

In accordance with the notice and submission deadline requirements of Sections 18.1(b) and 11.3, respectively, of Niagara Region's Procedural By-law, the Regional Clerk received from Regional Chair Bradley a motion to be brought forward for consideration at the March 25, 2021 Council meeting respecting Support Local Journalism and News Media.

WHEREAS a healthy and strong local media is essential for the proper functioning of our democracy;

WHEREAS the role of the fourth estate ensures that residents are well informed, and elected officials are held accountable for their actions and decisions;

WHEREAS local sources of journalism have struggled financially in recent years due to a decline of traditional revenue sources;

WHEREAS newspapers across Canada continue to have their content republished on online platforms (including social media) with little to no compensation, further disadvantaging local news media by exploiting their content;

WHEREAS local newspapers across Canada have been forced to significantly downsize, reduce coverage, and in many cases, cease production all together;

WHEREAS Niagara's local radio stations have been forced to reduce their coverage of local news, replacing it with less relevant syndicated content;

WHEREAS the importance of local news media has never been more important than during the COVID-19 crisis, as residents turn to trusted news sources for vital information and content;

WHEREAS the decline of trusted, balanced local news media across Canada, staffed by ethical journalists with integrity, has created a vacuum that has been filled by disinformation and slanted coverage, often fueled by social media;

WHEREAS nearly two out of every three Canadians support sending financial aid to struggling news providers, according to a Nanos Research poll of April 2020; and

WHEREAS the federal government allocated nearly \$600 million in aid for Canadian media over five years in its 2019 budget, including a 25-per-cent tax credit for newsroom salaries; a 15-per-cent tax credit for digital media subscribers; and charitable tax status for non-profit news outlets.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **FORMALLY RECOGNIZE** that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in the region and encourage residents to support local sources of credible news;

2. That Niagara Regional Council **ENDORSE** legislation and regulations to support and rejuvenate news outlets across Canada;
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to write a letter to the federal government urging them to move quickly to pass legislation to ensure an ecosystem for a healthy news media to serve all Canadians; and
4. That the Regional Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to forward this motion to the local area municipalities, local MPs and MPPs, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.