

Newsletter

August 2025

EOWC Advocacy Update

EOWC Advocates for Rural Priorities at 2025 AMO Conference



Left-to-right: Mike Gladstone, Vice President, Utility Public Affairs and Communications, Enbridge; Lisa Thompson, Minister, Ministry of Rural Affairs; Bonnie Clark, Chair, EOWC; Kevin Mariott, Vice-Chair, WOWC; Pauline Rochefort, Parliamentary Secretary, Secretary of State (Rural Development); Christa Lowry, Chair, ROMA.

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) was proud to represent our 103 rural and small urban municipalities at the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference in Ottawa.

During the conference, the EOWC held a joint meeting alongside the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC). Together, we discussed shared rural opportunities and challenges, and committed to a unified stand in support of the Elect Respect campaign. We encourage all elected officials, organizations, and members of the public to join us in signing the pledge at www.electrespect.ca.

Throughout the week, the EOWC engaged in productive meetings with

provincial and federal leaders, opposition parties, and sector partners. These conversations focused on the key issues facing Eastern Ontario—from housing and infrastructure to healthcare and economic development.

These meetings included:

- Parliamentary Secretary, Jennifer McKelvie, Canada's Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities
- The Honourable Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Minister of Long-Term Care, Parliamentary Assistant John Jordan, Ministry of Long-Term Care
- Parliamentary Assistant Amarjot Sandhu, Ministry of Infrastructure
- Parliamentary Assistants Bob Bailey and Steve Pinsonneault, Ministry of Rural Affairs
- Premier's Office (Ottawa Regional Office), Scott Phelan
- Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP)
- Ontario Liberal Party
- Rebecca Bligh, President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Ontario Medical Association
- Hydro One

We were pleased to meet with partners and decision-makers throughout the conference to share our advocacy and highlight the priorities of eastern Ontario's rural communities.

[Read the EOWC's AMO 2025 briefing package](#)

The EOWC Submission: Federal 2025 Pre-Budget Consultation



The EOWC has submitted its 2025 Pre-Budget recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and the Department of Finance Canada, calling for federal action to support sustainable growth, infrastructure investment, and service delivery in eastern Ontario's rural and small urban communities.

The submission outlines seven key recommendations:

1. A modern, reliable fiscal framework for municipalities
2. Targeted rural and small urban support
3. Investment in trade and transport-enabling ports
4. Federal investment in municipalities and other subsidiary industries and supports to help advance the commitment to allocate 1.5% of GDP toward critical defence and security-related expenditures
5. Inclusive design of Build Canada Homes, recognizing Ontario's Municipal Service Manager role
6. Federal recognition of municipalities' role in housing and long-term care
7. Direct investment in modernizing municipally operated paramedic services

The EOWC continues to advocate for collaborative, cross-government solutions to strengthen the communities that form the backbone of Canada and its economy.

[Read the EOWC's submission](#)

The EOWC Participates in Roundtable on U.S. Tariffs and Ontario's Trade-Impacted Communities Program



Left-to-right: Bonnie Clark, Chair, EOWC; Victor Fedeli, Minister, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Chair Bonnie Clark and Director of Government Relations and Policy Meredith Staveley-Watson recently joined a roundtable hosted by Minister Victor Fedeli, focused on the impacts of U.S. tariffs and Ontario's \$40 million [Trade-Impacted Communities Program](#).

The EOWC welcomed the opportunity to highlight how this new program can help address the unique challenges faced by rural and small-urban communities in eastern Ontario.

EOWC Presents to Standing Committee on Bill 9: The Municipality Accountability Act



On July 14, EOWC Chair Bonnie Clark presented to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy regarding [Bill 9, The Municipality Accountability Act](#).

The EOWC supports stronger accountability measures to ensure respectful, harassment-free workplaces for municipal staff and elected officials. With the 2026 municipal election ahead, these protections are more important than ever.

[Read the EOWC's Committee Submission](#)

In The Media

EOWC Chair Bonnie Clark Appointed County Caucus Chair on AMO's Board of Directors



The EOWC's Chair, Bonnie Clark, has been appointed as the County Caucus Chair on AMO's board of directors, joining AMO's Executive Leadership Team to represent counties' voices in meetings with the Ontario government.

Ontario Invests \$5M+ to Train 2,900 Workers in Northumberland & Peterborough

The [Ontario government is investing over \\$5 million through the Skills Development Fund](#) (SDF) to help more than 2,900 youth, jobseekers, and apprentices in the Northumberland and Peterborough regions prepare for in-demand jobs in skilled trades, construction, manufacturing, aviation, and more.

