



Office of the Minister

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May 5, 2018

Lynn Dollin
AMO President
200 University Avenue, Suite 801
Toronto, Ontario
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Dear President Dollin,

I am pleased to share with you that Bill 175, the *Safer Ontario Act, 2018*, received Royal Assent on March 8, 2018. The *Safer Ontario Act, 2018* repeals and replaces Ontario's *Police Services Act*, amends the *Coroners Act*, and creates, for the first time, the *Missing Persons Act, 2018*, the *Forensic Laboratories Act, 2018*. It also creates new legislation related to the oversight of police, including the *Police Oversight Act, 2018*, the *Ontario Policing Discipline Tribunal Act, 2018*, and the *Ontario Special Investigations Unit Act, 2018*. These statutes fall under the purview of the Ministry of the Attorney General.

As well, please note that the *Police Services Act, 2018* has been proclaimed with an in-force date of January 1, 2020. This will give all involved an opportunity to prepare for the new *Act*, as well as for us to complete a significant amount of necessary regulatory work to underpin the *Act*.

Passing this legislation is a momentous step for our province. It represents the first comprehensive review of the *Police Services Act* since 1990 and the largest policing transformation in a generation. The changes support our goal to build a proactive, sustainable and effective model of policing in Ontario. The *Police Services Act, 2018*, will modernize our approach to community safety by mandating municipalities to undertake local community safety and well-being (CSWB) planning; improve police oversight, transparency and accountability; enhance civilian governance; and respond to the needs and realities of Ontario's diverse communities.

I want to express my gratitude for the advice you provided to help shape the legislation and for your collaboration in achieving this milestone.

I am pleased that we were able to work together to address many of the issues that have been raised by municipal governments. You expressed concerns over certain changes affecting board composition, and we listened. As the Association of Municipalities of Ontario [AMO] requested at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, and consistent with our efforts to increase diversity on boards, we introduced diversity plan requirements for police services. You

wanted clarity around which services a police service must provide, and that will come through regulations enabled under this *Act*.

The new *Police Services Act, 2018*, will see municipalities taking a leadership role in defining and addressing local needs in collaboration with partners from a wide range of sectors through the development and implementation of CSWB plans. This collaborative approach to community safety and well-being planning represents a province-wide shift from a focus on reactive enforcement approaches to a more proactive and holistic community safety and well-being approach, which will help ensure those in need of help receive the right response, at the right time, and by the right service provider. A few key benefits of this new approach include enhanced collaboration among sectors, transformation of service delivery through better coordination of services, and more effective use of existing resources to address priority issues in the community.

We recognize, however, that municipalities cannot do this alone. In addition to standing ready to provide guidance documents and advice in preparing these plans, we agree that there is more for all levels of government to do to help you lead locally on these challenges. A crucial step, responsive to what we have heard from you, came in our most recent budget with a historic investment in mental health services, including, for example, establishing new integrated mobile crisis response teams – including community crisis workers, safe beds, and case managers in areas where they do not currently exist – to support people in crisis who might otherwise end up entering the justice system. We hope that CSWB planning will help you develop the case for the assistance you need in the future.

We also know that some municipalities may experience challenges due to limited capacity and resources. That's why municipalities will have the discretion and flexibility to create joint CSWB plans with surrounding municipalities. Municipalities may also partner with First Nation band councils to develop plans. This new legislative requirement for CSWB planning will come into force on January 1, 2019 – which would mean first plans must be adopted by January 1, 2021. As we move forward, my ministry is committed to working with our municipal and policing partners to identify and develop further appropriate supports required to implement these changes. This includes continuing to transform our grant programs to an outcomes-based funding model that better supports local CSWB initiatives. Further information on grants transformation will be communicated as soon as possible.

Finally, the requirements in this *Act* for what must be in a CSWB plan are not onerous. We commit to working with you through AMO to ensure any regulations that might, in the future, be developed to clarify best practices for CSWB plans take into account the unique needs of different municipalities across the province.

The *Act* will also help to modernize and strengthen the civilian police governance system through more consistent and effective oversight and accountability. The changes will ensure all municipalities policed by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have an OPP detachment board to provide civilian governance with respect to policing received from the local OPP detachment. OPP detachment boards will determine local priorities and objectives for the detachment and advise the detachment commander with respect to policing that is provided by the detachment. In addition, OPP detachment boards will have the power to establish local policies after consultation with the detachment commander, with respect to policing in the area. My ministry

recognizes that there are unique geographic differences among municipalities in Ontario, such as those in the north; that is why we have built flexibility into the legislation to address these circumstances via regulation. We will work with AMO and our municipal partners to develop criteria for multiple OPP detachment boards and to determine OPP detachment board composition.

This is a large, complex *Act*. My Ministry is committed to ongoing dialogue with municipalities to ensure the *Act* is effectively rolled out across our great province. There is at least one area that has created some confusion that I would like to comment on. This *Act* does not, and will not, privatize core policing. In fact, it places a limit on what could potentially be privatized in the future. However, we know there are exciting initiatives going on across the province involving better cooperation between community organizations and police, and we look forward to working with you to spread those great ideas.

Thank you again for your support and ongoing efforts to build safer, stronger communities in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M. Lalonde".

Marie-France Lalonde
Minister