

LUMCO

Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario

BY EMAIL: finapbc-cpb@parl.gc.ca

August 1, 2014

File: A16

RE: **LARGE URBAN MAYORS' CAUCUS OF ONTARIO (LUMCO) FEDERAL BUDGET SUBMISSION**

Dear Christine Lafrance,

Thank you for providing an opportunity for Canadians to participate in the 2015 Federal Budget. I am writing to you on behalf of the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO). As the Mayors of the 26 cities with over 100,000 residents, LUMCO represents 67% of Ontario's population.

We are pleased to see that many of the 2015 pre-budget consultation themes overlap with the issues affecting Ontario's big cities, such as jobs and infrastructure. I would like to take this opportunity to outline the key priorities affecting Ontario's Big Cities, so that they may be considered as part of the budget consultation.

Gridlock & Transit/Transportation

The Mayors of Ontario's Big Cities are united on the need for new funding to invest in roads and transit. Families and businesses agree: gridlock is one of the most important issues facing our communities today. It's costing us jobs, investment, and wasting our precious time stuck in traffic. Investment to date has not been enough, and the results are clear: overloaded subways and busses, and highways jammed with traffic. Our businesses and residents need it fixed. We believe it's time for government leaders to commit to investing in breaking gridlock. It's time to take a serious look at raising new revenue or allocating existing funding to transportation infrastructure. Although we are encouraged by the Federal Government's announcements of infrastructure plans, it remains unclear as to whether the funding announced represents a drop in federal support for this critical national priority, as the allocation of this funding is undetermined.

Emergency Services Costs

Municipalities recognize that emergency services professionals work in dangerous settings and should be highly respected. However, labour costs and increases within the emergency services sector continue to rise at rates that are exceeding those in other sectors and include higher wage increases, better benefits and retirement plans. Such increases are not being enjoyed by most taxpayers. In addition, the disproportionate increase of costs in the emergency services sector is adding to the eroding ability of municipalities to fund key projects and essential programs. The Federal government needs to partner with other levels of government to address this unsustainable situation.

Ajax
Barrie
Brampton
Brantford
Burlington
Cambridge
Chatham – Kent
Greater Sudbury
Guelph
Hamilton
Kingston
Kitchener
London
Markham
Milton
Mississauga
Oakville
Oshawa
Ottawa
Richmond Hill
St. Catharines
Thunder Bay
Toronto
Vaughan
Waterloo
Whitby
Windsor

.../2

Job Creation

Job creation is a pressing issue in our country, as employment growth since the recession ended has been inconsistent and, in 2014 in particular, disappointing. Ontario's Big City Mayors believe that although all levels of government are working to create jobs and grow the economy, too often this is done in isolation. We are in need of a diverse and robust jobs strategy for Ontario and Canada.

As Mayors we are calling on our partners in the Provincial and Federal Governments to work with city leaders to develop a diverse and robust Jobs Strategy, which would include actions to address:

- Labour Market Reform: skills training/apprenticeship programs; immigration reform;
- expansion of international trade and foreign direct investment through a new, coordinated trade agenda shared by Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments;
- infrastructure investment that targets the problems that hold our economy back, particularly aging transportation infrastructure and the under provision of public transit

This strategy will result in job creation and growth in the local, provincial and national economy. I would like to note, as well, the excellent work of a group of Ontario Mayors on the issue of protecting and expanding employment in the auto industry. This working group – the Ontario Auto Mayors – urge the Federal government to develop and pursue a national auto industry strategy that will help protect Canadian jobs and encourage expansion in this critical sector.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is a national issue and Ontario's Big City Mayors are calling on provincial leaders to upload the costs of social housing to the Province. However, this is an issue that demands the attention of all levels of government. With the ballooning prices of residential property in major Canadian cities, and long waiting lists for social housing, municipalities need the support of CMHC and associated funding to both maintain the existing supply of affordable housing, and begin to address the backlog. In particular, there are innovative approaches to affordable home ownership that can be explored through supportive Federal tax policy that can support lower income families, giving them pride of ownership and building equity. But it is only through a meaningful investment in capital projects in the affordable housing sector that we can begin to address this crisis, and at the same time, reduce costs to our hospitals, social services, and other government services.

The issues facing Ontario's Big Cities are the same ones facing many other Canadians. We look forward to the Federal Government's continued investment in Ontario's largest cities. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the 2015 Federal Budget. If you wish to discuss any of these issues further, I can be reached at officeofthemayor@barrie.ca or by contacting my office at 705-792-7900.

Sincerely,



Jeff Lehman
Mayor, City of Barrie
Chair, LUMCO

City of Barrie
70 Collier Street, P. O. Box 400
Barrie, Ontario L4M 4T5
Phone: 705 792-7900 Fax: 705 739-4265
officeofthemayor@barrie.ca www.ontariobigcitymayors.ca

Ajax
Barrie
Brampton
Brantford
Burlington
Cambridge
Chatham – Kent
Greater Sudbury
Guelph
Hamilton
Kingston
Kitchener
London
Markham
Milton
Mississauga
Oakville
Oshawa
Ottawa
Richmond Hill
St. Catharines
Thunder Bay
Toronto
Vaughan
Waterloo
Whitby
Windsor