NEWS RELEASE

**Housing and Homelessness Priorities for the 2023 Ontario Budget**

February 13, 2023 – [MUNICIPALITY] joins the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) in calling for the provincial government to work more collaboratively with municipalities on efforts to increase the supply of housing, and for it to tackle the homelessness crisis in Ontario – a crisis created by decades of provincial neglect.

AMO, a non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario’s 444 municipal governments, presented these top priorities for the [2023 provincial budget](bit.ly/AMO2023PreBudget) to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

Increasing the supply of housing is a priority for municipalities across Ontario, including [MUNICIPALITY]. INSERT: Local concerns related to Bill 23 and/or MAYOR/REEVE quote.

Bill 23 limits municipal access to infrastructure financing – a cost to Ontario property taxpayers $1 billion a year, according to AMO. The sector is looking for the provincial government to clarify how it will offset these costs for property taxpayers and commit to reversing legislative measures that create unintended consequences. There are risks to eliminating environmental protections or weakening municipal governance.

AMO’s pre-budget submission highlights that the Government of Ontario’s per capita spending on programming is the lowest in Canada at $2,000 less per person than the national average. It states the homelessness crisis in Ontario is a direct result of decades of provincial underinvestment in areas such as affordable housing, community mental health and income assistance programs.

INSERT: Local challenges related to homelessness and/or quote.

The Government of Ontario should heed AMO’s recommendations to end homelessness:

* Increase the supply of deeply affordable housing through a variety of approaches from rent subsidies to property acquisitions.
* Increase financial assistance to individuals and families and fulfill the government’s promise to transform its social assistance system.
* Invest in health services, community-based mental health services, supportive housing and addictions services.

-30-

***Quotes from AMO President Colin Best:***

“The provincial government’s belief that the housing supply crisis can be solved by limiting municipal access to infrastructure financing, eliminating environmental protections or changes to municipal governance is unsound. Unless the costs of Bill 23 are fully offset by the province, it will cost Ontario property taxpayers $1 billion a year.”

“This is a made-in-Ontario crisis resulting from provincial underinvestment and poor policy choices made by the government of Ontario. The Government of Ontario has the tools and resources to end the homelessness crisis it has created over decades. It must surely possess the leadership, capability and political will to get the job done.”