



## TOWN OF MINTO

**DATE:** May 26, 2016  
**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Bill White, CAO/Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Delegations 2016 AMO Conference

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### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

5.1 Actively and professionally seek out Federal and Provincial grants and revenue-sharing programs, and promote sustainable and equitable funding programs that require a minimal amount of reporting and promote local accountability.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The 2016 AMO Conference is August 14-17 in Windsor. With the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) and Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) splitting into separate events next year, AMO is now the largest conference where Council can seek delegations with Provincial Ministers regarding areas of municipal concern.

The following are delegations since 2011:

- February 2011 OGRA/ROMA Minister of Infrastructure Bob Chiarelli access to Provincial Gas Tax
- August 2011 AMO Rick Bartolucci Ministry of Municipal Affairs downtown incentives
- February 2012 OGRA/ROMA then Minister of Municipal Affairs Kathleen Wynn Source Water Protection integration with Provincial Policy  
Attorney General John Gerretson Joint and Several Liabilities
- August 2012 AMO Minister of Environment James Bradley Source Water Protection Implementation
- February 2013 OGRA/ROMA Minister of Environment James Bradley Source Water Protection Implementation, Town of Minto Resolution  
Minister of Transportation Glen Murray Connecting Link Funding
- August 2013 delegation Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Transportation jointly with Wellington North and North Perth regarding restoration of the connecting link program
- February 2014 Minister of Municipal Affairs Linda Jeffrey Streamlining Municipal Reporting
- August 2014 Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding streamlining reporting and Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act; Deputy Premier Deborah Matthews Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act; Minister of Agriculture Jeff Leal Rural Ontario Municipalities Economic Development Update; Minister infrastructure Sustainable Infrastructure Funding Model
- February 2015 Minister of Municipal Affairs Ted McMeekin Streamlining Municipal Reporting; Associate Minister of Health with responsibility for Long-Term Care Hon. Dipika Damerla, Strong Health Care Options Rural Ontario
- February 2016 Minister of Environment and Climate Change Glen Murray Regarding Infrastructure Resiliency, Climate Change Funding (“cap and trade”)

Normally the Town receives one or two of its delegation requests. While delegations do not always result in immediate action by the Province, the cumulative impact of this effort from all municipalities can impact future policy.

## **COMMENTS:**

Starting out 2016 staff was most concerned with Provincial initiatives in “Ombudsman oversight, climate change, and infrastructure resiliency. Since then Council has developed a complaint protocol that ensures most complaints are dealt with locally. More activity is not needed on this issue.

One key concern is the Town’s treatment by the Attorney General’s office regarding the transfer of ownership of the Harriston Lawn Bowling site. Following an inquiry by MPP Randy Pettapiece the agency advised it would not speak to him since the issue was “before the courts”. The Province preferred to have lawyers discuss the matter which simply drives cost up. This is not a contentious court issue. It is a simple order the Province can sign at any time. A delegation on this might bring some common sense into this issue.

The Town had significant success with the Rural Economic Development (RED) program over the years. The fund was used for downtown streetscaping, Lion’s Park and project development such as LaunchIT. Council supported resolutions calling for RED to be re-instated, but a delegation to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs would add strength to this concern.

The Province has since tabled changes to the Municipal Elections Act that could include a ranked ballot system among other rules. Interestingly enough the Canadian Prime Minister has proposed “ranked ballot” initiatives for the next Federal Election. Regulations are now out for comment before July 28. Council should have a chance to decide whether it would want a ranked ballot system in Minto, but a delegation outlining concerns is also possible.

With recent discussion around the fate of “natural gas” under the Provincial Energy Plan, it seems residents and business will pay much higher energy costs to meet targets set at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. AMO has begun to review the Climate Change Action Plan June 8. Municipalities will have a significant role implementing the plan, but the details are not determined. The Provincial position on “natural gas” in 2015 encouraged municipalities to find “creative” ways to extend gas into rural areas, a position supported federally. Natural gas is the last affordable home heating source left now that electricity and oil have been “taxed”. Under “cap and trade” government “tariffs” could increase natural gas costs and eliminate it as a competitive choice in favour of a lower carbon alternative. There have been a number of resolutions through correspondence opposing action against natural gas including actions by MPP Randy Pettapiece (see attached). Council could add its voice to those concerned with these actions.

