

## **Support for Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Municipal Code of Conduct Recommendations**

WHEREAS Bill 5, known as the “Stopping Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act”, was an important piece of legislation to strengthen accountability for council members, but failed upon second reading in the Provincial legislature in May 2023;

WHEREAS Bill 5 was endorsed by over 170 municipalities in Ontario including the Niagara Region, recognizing the importance of aligning council conduct policies with workplace violence and harassment policies;

WHEREAS a safe and respectful work environment is a basic expectation for all Ontarians;

WHEREAS serving our communities in a leadership role is a privilege and a responsibility;

WHEREAS improving local public discourse will improve public confidence in local government and increase respect for our municipal institutions and the work we do;

WHEREAS democracy suffers when the public loses confidence in their representatives and institutions; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Municipal Affairs launched consultation on strengthening municipal codes of conduct in March of 2021 without any further update.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Regional Council **SUPPORTS** the recommendations made by AMO that:
  - a) Codes of Conduct should be updated to include workplace safety and harassment policies;
  - b) Codes of Conduct should have an escalating enforcement mechanism through administrative monetary penalties that recognize local circumstances;
  - c) Integrity Commissioners should have better, standardized training to improve consistency of decisions across the province;
  - d) in the most egregious cases, such as harassment or assault, municipalities should be able to apply to a judge to remove a sitting member if recommended by an Integrity Commissioner;

e) a member removed under this process should be unable to sit in another election during the term of office removed and the subsequent term;

2. That Regional Council **URGES** the Ontario Government to table and pass legislation to make these changes as soon as possible;

3. That Regional Council **REINFORCES** that the time to act is past due as articulated and expressed by AMO; and

4. That this motion **BE CIRCULATED** to AMO and Niagara members of provincial parliament.