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April 5, 2016

Grant Crack, MPP
Chair, Standing Committee on General Government
Bill 172, *Climate Change and Low-Carbon Economy Act, 2016*
c/o Sylwia Przezdziecki, Committee Clerk

Dear Mr. Crack,

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario would like to provide its strong support for Bill 172, the *Climate Change and Low-Carbon Economy Act, 2016* to you and the members of the Standing Committee on General Government.

Municipal governments in Ontario have long taken climate action to heart. We have invested in transit, green buildings and development standards, active transportation, sewer separation and stormwater systems as well as waste reduction, landfill gas, and streetlight replacements.

We know that these actions lower greenhouse gas emissions and that they make our local economies more sustainable. In fact, municipal governments believe that the low-carbon economies we are seeking to build can only be built with investments in our communities and the services which support them. But there is more to be done. To that end we were pleased to see municipal services in the Bill 172 Schedule 1 as eligible for investments.

However, to make the transition to a low-carbon economy as quickly and successfully as possible, we believe that there are some other issues in need of your attention as you and the Standing Committee members consider this Bill and lay out the framework for Ontario's low carbon future. Specifically, these are:

1. The need for dedicated and stable funding for municipal governments to draw on to plan and make investments in low carbon, sustainable communities. Transit, cycling lanes, waste reduction and management, water conservation and wastewater energy recovery, low emission buildings and development are all examples of initiatives that need support.

2. Climate adaptation and infrastructure resilience need their own dedicated funding. All communities across the province will need to adapt to a changing climate, whether in the north or south, over 1 million residents or under 1,000. The recent past flooding in communities like Burlington, Wawa, Bracebridge, and Minden Hills underscores this. AMO is pleased that the federal government has created a Green Infrastructure Fund specifically to help with adaptation and if we are to be successful, Ontario must do the same.
3. Better climate modelling and energy mapping to help municipal governments make the right investments at the right time for our communities and this is a role the provincial government could play.
4. The cap and trade market must recognize municipal GHG reducing projects through offset credits which can be marketed to emitters. This would create a modest but meaningful opportunity for reinvestment in communities. If municipal projects were recognized historically, back to the year 2000, for these credits, this would allow communities to realize an immediate benefit from their previous actions to be put toward future ones.

We hope that as you and the Standing Committee on General Government members review this Bill, you will think of the kind of communities you and your constituents want to live in. Investing in municipal services can increase productivity and quality of life for all our businesses and residents and underpins provincial and national prosperity. AMO urges you to fully consider the issues we have raised and to return the Bill to the Legislature for Third Reading.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara
AMO President

Attachment – AMO’s Submission to the Government on Cap and Trade and Climate Change Partnership