

# Remarks for the Honourable Bill Mauro

Minister of Municipal Affairs

## 2017 Northwestern Ontario Regional Conference

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Victoria Inn  
555 Arthur Street West  
Thunder Bay

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## **Introduction**

- Thank you for that kind introduction, Mayor Landry [Wendy Landry, Mayor, Municipality of Shuniah and President, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)].
  
- Earlier this week I had the opportunity to celebrate the outstanding career of Lyn McLeod at Queen's Park.
  
- Lyn was honoured with the 2017 Distinguished Service Award by the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians.

- I had the honour to speak at the reception, and talk about Lyn's long-standing commitment to northwestern Ontario.
- She was a trailblazer, being the first woman in Ontario ever elected to lead a political party.
- Well I'd be remiss if I didn't note that our very own Wendy Landry is also a trailblazer.
- In 2016 she was recognized for her leadership by the Influential Women of Northern Ontario.

- Among her many, many accomplishments, Wendy is the first First Nations woman in Ontario to serve as mayor.
- Wendy... You're a tremendous advocate for the North, and we are very fortunate to have you as president of NOMA.
- Good morning everyone ...
- ... and welcome to the 2017 Northwestern Ontario Regional Conference.

- My ministry is pleased to partner with the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) to bring you this event.
- This is an excellent opportunity to discuss the importance of maintaining strong municipal-provincial partnerships ...
- ... to ensure ongoing fiscal sustainability, and continuing to build up Ontario through investments in infrastructure.
- Many of you attended the AMO annual conference held last month in Ottawa.

- There, I talked about the important partnership between the province and municipalities ...
- ... and about our government's record in addressing 10 out of the 12 asks that AMO put forward in 2011.
- I think you would agree that 10 out of 12 is a pretty great score.
- And in many cases, we exceeded expectations.

## **Provincial Support/Uploads**

- In the years since we were granted the privilege to lead this great province, our government has uploaded significant costs from municipalities.
- We've uploaded public health funding from 50 per cent provincially funded to 75 per cent.
- And we've uploaded \$125 million in court security costs.
- As we complete the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review in 2018, provincial support to municipalities will total more than \$4.2 billion annually.

*[Provincial Support Table on screen]*

- Our government has increased overall support to municipalities by 264 per cent since 2003 — that's over three-and-a-half times more funding.
- This means that Kenora is benefitting from an additional \$5 million annually as a result of OMPF and the uploads.
- This works out to an average of \$503 per household.



- Support to Red Lake is about \$1.7 million, or \$451 per household.
- That goes a long way in a small community.
- And it clearly shows that working with municipalities and ensuring that they are financially sustainable is a priority for our government.

## **Infrastructure Investments**

- Now, I'd like to turn your attention to infrastructure.

- In addition to uploads, our infrastructure investments are critical in helping municipalities catch up, build and move ahead.
- This is part of our plan to invest a total of \$190 billion over 13 years to build and upgrade our critical infrastructure ...
- ... the largest investment of its kind in Ontario's history.
- I think we can all agree that these investments are long overdue.

- If not now ...
- ... when Ontario's economy is doing relatively well ...
- When? The time is right to invest, to catch up on long overdue projects in your communities, or to build new infrastructure that will serve for decades to come.
- Small, rural and northern municipalities are receiving help through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund to build and repair roads, bridges, and water and wastewater systems in their communities.

- What's more, we are tripling that fund to \$300 million per year by 2018-19 ...
- ... with \$200 million of that to be distributed through stable, formula-based funding.
- That's predictable, bankable, stackable money.
- And we're cost-matching a portion of the funding set aside in the federal government's Clean Water and Wastewater Fund.

- This fund has provided over \$569 million in federal infrastructure investments across the province.
- If you recall, it was first announced as a 50 per cent federal, 50 per cent municipal cost-share program.
- Prior to the federal government announcing this funding ...
- Our government had already announced our allocations for OCIF.

- We realized that without further provincial funding, you wouldn't be able to fully maximize the federal program.
- I worked with my colleague, the Minister of Infrastructure Bob Chiarelli...
- To secure approximately \$270 million new dollars, to cover half of the municipal share.
- And ensure that OCIF funding could be used and was eligible for the remaining 25 per cent municipal portion of the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund projects.