This investment supports hands-on training, mentorship, and paid placements, helping workers gain the skills needed to succeed—especially amid challenges from U.S. tariffs.

Key projects:

- Junior Achievement of Northern and Eastern Ontario: \$609K for skilled trades training and mentorship for 2,650 students
- Northumberland Builders & Construction Association: \$230K for mobile onsite training
- Nventure Business Development Corp.: \$562K to launch Canada's first VR tool for manufacturing recruitment
- OPCMIA Local 598 Training Centre: Nearly \$4M to train apprentices and pre-apprentices in restoration trades

South Frontenac Receives \$3.2M to Unlock Housing Opportunities



The [Township of South Frontenac in the County of Frontenac have secured \\$3.2 million through the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund](#). This critical investment will help unlock up to 1,150 new housing opportunities and drive long-term economic growth in the Verona area.

Meredith Staveley-Watson Featured on Podcast Discussing the Future of Local Government

#FEMPIRE

EPS. 18

TOPIC

*Redefining Municipal
Advocacy & Policy in
Ontario*

GUEST

*Meredith
Staveley-Watson*

*Director of Government Relations & Policy,
Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus*



Meredith Staveley-Watson, Director of Government Relations and Policy at the EOWC, is featured on the latest episode of Fempire.

Meredith shared insights on the financial realities municipalities face, the importance of strong local leadership, and how she's helping over 100 municipalities advocate for smarter, more sustainable policy.

[Listen to the FEMPIRE episode](#)

Partner Updates



EORN

EASTERN ONTARIO
REGIONAL NETWORK

EORN Partners with CIRA to Map Internet Gaps in Eastern Ontario

EORN, in partnership with the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), is collecting internet speed data to better understand the quality of connectivity across eastern Ontario.

By promoting and taking the CIRA Internet Performance Test, residents and businesses can help build a clearer picture of internet access in their communities. This data is vital for informing decision-makers and funders, guiding future investments to improve broadband service. The more tests completed, the stronger the case for bringing reliable, high-speed internet to all corners of the region.

[Take the test and help shape the future of connectivity.](#)

Regional Updates and News

Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada



Canada Invests \$748M in Ontario to Build Stronger, More Connected Communities

The [Government of Canada is investing over \\$748 million in Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario](#) through the Canada Community-Building Fund to support local infrastructure that strengthens communities and enables housing growth.

This funding will help build and improve roads, water systems, public transit, and community spaces across the province.

By investing in both essential and recreational infrastructure, the federal government is helping municipalities prepare for future housing needs while improving quality of life today.



Ontario Invests \$89M to Help Seniors Age Safely at Home

The [Ontario government is investing \\$89 million to make the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care \(CPLTC\)](#) program permanent, expanding it to serve even more communities, including First Nations. CPLTC offers 24/7 non-emergency medical care—like at-home treatments and remote monitoring—so seniors can safely remain in their homes and avoid unnecessary hospital visits.

Since its launch, CPLTC has supported over 81,000 people with more than 310,000 hours of care. This new funding will extend services to areas like Pikangikum and Weenusk First Nations, as part of Ontario's plan to strengthen long-term care by delivering faster, more convenient care where it's needed most.

Ontario Invests \$56.8M to Train 2,200 New Nurses by 2029

The [Ontario government is investing \\$56.8 million to expand nursing](#)

[education across the province, adding 2,200 new nursing seats](#) in colleges and universities by 2029. This initiative will grow the province's health-care workforce, ensuring more nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and registered practical nurses are available to meet rising health-care demands, especially in hospitals, long-term care homes, and community clinics.

The investment also supports flexible online learning pathways to help personal support workers and registered practical nurses advance their careers. An additional \$7.5 million will be provided to universities to upgrade clinical supplies and lab equipment, giving students access to the latest training tools.

Ontario Launches \$1B Financing Program to Protect Jobs Amid U.S. Tariffs

The [Ontario government has launched the Protect Ontario Financing Program](#), a \$1 billion initiative to support local businesses—particularly in the steel, aluminum, and auto sectors, hit hard by rising U.S. tariffs. This is the first phase of the province's broader \$5 billion Protecting Ontario Account, announced in the [2025 Budget](#).

The program will provide liquidity support through loans to help companies cover key expenses like payroll and utilities, protecting jobs and critical supply chains. Eligible businesses can apply through a dedicated website, where they'll complete a screening tool before being contacted for next steps.

