

Sent via email to: premier@ontario.ca

March 27, 2023

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

RE: Municipal Codes of Conduct

Ethical behaviour and respectful civil discourse are fundamental to maintaining public respect for our democratic institutions. When the behaviour of elected representatives falls short, democracy suffers. That is why I am writing to you to urge introduction of legislation to update municipal Codes of Conduct and improve enforcement.

In recent years, incidents of disrespectful, uncivil, and egregious conduct by some municipal council members have occurred that have clearly concerned the public, municipal staff, and elected members of councils. Without adequate tools to enforce compliance with our Codes of Conduct and to discipline members found to have violated them, municipal councils have found themselves unable to meet public expectations.

Ontario's citizens deserve better. In 2021, AMO supplied strong [recommendations](#) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Steve Clark to enhance municipal Codes of Conduct and compliance by:

- Updating municipal Codes of Conduct to account for workplace safety and harassment
- Creating a flexible administrative penalty regime that can be adapted to the local economic and financial circumstances of municipalities across Ontario

- Increasing training of municipal Integrity Commissioners to enhance consistency of investigations and recommendations across the province
- Allowing municipalities to apply to a member of the judiciary to remove a sitting member if recommended through the report of a municipal Integrity Commissioner

At its most recent meeting on March 24th, 2023, the AMO Board reaffirmed its recommendations and additionally recommended that a member removed through application to a judge be prohibited from sitting for election in the term removed and the subsequent term of office.

AMO believes that these changes will improve the working environment of municipal elected and staff officials and send a strong signal regarding the standard of conduct expected. They will also help to protect anyone that may be subject to egregious behaviour and help make municipal government more welcoming while helping residents continue to have the utmost confidence in their local elected officials and institutions. Enacting these changes in the near term will help to ensure our residents can continue to count on their local governments as their closest and most responsive public institutions.

AMO stands ready to work in partnership with your government. Together, we can take strong steps to preserve and improve public confidence in our democracy.

Sincerely,



Colin Best
AMO President
Halton Regional Councillor

cc The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing