last year to include all 216 Ontario mayors. At least one legal opinion suggests this was when questions of interpretation began to arise.



London (CN) News Staff Twitter uploads to CTV News on July 18, 2024 (https://www.ctvnews.ca/)

London Coun. Sam Trosow is a retired Western University law professor. He believes the strong mayor legislation was rushed.

"I think if it was the intention of the legislature to categorically exempt police services matters from the act they would have or they should have said so. And they probably rushed this through so quickly, maybe they didn't even bother to think about it," he explained.

"But I think that the mayor of Sarnia is within his rights to challenge this part of the budget," Trosow said.



Sarnia News Staff Twitter uploads to CTV News on July 18, 2024 (https://www.ctvnews.ca/)

Related Stories

- > ['We need to do it, and soon': Sarnia Police Services Board launches renewed effort to move forward with new headquarters](#)
- > [Sarnia police headquarters funding reduced by city council](#)
- > ['A vanity project': Sarnia police offer compromise as city's mayor threatens strong mayor powers](#)

8.10

From: Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS)

Sent: March 27, 2026 1:31 PM

To: CAO <CAO@calvintownship.ca>

Subject: 2026 Provincial Budget Highlights

[View as Webpage](#)



Yesterday, the Provincial government released the **2026 Ontario Budget: A Plan to Protect Ontario**, projecting a **\$13.8 billion deficit for 2026–27**, with a return to balance now delayed to 2028–29.

For Ontario's ICI construction sector, the budget reinforces a continued reliance on **strong public-sector investment**, including increased infrastructure spending and major commitments in transportation, energy, and institutional projects. Large scale builds, such as highways, transit, and nuclear expansion, are expected to support thousands of jobs and sustain a robust project pipeline, helping offset private-sector activity and underpinning non-residential construction growth across the province.

Below are highlights of the budget that may affect Ontario's ICI sector.

Protect Ontario by Building

Ontario has a **10-year, over \$210 billion plan** to build Ontario including \$37 billion in 2026/27. This capital plan includes investments to get shovels in the ground faster, create more construction jobs, and lay the foundation for long-term growth and prosperity for communities across the province.

Building Transit: \$63B over 10 years to expand and improve public transit across the GTA and beyond

- Major subway projects: Ontario Line, Scarborough Subway Extension, Eglinton Crosstown West Extension, Yonge North Subway Extension
- LRT projects: Finch West LRT, Eglinton Crosstown LRT, Hamilton LRT, Hazel McCallion Line
- Other investments: TTC Line 2 trains, GO rail upgrades, Northlander return, East Harbour Transit Hub

Building Health Infrastructure: \$64B to expand and modernize hospitals, adding 3,000 beds

- Major projects: Fancsy Family Hospital (Windsor), Peter Gilgan Mississauga Hospital, Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus, South Niagara Hospital
- Other upgrades: Orillia Soldiers' Memorial, Stevenson Memorial, Bowmanville Hospital, Peel Memorial redevelopment

Building Post Secondary Infrastructure, Schools and Daycare Spaces: \$35.5B to educational facilities and daycare

- \$30 billion for schools and childcare space
- \$5.5B for postsecondary upgrades, and funding for municipal infrastructure.

Building Highways

- Ontario has started construction on Highway 413
- Building the Bradford Bypass, a new four-lane highway that connects Highways 400 and 404
- The QEW Garden City Skyway Bridge Twinning Project
- Construction of the new Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph
- Widening Highway 400, with new bridges being built at North Canal, Highway 88, Innisfil Beach Road and Dunlop Street in Simcoe to accommodate the future 10-lane highway
- Widen Highway 17 between Renfrew and Arnprior
- The government is also investing in highways in the North

Advancing Infrastructure Projects with the Building Ontario Fund

The Building Ontario Fund (BOF) continues to deliver on its mandate by advancing high-impact infrastructure investments in partnership with Canadian institutional investors and project proponents. In addition to its \$1 billion investment in the Darlington New Nuclear Project, BOF is also making investments in new projects for affordable housing and long-term care, including the following:

- Up to \$300 million to launch a housing initiative with High Art Capital
- A \$133.6 million investment, in partnership with Arch Corporation, in four long-term care homes that will create over 570 new and redeveloped beds
- An \$83 million investment in the first phase of affordable student housing development at Toronto Metropolitan University

Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund

- Ontario is providing an additional **\$300 million over six years** to help meet the needs of growing communities by supporting the repair, upgrade or construction of new sport and recreation facilities
- This brings the total program funding to \$500 million

Investing in Skilled Trades and Construction-Related Talent

- Since 2020, Ontario has invested more than \$2.1 billion in skilled trades, with initiatives aimed at reducing stigma, streamlining the apprenticeship system, and increasing employer participation
- As announced in the 2025 Budget, the **province invested \$75 million over three years** to train up to 7,800 additional postsecondary students across Ontario for in-demand construction-related occupations

Supporting Skilled Trades Apprentices

Ontario is **investing \$64.2 million over three years** to create up to 4,000 new training seats each year, helping apprentices access in-class training faster, while covering their \$10-per-day Level 1 classroom fees. This investment is part of the \$159.3 million commitment announced in the 2025 Budget to strengthen skilled trades programs.