Ontario Invests Additional \$1.6B in Housing Infrastructure to Support Growth and Jobs

The [Ontario government is investing an additional \\$1.6 billion into the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program](#) (MHIP), nearly doubling the fund to \$4 billion. This major boost will help municipalities and Indigenous communities build the essential infrastructure, like roads, bridges, and water systems, that is needed to support hundreds of thousands of new homes across the province.

Ontario Launches New Funding Model to Accelerate Long-Term Care Construction

The [Ontario government is introducing a new Capital Funding Program](#) (CFP) to make it faster and easier to build long-term care homes. The new model shifts from a fixed cost-per-bed approach to a flexible, percentage-based funding system, covering up to 85% of eligible construction costs based on regional conditions.

This approach aims to overcome barriers such as labour shortages and rising costs while helping not-for-profit, hospital, and Indigenous operators access funding earlier, so projects can break ground sooner.

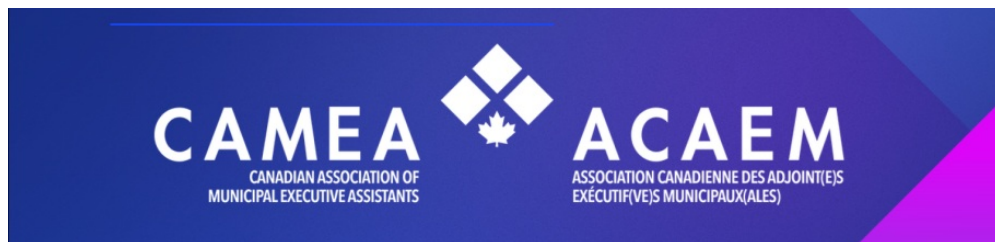
The program will help deliver on Ontario's plan to build 58,000 new and upgraded long-term care beds, with redevelopment projects like Maxville Manor already underway. The updated 160-bed facility will

feature modern amenities and is expected to open in 2027.

Ontario Invests \$70M to Support Workers Impacted by U.S. Tariffs

The [Ontario government is investing \\$70 million to support workers affected by U.S. tariffs and economic uncertainty](#). The funding will expand access to training and job support through two major initiatives:

- **\$20 million for Protect Ontario Workers Employment Response (POWER)** Centres, which will now offer proactive support—responding to layoffs within 24 hours and launching even before job losses occur. These centres will connect workers to training, job search help, and Employment Ontario services.
- **\$50 million for Better Jobs Ontario (BJO)**, offering up to \$35,000 per person for tuition, child care, and other supports to help jobseekers retrain for in-demand careers.



CAMEA's Building a Best Practices Library – and Needs Your Help!

The Canadian Association of Municipal Executive Assistants (CAMEA) is creating a members-only Best Practices Library featuring sample policies, templates, and checklists tailored to the unique roles of Executive Assistants in local government. Launching in January 2026, this library will be a go-to resource for Executive Assistants across Canada.

To make this resource as valuable as possible, CAMEA is inviting members to share non-confidential documents—final or draft—that others may find useful. Submissions can include municipal branding and be in English, French, or both.

High-priority topics include:

- Council meeting procedures,
- report templates,
- onboarding checklists,
- event planning tools,
- social media policies, and more.

Submit by September 30, 2025 to admin@camacam.ca with the subject line: CAMEA Library Contribution.

[View an example here.](#)

Upcoming Events



IESO Webinar: Electricity Planning from Peterborough to Kingston

The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) has launched regional electricity planning for the [Peterborough to Kingston region](#), which includes the Cities of Belleville, Kingston, Peterborough, Quinte West, Prince Edward County, the Municipality of Clarington in the Region of Durham, and the Counties of Hastings, Lennox and Addington, Northumberland, and Peterborough.

Join the IESO webinar on September 11, 2025, at 1 p.m. to learn more, review draft demand forecasts, and share your feedback.

Materials will be available in advance and written comments after the webinar are welcomed until October 2, 2025 to engagement@ieso.ca.

[Register for the webinar here.](#)



Unlocking Opportunity through Human Rights in Municipal Planning

AMO is offering a specialized workshop for elected officials titled "Unlocking Opportunity through Understanding Human Rights Requirements in Municipal Planning."

Taking place on September 11, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, this session will explore how applying a human-centered approach to land use planning can help municipalities secure funding, build community trust, ensure legal compliance, and drive local economic development.

[Register for the workshop here.](#)



P3s for Municipalities: 6-Part Webinar Series

The EOWC is excited to build its partnership with the [Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships](#) (CCPPP). CCPPP is offering the free P3s for municipalities webinar series available for municipal and Indigenous employees and elected officials across Canada.

