

**Notes for remarks by**

**Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario**

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**AMO AGM AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

It is great to be back at AMO's AGM and Annual Conference. Last week, I was in over a dozen communities all across the North. I talked — as I do — about how our plan is building Ontario up. But mostly I listened, because that's an important part of my job — and one I really enjoy. I like hearing about your challenges and finding the solutions that will make a real difference in people's lives. It's why I first got involved locally, as a school trustee. And when I made the jump to provincial politics, it was to bring local solutions to the table. It's still what drives me. So I have so much respect and admiration for local leaders. I see us as partners.

Two years ago at AMO, I gave three criteria for our partnership. We work together on long-term projects. We respect each other by understanding each other's perspectives. And we're prepared to make compromises. Then I laid out a number of issues that would test our partnership. So before we get into our fireside chat, I want to quickly update you on how these principles are helping us build a province where every community is treated fairly, is on a path towards fiscal sustainability and is able to provide people with the very best services.

First I want to talk about infrastructure. When I became Premier, our province's infrastructure was at the breaking point. So we came up with a plan to make the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history. For some municipal partners, it means historic investments in transit. For others, it means better roads and new bridges. And for everyone, it means new and upgraded hospitals, schools and other assets vital to the wellbeing of our people.

And by listening to you we also came forward with the \$100 million Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund. That was the fair thing to do. And since launching OCIF just two years ago at AMO, we've gone further and tripled the funding. Between now and 2019, OCIF will transfer \$670 million infrastructure dollars directly onto the books of 426 communities. Three years ago, that number was zero. The same is true of Connecting Links. Has this bridged the gap? No. But is it narrowing? Absolutely.

Bridging the gap is also why, last year in Niagara, I told you we needed a real federal partner on infrastructure. I even campaigned for that partner. Today our new federal government has followed the province's lead. They've created new funding streams to partner with communities on your infrastructure needs. Negotiations are going well and that's important. We're all eager to announce a deal and get shovels in the ground.

So I'm pleased to tell you that Ontario will open the intake for your municipal projects to apply for Phase 1 of the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund and the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund in early September.

For CWWF, we'll use a formula similar to OCIF to fairly allocate the funds to every municipality with water, wastewater and stormwater systems. Most will be able to fund their share of these new investments using their recently expanded OCIF allocations. And we will work to make more support available, where it's required, by including an appropriate provincial contribution to the municipal 50 per cent contribution. That is over and above what the province is already providing through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund.

We are exploring funding available under Moving Ontario Forward and other infrastructure programs to expand provincial support, where required, to up to 25 per cent for eligible recipients under the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund. In early September, we will also launch the intake process for the federal Public Transit Infrastructure Fund. We are working with the federal government and municipal partners to announce more details when the intake opens.

We know that we accomplish more when we work together. For example, progress is being made with Community Hubs. Together, we are maximizing all of the resources of our communities, whether municipal or provincial, because we know Community Hubs are critical to bringing services together and using spaces better to serve Ontarians and the municipalities that they live in.

I have also heard from your association about the challenge of providing 21st century services with a 19th century revenue toolkit. It requires you to rely heavily on property taxes. You have told us that even with the increases we've made to provincial transfers for infrastructure or to upload services back to the province — changes that add up to billions of dollars for municipal budgets every year — we haven't bridged the gap.

To do your jobs most effectively, you have said that municipalities need to be able to raise more revenue themselves and from streams more diverse than property taxes. I know we've discussed revenue tools at this conference before, and I see that there are a number of sessions on financial sustainability on this year's agenda.

I want you to know that we are still very much open to discussing this issue with you. I want to keep hearing what you have to say. Let's face it, it's a very important dialogue — one that AMO has been having more broadly with its membership. And I understand it is continuing that dialogue with you today as part of your "What's Next Ontario?" consultations.

We've heard a diversity of opinions from the municipal sector and other stakeholders on the issue of revenue tools and we want to take more time to allow you to collectively determine what is required to make municipalities of all types and sizes financially sustainable in the future. We want to make sure that we consider how to get this very important decision right for everyone.

So, at this AGM and in the months ahead, put those specific tools you're thinking about on the table. Take them home and discuss them with your constituents and your councils. Find a consensus. Working with your incoming President, Lynn Dollin, and through our relationship at the AMO-MOU table, when our government hears that you have reached consensus on the specific ways you want to raise additional revenues for your community, we will work with you, in an open and transparent way, to make those additional tools available. And I will make sure we are continuing to treat you fairly by giving you the powers and respect that mature municipal governments deserve.

Long-term projects. Respect for each other. And compromise. We have a lot on the go, but with these principles guiding our partnership we are moving confidently forward to build this province up.

Thank you.