Protecting Workers and Businesses Against Tariff Impacts

The government continues to take action to protect Ontario from U.S. tariffs, supporting key sectors such as steel, manufacturing, forestry, and construction.

Support for Businesses

- **Protect Ontario Financing Program (POFP):** Provides working capital for affected businesses, including Algoma Steel, ensuring continuity and supporting critical supply chains
- **Protect Ontario Account Investment Fund:** Up to \$4B to invest in strategic sectors, domestic manufacturing, and critical minerals, strengthening supply chains
- **Trade-Impacted Communities Program (\$40M):** Supports municipalities, economic development organizations, and sector associations to enhance economic resiliency
- **Buy Ontario Act (2025):** Prioritizes Ontario goods and services in public procurement, including infrastructure projects, fleet vehicles, and construction-related investments

Economic and Fiscal Outlook

Ontario's economy showed resilience in 2025 amid U.S. trade uncertainty. Real GDP rose 0.5% in Q1, fell 0.7% in Q2, then rebounded 0.5% in Q3. Consumer spending remained resilient, rising 0.5% in Q1 and 0.7% in Q2, before a slight decline of 0.1% in Q3. Business investment in machinery and equipment declined over 6% by Q3 due to trade uncertainty.

Labour Market

- Employment increased by 80,900 jobs in 2025, mainly in the private sector; unemployment averaged 7.7%
- Trade-sensitive industries, including manufacturing and goods-producing sectors near the U.S. border, were disproportionately affected

Consumer Price Inflation

- CPI inflation averaged 1.9% in 2025, with energy prices down 7.4% (gasoline –10.7%) and food up 3.2%
- Core inflation (excluding food and energy) rose 2.4%

Medium-Term Outlook

- Real GDP growth: 1.0% (2026), 1.7% (2027), 1.8% (2028), 2.0% (2029)
- Employment growth: 0.7% (2027), 0.8% (2028), 1.1% (2029)
- Unemployment rate projected to decline from 7.7% (2025) to 6.2% (2029)
- CPI inflation projected at 2.1% in 2026, returning to 2% medium-term

Fiscal Outlook

- Deficit: \$12.3B (2025–26), \$13.8B (2026–27), \$6.1B (2027–28)
- Surplus: \$0.6B projected in 2028–29
- Program expense projected to rise from \$212.1B (2024–25) to \$231.3B (2028–29, 2.2% CAGR).

Risks to Outlook

- Global trade tensions and CUSMA review may impact growth and inflation
- Geopolitical tensions and supply-chain disruptions could raise costs
- AI investment offers growth potential, with risks of market corrections

You can read the full budget **2026 Ontario Budget: A Plan to Protect Ontario** [here](#).



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8.11



Regular Council Meeting Resolution Form

Date: February 17, 2026 No: RESOLUTION - 56-2026
 Moved by Councillor Kevin Rosien Disposition: CARRIED
 Seconded by Deputy Mayor Scott Brum Item No: 14.2

Description: Ontario Heritage Organization Development Grant Advocacy

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS Ontario municipalities are legislated to preserve records of enduring and historical value, and community archives play a critical role in fulfilling this responsibility, particularly in rural and smaller municipalities; and

WHEREAS The Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG) is the only provincial operating grant available to grassroots, non-profit heritage organizations, including community archives and historical societies across Ontario; and

WHEREAS The maximum annual HODG grant of \$1,545 per organization has remained effectively unchanged for more than 15 years, resulting in a significant erosion of its real value due to inflation, such that its current purchasing power is approximately two-thirds of what it was in 2010; and

WHEREAS Rising operating costs related to insurance, utilities, records preservation, digitization, accessibility, and volunteer coordination have increased financial pressure on heritage organizations, often requiring municipalities to absorb additional costs to ensure continuity of service; and

WHEREAS Strengthening HODG would represent a modest but high-impact provincial investment that would help stabilize community archives, reduce pressure on municipal budgets, and safeguard Ontario's public records and local heritage for future generations;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council formally support a review and modernization of the Heritage Organization Development Grant, including restoring its real purchasing power through inflationary adjustment and exploring options for increased or multi-year operating stability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT This resolution be forwarded to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, local Members of Provincial Parliament, AMO, and Ontario municipalities for consideration and support.

[Signature]
MAYOR

Recorded Vote Requested by: _____	Yea	Nay
Mayor Lori Hoddinott	_____	_____
Deputy Mayor Scott Brum	_____	_____
Councillor Kevin Rosien	_____	_____
Councillor Robert Campbell	_____	_____
Councillor Jill Campbell	_____	_____

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest: _____
Disclosed his/her/their interest(s), vacated he/her/their seat(s), abstained from discussion and did not vote