

## Remarks by the Honourable David Oraziotti, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services

### Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual Conference

August 16, 2016

***\*\*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY\*\****

- Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for being here.
- I am pleased to be joining you at this year's AMO Conference.
- Our government is committed to working to achieve a stronger, safer province.
- Last year, we announced the development of the Strategy for a Safer Ontario.
- As many of you may know, this strategy is about building safer, stronger communities across Ontario.
- It is based on the values of collaboration, and cooperation among all participants in community safety, and will pave the way for effective, sustainable, and community-based policing in our province.
- It aims to bring together various sectors of our province, including mental health, social services, education and police, and will promote partnerships with a focus on making our communities safer.
- The strategy will foster collaboration within these sectors, and others, so that those working on the frontlines in our communities can identify areas of concern and intervene proactively to protect vulnerable individuals, keep them out of harm's way and help keep Ontario safe.
- And these same values will guide us as we look at the province's policing framework and develop changes that better reflect the priorities and realities of policing today.
- Today, I want to reiterate our government's commitment to the development of the Strategy for a Safer Ontario, and update you on the progress we have made on that goal in the past year.

- This past winter and spring, my ministry held a series of consultations across the province, including in-person public and stakeholder sessions as well as extensive public engagement through an online survey.
- The goal of these consultations was to hear from you, and those in your communities about what *you* feel are the essential themes and issues that must be addressed as we develop the strategy.
- We had an overwhelming response to our request for input.
- Our online survey resulted in over 1,700 responses.
- And we held sessions in 17 communities across Ontario, discussing Community Safety & Well-Being, Accountability to the Public, Delivery of Services & Technology when it comes to community safety, and Education & Training for police.
- By travelling across the province we were able to hear a wide range of opinions and perspectives.
- Yet, there was still considerable common ground around key points and direction.
- There was broad support for a collaborative approach to Community Safety and Well-Being Planning, and the involvement of a variety of community organizations, including those representing or serving vulnerable individuals as well as police services.
- We also heard that increased communication and partnerships with communities and local organizations were important in fostering positive relationships between the community and police.
- There were differing opinions on whether police service boards were needed throughout the province.
- At the same time, there was broad support for a clearer definition of roles as well as increased collaboration between boards and police chiefs.
- Participants noted the need for greater interaction between boards and the public, and for boards to be more reflective of community diversity and needs.
- And there was general support for the use of technology to enhance public safety and police accountability, but concerns were raised about privacy issues, data storage challenges, and the potential high cost associated with these new technologies.

- This remarkable volume of input will help inform this important work, and is a true demonstration of how important community safety is to our communities, and to our province.
- My ministry is thoroughly reviewing and analyzing the submissions, findings and feedback from the consultations and survey, including via the AMO-MOU table process and the Future of Policing Advisory Committee – of which AMO is a valuable member – as we move forward.
- Our ministry is leading efforts to examine the best approach to civilian police governance in order to provide a foundation for service delivery that reflects and serves the needs of communities.
- It is a fundamental focus not only for the policing community, but also for provincial and municipal governments and administrations, as well as civil liberties groups and the public.
- And it is certainly a focus for our government.
- Under the strategy, there is a recognized need for effective governance of police services that is responsive to local needs.
- Our police services boards are governing bodies – they set the strategic direction of a police service; and they monitor and evaluate the performance of the service against this strategic direction and legislated standards and responsibilities.
- Police services boards connect the community and the police, and should reflect the needs of their community in the police service’s strategic direction and policy.
- We have heard that we need to move toward universality for civilian police governance across the province.
- Regardless of the manner in which police services are delivered in a municipality, there should be a local civilian police governance body.
- And our government is looking to address how it can enable consistent civilian police governance across all our municipalities, as the current framework under the *Police Services Act* (PSA) does not ensure meaningful participation in civilian police governance.
- We are examining opportunities to better equip police services boards to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.

- This includes recognition that police services board members, collectively, should possess a range of skills and competencies aligned with the important roles and responsibilities of a board, in order to operate effectively.
- There is a need to provide more clarity on the roles and responsibilities of police services boards.
- Representatives from my ministry continue to meet regularly with communities across the province.
- It is clear to us that municipalities and their multi-sector partners are all strongly invested in the safety and well-being of our communities.
- Considerable work has been done to help inform us as we move forward, but there is still significant work ahead.
- A strong policing framework that supports community safety and well-being needs a robust independent oversight system that ensures public trust in police services, their officers and the services they provide.
- For that reason, the Government of Ontario has appointed the Honourable Michael H. Tulloch, a judge of the Ontario Court of Appeal, to lead an independent review of the three agencies that oversee police conduct in the province: the Special Investigations Unit, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director and the Ontario Civilian Police Commission.
- Justice Tulloch has been asked to provide the government with recommendations on ways to enhance the transparency and accountability of the province's three police oversight bodies, while ensuring that these agencies are carrying out their work as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- As part of his review, he will engage in public and stakeholder consultations.
- The final report containing all recommendations will be delivered to the Attorney-General by March 31, 2017, and will be made available to the public.
- In the coming months we will continue to work closely with our partners as we move forward with finalizing the Strategy for a Safer Ontario.

- Thank you for your ongoing participation in this process.
- I know that we share a vision for a stronger, safer Ontario.
- By working together, we can truly implement an innovative, effective plan that changes the way we view, develop and deliver policing services.
- Thank you.

**END**