

LUMCO

Ontario's Big-City Mayors

May 24, 2019

Statement from Mayor Cam Guthrie, Chair of LUMCO and LUMCO Mayors

Today, following a meeting of the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO), LUMCO Chair and Mayor of Guelph Cam Guthrie released the following statement:

"Big-city mayors from across Ontario continue to be alarmed about the Province's unilateral, retroactive cuts to municipal funding after cities have already passed our budgets. We are also united in concern about Bill 108, which could put at risk cities' finances and ability to provide parkland, community facilities, and well-planned neighbourhoods.

We understand the fiscal position the Government of Ontario is in, and we want to be a partner in its efforts to get its budget deficit and debt under control. We appreciate that Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark attended our meeting today to speak with LUMCO mayors about municipal financial sustainability and Bill 108.

We again call on the Government of Ontario to defer the implementation of these funding cuts so that the Province and cities can work together on how to minimize the impact on the people we all represent, and the services they depend on.

To absorb the funding cuts the Province has made, after municipal budgets have already been approved – let alone find a further 4 per cent in budget reductions as the Premier has suggested – cities will be forced to consider increasing taxes or fees, cutting services, raiding reserves, or deferring infrastructure and capital projects. Unlike the provincial government, municipalities are required by law to balance their budgets annually and cannot run a deficit.

Ontario's big-city mayors are equally concerned about the proposed changes in Bill 108, which could put at risk our cities' finances and ability to provide parkland, community facilities, and adequate public engagement to inform the planning of neighbourhoods. Changes to Development Charges, which are paid by developers to offset the cost of growth, could put already-approved parks and community centres in jeopardy. A return to the old OMB rules for planning appeals means that local planning matters will once again be taken out of the hands of municipal Councils. We wholeheartedly support the Province's goals of improving access to different types of housing, including more affordable housing, but believe that by working together, we can find better ways to achieve them.

We call on the Province to engage with Ontario's cities on Bill 108 in order to meet the goals of housing choice and affordability, while respecting the role of municipal Councils in planning decisions and protecting the financial sustainability of cities. In the immediate term, we call on the Province to extend the deadline for comments on Bill 108 from June 1 to September 30 to allow municipalities adequate time to comment.

LUMCO mayors are asking the Government of Ontario to sit down with cities to work together on the issues that concern us all – financial sustainability, housing that people can afford, prosperity and quality of life.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cam Guthrie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mayor Cam Guthrie, City of Guelph, Chair of LUMCO

For more information:

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About LUMCO

The [Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario \(LUMCO\)](#) includes mayors of 28 single and lower-tier cities with a population of 100,000 or more, amounting to 67% of Ontario's population. LUMCO advocates for issues and policies important to Ontario's largest cities.