

Sent via e-mail: linda.jeffrey@ontario.ca
Steven.blaney@parl.gc.ca

February 4, 2014

Hon. Linda Jeffrey
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street – 17th Floor
Toronto ON M5G 2E5

Hon. Steven Blaney
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers Jeffrey and Blaney:

Re: Disaster Relief Programming

There has been an increasing number of weather and human related disaster events at a scale which overwhelms local capacity to resolve. Floods, snow storms, train derailments and fires have featured frequently in headlines. In addition to the tragic theme of human loss of life, these disasters place challenges on local governments not only to react with sufficient resources as part of the response phase, but also the longer term challenges to local capacity in the recovery phases. While both provincial and federal governments have programs that serve the public well, there is a gap. The ineligibility for funding of many services and assets that belong to the public sector is adding to the strain already placed upon municipal tax payers.

There are instances where the federal, provincial and municipal orders of government should more equally share in recovery costs, particularly where improving the caliber of infrastructure is a logical answer. As well, certain types of professional services are not on staff within many municipalities, yet these are the skills that are required to not just respond but also plan a better, more resilient landscape for the future.

It is the AMO Board of Directors' view that it is time to expand disaster relief programs where municipal assets and specialist services used during disasters are more broadly included in the programs. To that end, programs either need to be enlarged or new programs developed that focus on replacing infrastructure in a manner or size which is more responsive to extreme events. The costs of planning and executing improved infrastructure after a disaster should be eligible. Resilient communities are important to all orders of government.

A variety of approaches to programs is important as one size does not fit all. AMO would be happy to work further with you as you consider these new aspects to disaster relief programming.

Municipal governments, on behalf of our residents, require disaster relief programs that reflect the changing climate trends and those impacts on our communities and its infrastructure. We look forward to discussing this further with you and your officials.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R.F. Powers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R.F. (Russ) Powers
President

cc: Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Claude Dauphin, President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)