

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

# STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION 2020**

1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament  
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The Honourable Ted Arnott, MPP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Sir,

Your Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs has the honour to present its Report and commends it to the House.

Amarjot Sandhu, MPP  
Chair of the Committee

Queen's Park  
March 2020



STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS  
MEMBERSHIP LIST

1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs conducted its pre-budget hearings in January 2020 in Toronto, Thunder Bay, Belleville, Kitchener-Waterloo and Niagara.

The Committee also visited Sioux Lookout, a small northern community and important hub for Indigenous people who live in Ontario's fly-in northern First Nations communities.

Witnesses included interested individuals and representatives from associations and organizations, businesses, community groups, municipalities, service agencies, and trade unions. In total, 149 witnesses appeared before the Committee. In addition, approximately 146 written submissions were received from individuals and groups who did not appear before the Committee.

The pre-budget consultation provides an important forum for citizens, stakeholders, and local government partners to discuss their social, economic, and program-related concerns with elected representatives. The submissions to the Committee are a vital part of the political process by which governments are held accountable for their decision making and administration by the electorate. We are grateful to witnesses who shared their personal challenges and struggles, putting names and faces to complex policy issues.

This report is an overview of the main issues raised by presenters during the pre-Budget consultation. Details of submissions by witnesses and their responses to questions by Committee Members can be found in the *Hansard* of the Committee's Proceedings. Committee recommendations and a list of witnesses, as well as the organizations and individuals from whom written briefs were received, appear at the end of the report.

## MINISTRIES

### Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs

The Committee heard testimony on the various challenges facing the agricultural sector arising from international pressures, pests, and limited domestic processing capacity, among other factors. Nearly all testimonies noted that continued cooperation with the federal government is required to bolster the Canadian market and develop capacity.

In particular the Beef Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association recommended increasing the cap on the Ontario Risk Management Program and the Self-Directed Risk Management program. Beef Farmers of Ontario also suggested Ontario work with the federal government to create a beef cattle investment and assistance program, and open up Crown land in northern Ontario for agricultural expansion. The Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers recommended that a third party agricultural ombudsman be established to mediate a common-sense approach to compliance and enforcement of provincial regulations in order to eliminate red tape.

To help address loss of market share due to recent trade agreements, the Ontario Dairy Council requested Dairy Tariff Rate Quotas be allocated to processors who are currently manufacturing dairy products in Canada, while Dairy Farmers of Ontario called for a moratorium on further market access openings while the industry adjusts to its diminished market share. Dairy Farmers of Ontario also stressed the importance of providing funds to train animal welfare inspectors enforcing Bill 156, the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019*, once passed.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture called for amendments to Ontario Regulation 697 under the *Land Transfer Tax Act* to clarify that an individual or individuals who own and control a farm corporation are deemed to have carried on farming exclusively on lands farmed by the corporations.<sup>1</sup> They also recommended the government allocate the 40% provincial contribution towards the Agri-Recovery Framework to participate in the federal-provincial program.

In reference to the need to reduce red tape, the Ontario Beekeepers' Association requested the government update the Pollinator Health Action Plan and establish a central contact at the Ministry to look after environmental issues affecting the sector.

### Attorney General

Recommendations concerning the Ministry of the Attorney General were focused on legal aid funding, addressing the rise of gun violence in cities, services for victims of crime, and programs to divert individuals from prison.

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<sup>1</sup> This recommendation was also made by the Northumberland Federation of Agriculture.

### *Diversion Programs*

The John Howard Society of Ontario requested immediate investments to expand programs which divert people out of jail, including the province's Bail Verification and Supervision Program, as well as the "bail bed" program (which provides an alternative to jail for those who otherwise would not be released). The Society also suggested three mid-sized jurisdictions could test out a pre-charge screening and approval model to increase rates of diversion and lower rates of incarceration.

### *Gun Violence*

Stakeholders representing municipalities and communities pressed for additional provincial action on gun violence, including prevention, enforcement, and victim support. The Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO) requested adequate funding for the Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence and stronger legislation on gun sales and the inspection of gun dealers and shooting ranges. LUMCO also requested the government consult with large municipalities to ensure there is support for community-level prevention and enforcement efforts.