- This means priority projects can potentially be 100 per cent funded with federal and provincial money ...
- ... preventing these costs from weighing down your local tax base.
- Our government also listened to your concerns about providing support all municipalities ...
- Even those without water and wastewater assets.

- Working with Minister Chiarelli, we made sure allocation-based funding was made available to all 444 municipalities in Ontario to support not only water and wastewater projects ...
- But also ditch and culvert projects in your communities.

### **Local Infrastructure Projects**

- Now I'd like to spend a little time showing what these investments look like on the ground, in your communities.
- Here in Thunder Bay, thanks in large part to \$14 million in federal and provincial funding through the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund ...



- Prince Arthur's Landing opened in December 2011 as part of the city's waterfront redevelopment.

*[Prince Arthur's Landing slide on screen]*

- It's been featured in many design publications, including Canadian Architect and World Architecture News.
- In addition, thanks to our Building Ontario program, we have 16 school projects completed, underway or planned in Thunder Bay.

- Ogden Community School and Centre is being improved to better serve the east end of the city.

*[Ogden Community School slide on screen]*

- And several blocks northeast of here, St. Thomas Aquinas School is also benefiting from the Building Ontario program.

*[Thomas Aquinas School slide on screen]*

- I want to add that a grade 6 pupil from St. Thomas Aquinas was one of only 12 bursary winners across Canada to attend the “Me to We Social Justice and Leadership” summer camp in Bethany, Ontario last month.
- When I hear things like that, it reminds me why we are doing what we do.
- We’re community builders ...
- ... and while that is often measured in the buildings, the streets and the bridges we help get built ...

- ... what it really means — and what really matters — can't be seen on a map or in an aerial photo.
- It's the people we help support and raise. It's our family and our neighbours' families.
- It's the kids who grow up to continue and lead the community into the future.
- That's what a community really is.
- And the province is partnering with you to build and support your communities across the northwest.

- In Greenstone, they've renovated the existing Legion building into the Beardmore Multi-Purpose Centre ...

*[Beardmore slide on screen]*

- ... giving residents easier access to municipal programs and services.
- It includes a community library, health centre, community room, and a municipal office.

- This investment supports community growth, economic development and ensures that area residents have easy access to important local services.
- In 2017-18 our government is investing \$630 million in northern highway infrastructure to make travel safe and easier.
- The Northern Highways Program provided \$6.9 million to rehabilitate the Pelican River Bridge in Sioux Lookout.

*[Pelican Bridge slide on screen]*

- The bridge was originally built in 1966 and has provided countless people with access to Sioux Lookout ever since.
- The province invested \$4.3-million to replace culverts on Highway 595 in Gillies through the Northern Highways Program.
- Now projects like culverts don't necessarily grab headlines, but they are essential to keep people and goods moving throughout the North.

- In addition to our investments through the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, the Building Ontario program and the Northern Highways Program ...
- We are providing steady, long-term funding for northern communities to develop and renew their infrastructure through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF).

*[OCIF map slide on screen]*

- In Nipigon, Mayor Harvey and his council will receive \$1.1 million to rehabilitate the Nipigon Water System Reservoir.



- And in Ignace, Mayor Kennard (pronounced ken-ard) and council will receive more than \$900,000 for needed repairs to West Beach Drive.
- In addition to increased funding and uploads, I want to touch on some of the other work our government is undertaking ...
- ... like improving land use planning through proposed reforms to the Ontario Municipal Board.

- We all recognize that local elected officials and the public deserve a stronger voice in planning for growth and land use in their own communities.
- Our proposed Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, if passed, will give you that voice.
- There would be greater deference to municipal decisions if they align with local and provincial land use plans and policies.

## **Bill 68 – Modernizing Ontario’s Municipal Legislation Act**

- We are also trying to lessen the burden on you with regard to municipal legislation, through the changes in the Modernizing Ontario’s Municipal Legislation Act.
- For the regulation regarding the prudent investor standard, we plan to hold a public consultation this fall (TBC).
- We will also be providing further details on the regulation through that process.

- The regulation needs to be in place and relevant sections of the Act need to be proclaimed before municipalities can make changes to their investment portfolios.
- We are working to have this new regulatory framework in place to come into force as early as January 1, 2018.
- We heard you when you said that municipalities need more time to implement the legislation's new provisions.
- In response, we are considering a two-phase approach.

