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POLICY UPDATE

March 23, 2020

COVID-19: AMO Update

While it is only week-two of the declared state of emergency in Ontario, municipal councils and staff have been responding to, and preparing for COVID-19 for weeks and months, through the work of public health units, emergency planning, and the preparedness of front-line public safety and emergency responders.

AMO will continue to support its members by keeping you up-to date on available information, sharing and creating new resources, by helping to shape government policy and responses to the emergency, and by advocating for support for municipal government.

There were many important developments last week, including the passage of the *Municipal Emergency Act, 2020* to permit virtual participation in council meetings, and support supply chain effectiveness.

These follow important government action the previous week to stabilize public health finding.

On March 25, Finance Minister Rod Phillips will deliver an economic update rather than a provincial budget, and AMO will provide an immediate analysis for members. AMO is focused on critically important issues that require urgent action. In the wake of forgone tax, fee and transit revenues, municipalities will need adequate and timely financial assistance. Municipal employees, critical for many core functions, and to the response and management of the emergency, need support and protection. Municipal human services account for the most vulnerable and susceptible populations in the province and are under extreme pressure. Municipalities stand ready to channel needed federal and provincial economic stimulus into the economy through infrastructure investments and other means. Seasonal residents are putting pressure on small urban and rural resources. Broadband gaps challenge business continuity, enterprise and new education measures.

AMO is also looking at resources and potential collaboration to ensure municipal governments are ready to play their indispensable role in the economic recovery, and rebuilding prosperity in Ontario.

AMO is using strong, existing networks to stay on top of this emergency. We will make rapid adjustments to respond to quickly evolving situations. Our policy and membership teams are working directly with your subject matter experts and professional associations, coordinating critically important advice, information and action. Thank you for your Council's leadership, and the support of extraordinary municipal public servants.

We are keeping our [COVID-19 webpage](#) current and focusing on what's most relevant. AMO's covid19@amo.on.ca email will manage your questions, take your ideas, and facilitate your feedback.

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