### *Legal Aid*

Many stakeholders expressed concerns over the reduction in funding for Legal Aid Ontario and asked that funding be restored to previous levels, with particular concern for community legal clinics.<sup>2</sup> These stakeholders suggested the reduction in funding will lead to poorer outcomes for low-income people.

### *Victim Services*

The Committee received an extensive amount of feedback regarding services for support for victims of crime, particularly for women and children:

- The Community Advocacy and Legal Centre recommended the reinstatement of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board as well as funding to compensate victims of crime for their injuries, particularly victims of childhood physical and sexual abuse, and domestic violence.
- Waterloo Region Community Legal Services recommended restoring some aspects of the former compensation framework (such as compensation for lost employment income and pain and suffering payments) under the Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP).
- The Child Witness Centre recommended investing \$3 million annually for six Child and Youth Advocacy Centres in Ontario, as well as an additional \$450,000 to provide victim-centric support to young victims and witnesses of crime through the criminal court process in Waterloo Region.

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<sup>2</sup> Community Advocacy and Legal Centre, Don Valley Community Legal Services, Family Lawyers Association, Income Security Advocacy Centre, Local 160 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, Northumberland Community Legal Centre, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Society of United Professionals.

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, Faye Peterson House, and the Three Oaks Foundation also called for increases in Ministry-funded Violence Against Women services, including the Family Court Support Worker Program. The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians asked for more resources at the community level to address human trafficking, with a focus on prevention, data collection, and victim counselling.

## **Children, Community and Social Services**

### *Child Welfare*

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services administers Ontario's Child Protection Services program. Fifty Children's Aid Societies, including 12 Indigenous societies, have been designated to deliver child protection services throughout the province. According to the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, in 2019 approximately 42% of the province's agencies were in deficit against their allocation. They recommended adjusting the funding formula to better allocate funds, and investing at minimum an additional one percent per year for five years. They also requested additional money to support the transition of care to indigenous societies.

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians asked that the government work with First Nations to develop solutions to what they described as a child welfare crisis, shifting the emphasis from apprehension to prevention. Tikinagan Child and Family Services requested an additional \$4 to \$5 million to increase primary prevention services over a wide geographic area.

### *Community Services*

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses estimates that over two million women and children will experience or be exposed to gender-based violence, and noted that shelter space is critically important. While recent enhancements to Violence Against Women funding were appreciated, they requested that these enhancements become part of the sector's regular annual budget to provide stability to the sector.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, YWCA Toronto called for investment in poverty-reduction initiatives and culturally-responsive social and health services which support families impacted by violence.

### *Immigrant Settlement*

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants asked that the Province continue to invest in newcomer settlement and language training programs. The organization also asked that the Province ensure immigrants and the community-based organizations serving them are not negatively impacted by employment services transformation.

Reception House Waterloo Region asked for \$380,000 a year to support employment services such as job placement and workplace-based language training for government-assisted refugees.

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<sup>3</sup> Faye Peterson House and Three Oaks Foundation made similar recommendations.

### *Non-profit and Volunteer Sector*

According to the Ontario Non-Profit Network (ONN), the sector receives less than half of its revenues from governments, magnifying the impact of public investments in service delivery. To better support this sector, the ONN recommended the Province continue its efforts to streamline administrative processes by, for example, creating a joint table to consolidate transfer payment agreements, simplifying the police check process, and creating the equivalent of the Small Business Access portal for non-profits.

### *Social assistance*

Ontario has two main social assistance programs: the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works. A number of stakeholders indicated that the financial support provided by these programs is insufficient and suggested it be raised significantly to reflect costs of living. They also suggested that rates should be indexed to inflation.<sup>4</sup>

To be eligible for ODSP income support, recipients must also meet the definition of a “person with a disability” under the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997*. In November 2018 the Ministry indicated its intention to change the definition to align it with definitions used by the federal government. Some witnesses asked that the current definition be maintained.<sup>5</sup>

Recipients of social assistance can earn \$200 a month through employment without penalty; one-half of any additional amount earned is deducted from their financial support. The ODSP Action Coalition asked that the annual earning exemption be \$6,000 per year plus half of any additional earnings.