Expanding municipal revenue generating options (such as share of the gas tax) to help fund rural infrastructure has been considered as a Town delegation before. The challenge in this case is that the Province just increased allocations to infrastructure by re-instating connecting link funding and enhancing amounts for OCIF and SCF in upcoming years. In Minto qualifying for grants is less of a problem than funding its share in available programs.

The Town has asked the Minister of Labour and Minister of Health to consider applying presumptive legislation on PTSD to emergency care nurses, similar to firefighters. To date neither Ministry has supported this request with the Minister of Health and Long Term Care writing Council in this regard recently.

The Town has at least one major property that receives property tax rebates even though the space is not rentable. There appears to be a flaw in the legislation that allows landlords to receive a property tax reduction with no intention of renting their building. There is also the issue of joint and several liabilities which is also an area of concern for Randy Pettapiece and remains a concern of most municipalities.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:**

Delegations are at no additional cost to the Town. Deadline for requests is June 29.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Council receives the May 26, 2016 report from the C.A.O. Clerk regarding delegation requests 2016 AMO Conference and that Council request a delegation with the Attorney General on transfer of the Harriston Lawn Bowling lands, re-instatement of the Rural Economic Development (RED) program and other issues of concern to Council.

Bill White, C.A.O. Clerk



**Randy Pettapiece, MPP**  
Perth-Wellington

Perth-Wellington Constituency Office  
Stratford, Ontario

May 26, 2016

Hon. Kathleen Wynne, MPP  
Premier of Ontario  
Room 281, Main Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A8

### **Open Letter to the Premier of Ontario**

Dear Premier:

Many of my constituents have contacted me regarding your government's deeply flawed draft "Climate Change Action Plan." They are right to be concerned about your \$7-billion draft plan as revealed in media reports. As it was described, you intend to:

- Ban natural gas heating for homes and small buildings built in 2030 or later;
- Ban natural gas from all buildings by 2050; and
- Spend \$3.8-billion in new subsidies to retrofit existing buildings and move them off natural gas.

Many people in Perth-Wellington rely on natural gas—and many more would benefit if the necessary infrastructure were in place, as it is in much of urban Ontario. Your draft plan is already undermining confidence in the viability of future investment in natural gas infrastructure. In addition, your draft plan strangely contradicts current government policies encouraging the use of natural gas. Just last year, your government announced the Natural Gas Access Loan and Natural Gas Economic Development Grant—both targeted to rural and remote areas now unserved by natural gas.

The bottom line is this: your draft plan would mean even higher energy costs for individuals, families, businesses, farms and municipalities. As you know, they are already paying among the highest electricity rates in North America as a direct consequence of your policies. If forced to convert from natural gas to electric heating, the average household heating bill would rise sharply by \$3,000 a year. That's in addition to up-front conversion costs of \$4,500. If it is your position that we in Perth-Wellington can afford this, you are sorely mistaken.

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We recognize your draft plan is not yet government policy. However, we in the official opposition have repeatedly asked you to clarify your intentions but you have refused to do so. Your promises not to ban natural gas ring hollow when, at the same time, you are refusing to disavow the effective ban as contained in your draft plan. Your lack of consultation, lack of transparency and lack of interest in the energy needs of rural and small-town Ontario is completely unacceptable.

As you should know, your draft plan comes as many communities, including Perth East, which I am privileged to represent, are actively trying to secure approval for natural gas access. Communities have been working on this over a period of years, and I have consistently supported them. I wrote to you and your ministers of energy and economic development to do everything possible to support natural gas access in Perth East. Last week I questioned your Minister of Energy on your draft plan, but he provided no reassurance whatsoever.

We need you to abandon your draft "Climate Change Action Plan," and we need you to do it now. Our future ability to access clean, affordable energy, including natural gas, hangs in the balance.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Randy Pettapiece, MPP  
Perth-Wellington

- c: Hon. Bob Chiarelli, Minister of Energy  
Hon. Glen Murray, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change  
Hon. Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure  
Hon. Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
Municipalities in Perth-Wellington