



OFFICE OF THE REEVE

DISTRICT OF PARRY SOUND

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April 16th, 2020

Honorable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Re: Travel Restrictions to Small Communities

Dear Premier Ford,

The Township of Armour is a small municipality with a population of 1,414 in rural Parry Sound, Ontario. Although we are a community that relies a great deal upon our seasonal residents, both in terms of municipal revenue and on support for our local businesses, at this time we are asking the province for support in controlling an influx to our area, particularly for citizens who have other options in their primary community.

Our concerns are as follows:

1. We do not have the health facilities or equipment to treat a large number of patients if COVID-19 is brought into our area. Our closest hospital is in Huntsville and it only has 9 respirators available.
2. Getting reliable internet access in rural Ontario is a problem. With the influx of people coming into our area and the need for our children to learn on their computers, the internet is even less reliable and it is becoming a problem for everyone.
3. We have ongoing short-term cottage and Air B & B rentals which are operating in our area while our campgrounds and cottage resorts are closed, but the Almaguin OPP informed the municipality that they are only enforcing the no more than five (5) people in a group and isolation orders.
4. With the change of the seasons, it will be difficult to keep people from our parks and recreation facilities. Small municipalities do not have the resources available to enforce the closing of these facilities. We share one By-law Enforcement Officer between three municipalities.
5. The governments are asking us to do our best to flatten the curve and to stay home, but by allowing people to travel from the cities to small rural areas, you are effectively spreading COVID-19 into our communities.

This pandemic highlights the Almaguin Region's longstanding concerns in healthcare, housing, lack of resources and rural internet. Therefore, we are asking your government to implement travel restrictions which will prevent those living in large cities from coming into our small underserved communities, regardless if they own seasonal properties. This will give smaller communities and cottage country a fighting chance against COVID-19.

Respectfully yours,

Robert MacPhail, Reeve
Township of Armour