Also relating to social assistance, witnesses recommended the Province:

- maintain the independence and appellate functions of the Social Benefits Tribunal;<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change, Community Advocacy and Legal Centre, Community Legal Services of Ottawa, Don Valley Community Legal Services, Faye Peterson House, Friends Helping People End Poverty, Feed Ontario, Hamilton Social Work Action Committee, Health Providers Against Poverty, Income Security Advocacy Centre, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada Ontario and Nunavut Division, Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, ODSP Action Coalition, Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, Ontario Association of Social Workers, Ontario Campaign 2000, Ontario Federation of Labour, People First of Ontario, Poverty Roundtable Hastings Prince Edward, Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, YWCA Toronto.

<sup>5</sup> Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change, Community Advocacy and Legal Centre, Community Legal Services of Ottawa, Don Valley Community Legal Services, Feed Ontario, Health Providers Against Poverty, Income Security Advocacy Centre, Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, ODSP Action Coalition, Ontario Association of Social Workers, Ontario Campaign 2000, People First of Ontario, Poverty Roundtable Hastings Prince Edward, Waterloo Region Community Legal Services.

<sup>6</sup> Don Valley Community Legal Services, Income Security Advocacy Centre, ODSP Action Coalition.

- make sure that the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit is available to social assistance recipients who are tenants, without a reduction to their benefits;<sup>7</sup>
- eliminate the structured settlement payment penalties from ODSP;<sup>8</sup>
- change the definition of 'spouse' to match the definition used in family law;<sup>9</sup>
- treat CPP-Disability benefits as earned income (they are currently deducted dollar for dollar from social assistance);<sup>10</sup>
- reduce the social assistance overpayment recovery rate to 5%;<sup>11</sup>
- increase the Ontario Child Benefit;<sup>12</sup> and
- implement a universal basic income.<sup>13</sup>

### *Supports for Persons with a Disability*

#### Autism

Children and youth who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder are eligible for the Ontario Autism Program. As the Committee was consulting on the Budget, the Ministry was working towards developing a new needs-based and sustainable autism program. The Ontario Autism Coalition urged the Committee to implement the new program quickly, without caps, and to inform parents as soon as possible about the details so that they can plan accordingly.

#### Developmental Disabilities

Stakeholders asked the Ministry to make current levels of funding for services for persons with developmental disabilities, including recent enhancements, available every year on a predictable basis. They also asked that the Ministry merge Special Services At Home (which supports children), with Passport (which supports adults) into one streamlined program to avoid service gaps when transitioning from one program to the other.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the Lansdowne Children's Centre asked for a new, larger and accessible space to serve residents in Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit; and an individual asked that an Ombudsman provide oversight to the developmentally disadvantaged in agency care.

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<sup>7</sup> Don Valley Community Legal Services, Friends Helping People End Poverty, Income Security Advocacy Centre.

<sup>8</sup> McKellar Structured Settlements.

<sup>9</sup> ODSP Action Coalition.

<sup>10</sup> ODSP Action Coalition.

<sup>11</sup> ODSP Action Coalition.

<sup>12</sup> Ontario Campaign 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Poverty Free Thunder Bay.

<sup>14</sup> Community Living Essex County and Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs. Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region also raised concerns about the gaps between the two programs.

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## Colleges and Universities

Witnesses representing students, faculty, and administrators called for increased funding to cover tuition costs and to support students through programs that maintain health and promote career success.

### *Ontario Student Assistance Program*

Several student associations, recommended that Ontario restore the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) targeted free tuition program.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, requested that Ontario implement a two-year, interest-free grace period after graduation to ensure students are able to cover loan and interest payments, and define “mature” or “financially independent” students as those who have been out of secondary school for four years (instead of six years).