Designed for those new to or seeking a refresher on P3 infrastructure delivery, the series covers fundamentals, opportunities, challenges, and tools for successful P3 procurement.

CCPPP is also introducing the Council's new municipal P3 recommendations and insights from the updated [Public-Private Partnerships: A Guide for Municipalities](#).

Upcoming webinars: September 16. Webinars will continue to be available on the CCPPP site.

[Sign up for the webinar here](#)



Ontario East Municipal Conference 2025

The Ontario East Municipal Conference returns from September 17–19, 2025, at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre, bringing together economic developers, municipal leaders, and industry experts from across the region.

As Eastern Ontario's premier economic development event, OEMC offers a unique opportunity for attendees to connect with key decision-makers, gain valuable insights from experts, and collaborate on strategies to drive regional growth.

[Register here.](#)

Eastern Ontario HOUSING SUMMIT 2025

PRESENTED BY



WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 8



REGISTER NOW

🕒 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
📍 Ottawa Conference & Events Centre
200 Coventry Road, Ottawa

Hosted By:



Eastern Ontario Housing Summit 2025

The 2025 Eastern Ontario Housing Summit will explore how to meet the region's anticipated growth over the coming decades, and the rising demand it brings, even amid a challenging market. The summit will focus on strategies to ensure a sufficient and sustainable housing supply for residents today and in the future.

The event will be taking place October 8, 2025 at the Ottawa Events and Conference Centre.

[Register here.](#)

WESTERN ONTARIO MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

October 17, 2025 | London, ON

Powering Ontario's Economic Engine

Western Ontario Municipal Conference 2025

The Western Ontario Municipal Conference (WOMC), presented by the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, offers dynamic programming focused on sharing knowledge, best practices, and strategies to support municipal success. This event is ideal for elected officials,

municipal staff (including administration, planners, social services, and economic development professionals), service providers, and provincial and federal partners

The event will be taking place October 17, 2025 in London Ontario.

[Register here.](#)



AMO Second Annual Healthy Democracy Forum

Join the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for the 2nd Annual Healthy Democracy Forum—a key event supporting local democracy ahead of the 2026 municipal elections. The forum will take place October 18-19 in Toronto at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel.

This year's Forum will spotlight two major initiatives from AMO's Healthy Democracy Project:

- Day 1: Explore strategies to increase voter turnout, attract and retain diverse candidates, and boost public engagement.
- Day 2: Dive into AMO's Municipal Civility and Anti-Harassment Strategy with tools and resources to foster respectful, safe, and inclusive municipal environments.

[Register for the forum here.](#)



EOWC Parliament Hill Advocacy Day

The EOWC is heading to Ottawa on October 21, 2025, to host its Parliament Hill Advocacy Day.

As part of the day's events, the EOWC will hold a breakfast reception and meet with ministers and senior staff to present and discuss the unique challenges facing rural and small urban communities across eastern Ontario.



AMO Forum on Trade, Tariffs, and the Municipal

Role in Long-Term Economic Growth

The international trade landscape remains in flux. U.S. tariffs introduced during former President Trump's administration continue to evolve, with their legality under review in U.S. courts. Potential new trade negotiations are also on the horizon, adding further uncertainty.

On October 24, AMO is hosting an event focused on what this uncertainty means for municipalities. The session will explore how tariffs could affect municipal revenues and expenditures, and how local governments can contribute to broader federal and provincial strategies aimed at building a more resilient and prosperous economy.

[Register for the forum here.](#)

Connect With Us on LinkedIn, Facebook and X



About the EOWC

The EOWC is a regional non-profit organization representing 13 upper and single-tier municipalities across eastern Ontario. The EOWC supports and advocates on behalf of 103 municipalities and serves 1.1 million residents. The EOWC covers an area of approximately 50,000 square kilometers from Northumberland County to the Québec border.

The EOWC has gained support and momentum by speaking with a united voice to champion regional municipal priorities and work with government, business leaders, the media, and the public.

Visit the EOWC's website at eowc.org.

Connect with the EOWC

2025 Chair, Warden of Peterborough County, Bonnie Clark

2025 Vice-Chair, Mayor of Prince Edward County, Steve Ferguson

Director of Government Relations and Policy, Meredith Staveley-Watson

info@eowc.org

Meredith Staveley-Watson, Director of Government Relations and Policy | 235 Pinnacle
Street | Belleville, ON K8N 3A9 CA

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