



March 22, 2023

Via e-mail: minister.mah@ontario.ca

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
College Park 17th Flr, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Clark:

Re: Strengthening Municipal Codes of Conduct

I am writing to you to draw your attention to the immediate need for the government to act and bring forward a government Bill to implement changes to strengthen municipal Codes of Conduct and allow, in certain cases, the removal of members.

Ethical behaviour and respectful discourse are fundamental to retaining trust in democracy and the institutions of local government are no different. Municipal politicians and staff are deeply concerned with the growth in disrespectful, cynical and at times abusive conduct between council members. In recent years, there have been many incidents involving municipal council members whose behaviour has clearly crossed the line with colleagues, staff members or the public. Councils have few options to take appropriate action to discipline the member or enforce the Codes of Conduct all councillors agree to upon taking office. This impedes our abilities to maintain and improve trust with the public for what is their most accessible and direct form of government.

The citizens of Ontario deserve better. One solid step forward would be to strengthen municipal Codes of Conduct, improve the training and consistency of Integrity Commissioners work, consider putting in place administrative penalties for certain infractions to improve compliance with municipal Codes and ultimately, allow removal from office if recommended by an Integrity Commissioner and approved through an application to a judge. ROMA believes these changes have support amongst municipal governments and would send an important signal about the professionalism required of these offices.

We call on you to move legislation forward as soon as possible to put these changes into effect. ROMA will continue to work with your Ministry and the Association of the Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to preserve and enhance local government for our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robin Jones

Chair

cc: Colin Best, President, AMO
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier