

Municipal Codes of Conduct

WHEREAS on August 17, 2023, Regional Council supported 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;

WHEREAS Regional Council urged the Ontario Government to table and pass legislation to make these changes as soon as possible;

WHEREAS Bill 207, Municipal Accountability and Integrity Act, 2024, has been introduced that provides changes from the proposed Bill 5 which failed upon second reading including:

- a) Instead of municipalities hiring their own Integrity Commissioner (who then investigates them) an Integrity Commissioner Provincial Board would be established;
- b) Councils can no longer ignore an Integrity Commissioner recommendation that removal be elevated to the courts- it would go direct from an Integrity Commissioner to judicial review in instances of recommended removal;
- c) adherence to anti-discrimination policies in addition to violence and harassment policies;
- d) Trauma-informed design;
- e) Protections for people who come forward; and
- f) A duty to report

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **SUPPORTS** the call of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for the Government of Ontario to introduce legislation to strengthen municipal Codes of Conduct and compliance with them in consultation with municipal governments;

2. That the legislation **ENCOMPASSES** the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's recommendations for:
 - a) Updating municipal Codes of Conduct to account for workplace safety and harassment;
 - b) Creating a flexible administrative penalty regime, adapted to the local economic and financial circumstances of municipalities across Ontario;
 - c) Increasing training of municipal Integrity Commissioners to enhance consistency of investigations and recommendations across the province;
 - d) Allowing municipalities to apply to a member of the judiciary to remove a sitting member if recommended through the report of a municipal Integrity Commissioner; and
 - e) Prohibit a member so removed from sitting for election in the term of removal and the subsequent term of office; and

3. That a copy of this resolution **BE FORWARDED** to the President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Robin Jones; Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford; Minister Paul Calandra, Member of Provincial Parliament, Jeff Burch; Member of Parliament, Wayne Gates; Member of Provincial Parliament, Jennie Stevens; Member of Provincial Parliament Sam Oosterhoff and all local area municipalities.