- The provisions regarding municipal meetings will come into force on January 1, 2018.
- Other provisions dealing with codes of conduct and integrity commissioners will come into force in March 2019.
- We heard your concerns, and we listened.

### **Building Code**

- As you may have read, wood construction for multi-story buildings is beginning to pick up.
- Currently, the Building Code allows for wood construction for buildings up to six storeys.

- We're now exploring new ways to build even taller wood buildings.
- In Toronto, there is a proposal for a 12-story wood structure on George Brown College's waterfront campus.
- This would be Ontario's first tall-wood institution.
- The college also plans to open Canada's first tall-wood research institute.
- This is great news for the North.

- Forestry has always been, and will continue to be, a key component of our northern economy.
- The forestry sector creates thousands of jobs and sustains the local economies of more than 260 communities across Ontario.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has been working on a guide to help designers find alternative ways to build tall wood buildings that meet the standards of the Building Code.
- The guide is expected to be released later this year.

- And this past July, my ministry launched Phase Two of the public consultation for the next edition of the Building Code.
- In that edition, we are proposing to significantly reduce carbon emissions from new buildings.
- This is part of our fight against the effects of climate change.



- My ministry is working closely with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and Ontario's building and construction industry to find innovative and practical ways of saving energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Legalization of Cannabis**

- You've also raised concerns about the legalization of cannabis.
  
- As you know, the federal government is moving forward with its plan to legalize and regulate cannabis in Canada.

- Here in Ontario, as you may have seen from our announcement a few weeks ago, we are committed to getting this transition right, and bringing forward decisions that align with our priorities.
- To protect youth, promote public health and safety, focus on prevention and harm reduction, and eliminate the illegal market.
- Even as it becomes legalized, cannabis will continue to be a carefully controlled substance in Ontario ...

- ... subject to strict rules when it comes to both lawful use and retail distribution.
- Municipalities are critical partners in the implementation of a safe and effective retail and distribution system.
- We have been consulting with municipalities, including extensive conversations with AMO to understand your concerns, including interests in sharing revenue and store locations.

- We also understand that municipalities are seeking funding to address the impacts of legalization.
- Revenue is highly uncertain, as there are many unknowns, including the federal taxation approach, product pricing and supply and market conditions.
- Once we know what the federal government is proposing in terms of pricing and taxation, we will have a dialogue with our municipal partners.

- Until then, Ontario will carefully monitor the transition to federal legalization.

## **Ring of Fire**

- Another initiative we all have an interest in here in the northwest is the Ring of Fire.
- The province is committed to development in this area.
- We are working hard to lay the important groundwork necessary for smart, sustainable and collaborative development in the region.

- Part of that groundwork includes the Regional Framework Agreement negotiations table and the Jurisdiction negotiations table.
- As you know, we recently announced that we are working with Webequie (pronounced weh-be-kway), Marten Falls and Nibinamik (pronounced ne-bin-amick) First Nations to plan and construct year-round access to their communities and into the proposed Ring of Fire developments.
- The Premier has been clear that she will work with those First Nations who are ready to move forward on roads ...

- ... and that the Regional Framework Agreement and Jurisdiction discussions will continue in parallel.
- Environmental Assessments will begin this January and we will break ground on the roads in 2019.

## **Conclusion**

- Our government will continue to work with you to make Northwestern Ontario even greater.
- I know you work hard for your communities, and I'm committed to supporting your work.

- Thank you – I now have time to take a few questions.

[Question and answers]

### **Long Standing Service Award**

- I'd like to invite my colleague Minister Michael Gravelle to come up and say a few words, as well as help me present a special award.
  
- Michael (2-3 minutes)



- The strength of Ontario lies in its people – including the hardworking and committed municipal politicians who work every day to drive the success of their communities.
- It's my pleasure to honour Gustav Krause (pronounced goos-taav k-r-ows), a Councillor from Township of Schreiber, for his 25 years of service.
- Gustav – also known as Bob – began his career in municipal politics in 1972.

- Bob has always been and continues to be a great spokesperson for the Township of Schreiber...
- He has served the community as a councillor for 13 years and proudly represented the township as mayor for 12 years.
- Please join me in commending Bob for his commitment to the people of Schreiber.
- Your dedication and contributions are very much appreciated.

[Photo op with Gustav Krause]