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June 19, 2020

AMO Board Update: COVID-19, Three Months and Counting

It's been three months since the state of emergency was declared in Ontario. That's a full quarter of 2020. Yet, questions remain about how our communities, our province, and our country will move forward to sustain, transform, and fund services people rely on most, and to rebuild our economies.

Municipal governments have done an extraordinary job of keeping communities safe and conducting the business of government in tough and uncertain circumstances. The uncertainty is compounded by the economic and fiscal impacts of disruption, and the related fallout for the people and businesses in our communities.

AMO's Board met today. It recognizes that all orders of government have made important investments in keeping people safe and safeguarding the economic security of individuals. But as municipal operational costs skyrocket and revenues decline sharply, municipal governments are facing a financial crisis that will undermine any economic recovery, if Canada and Ontario do not provide immediate financial assistance. AMO is, again, [calling on Prime Minister Trudeau](#) and Premier Ford to work together to invest in the communities that are the foundation of Ontario's and Canada's economy. Members are supporting our advocacy efforts through local communications, government relations and social media, and it is making a difference. Thank you for your efforts and your support.

Minister Steve Clark joined the Board meeting today. He acknowledged the need for a collaborative federal-provincial response, encouraged AMO to continue its advocacy, and expressed the Premier's support to bring the Government of Canada to the table in Ontario.

The Board's business today also included a wide range of municipal policy matters for discussion and direction. AMO remains focused on keeping communities safe during the pandemic, and on supporting economic recovery. AMO is preparing for the Province's upcoming Independent Commission into Long-Term Care, and outbreaks among migrant workers are a growing concern. The Board looked at elements of AMO's submission to the Standing Committee on Social Policy on Bill 184, *the Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act*. AMO continues to have grave concerns with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's approach on below water table aggregate extraction, as elected municipal officials are personally liable for the protection of safe drinking water. The Board was also updated on AMO's ongoing climate change strategy, broadband and connectivity activities, and the status of the Blue Box steward obligation through which municipalities receive financial compensation for their Blue Box operations.

The Board also received an update on planning for the [2020 AMO Conference](#). There has never been a more important time to participate in the conference, with lessons learned from COVID-19, the future of municipal services, firsthand interaction with the Province, and the opportunity for [delegation meetings](#) to advocate directly on behalf of your community. The [program](#) will also feature new elements, including AMO's first Women's Leadership Forum and a panel of industry leaders charting Ontario's path to recovery. [Registering for the conference](#) is another way you can support AMO's important work.

Finally, the AMO Board expressed its thanks to members for the remarkable leadership of municipal councils and extraordinary municipal public administrators in responding to the COVID-19 emergency, keeping people safe, maintaining essential services and social cohesion, and building a foundation for economic recovery.

Thank you for supporting AMO and the work we do on your behalf.

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