### *Postsecondary Funding Models*

Representatives of university administration and faculty voiced concerns about budgetary pressures due to existing funding models. The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) recommended the government increase public investment in Ontario’s universities to improve Ontario’s rank among other provinces in per-student funding by 2024-25, at an estimated annual cost of \$425 million. OCUFA suggested cost savings could be achieved by reverting to an enrolment-based university funding model and eliminating the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO). On the other hand, the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association recommended expanding the capacity of HEQCO to conduct research on post-secondary education. To avoid costs to government, Confederation College suggested that lifting the freeze on tuition could allow the sector to better offset inflation and help relieve cost pressures.

Additionally, Queen’s University spoke to the importance of investing in campus infrastructure and research, including green infrastructure, through grants or no-interest loans, and matching federal funding.

### *Programs for Skilled Trades*

The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers requested investing in apprenticeship programs. All Aboard St. Marys and AllRoads Dodge Chrysler Jeep Limited proposed the adoption of the German system of awarding bachelor’s degrees to those obtaining the highest level of qualification in the skilled trades (i.e., journey person) in order to address the skills gap in Ontario.

### *Services and Supports*

The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) called for dedicated funding to provide community-based mental health practitioners on campuses, and asked that the Province maintain the doubled funding for the Women’s

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<sup>15</sup> College Student Alliance, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association.

Campus Safety Grant, while adapting the terms of reference to ensure funds can be used for effective, evidence-informed programs.

### *Workforce Readiness*

All colleges and universities who testified spoke to the importance of integrated learning and investments to prepare students for the workforce.<sup>16</sup> To boost capacity, Queen's University requested targeted investments in work-integrated learning and early-career supports for new graduates to assist eastern Ontario employers to retain skilled talent in the region. Ryerson University recommended the government establish competitive grants for experiential learning opportunities, as well as short-term courses to enhance career upskilling and support new Canadians.

Colleges appearing before the Committee, including Confederation College and Loyalist College, requested the Province invest \$45 million over five years to enable colleges to create industry-specific Small Business Innovation Centres to provide businesses with market-responsive applied research.

## **Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade**

The Committee heard about the challenges facing small and medium-sized businesses, especially in rural, remote and Northern communities where recruitment, costs, and red tape hamper economic development. Many recommendations were heard with regard to initiatives to boost specific sectors and economic regions of the province.

### *Economic Development Opportunities*

The Investment Industry Association of Canada recommended that Ontario consider introducing a broadly-based, market-driven incentive to attract equity capital for new business formation and expansion of existing small and medium-sized businesses. Similarly, the angel investor network Equation Angels proposed that \$1 million in annual funding for three years be made available to 12 formal angel groups in Ontario to help build a pool of private capital for start-up companies.

In addition to recommendations geared to the province as a whole, a number of specific requests were made for regional or sector-specific economic development opportunities:

- The Waterloo-Region Economic Development Council requested Ontario increase funding to the Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation from \$250,000 to \$2.5 million to achieve parity with Toronto Global.
- The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada called on the government to implement a comprehensive framework to attract chemistry sector investments, modeled on frameworks used in Alberta, Pennsylvania, Texas and Louisiana.

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<sup>16</sup> Confederation College, Loyalist College, Queen's University, Ryerson University.

- Film Ontario requested the government reinstate the \$10 million Intellectual Property Development Fund, which provided support on a company basis for early stage development activities.
- The City of Guelph requested predictable, long-term funding to support local innovation hubs.
- The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers called for improved and increased government funding of the aerospace industry.
- Unifor recommended the Province ask General Motors Canada to allocate a new product and build vehicles at the Oshawa assembly plant again, and invest in electric vehicle technology to preserve and create auto jobs in Ontario.
- Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters requested that the government establish Regional Industry Councils to address the challenges facing the sector, particularly labour force development.

### *Immigration*

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business called on Ontario to work with the federal government to increase immigration pathways for lower-skilled workers. The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce recommended that eligible occupations under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) be expanded to include all high demand positions, and that OINP spots be allocated regionally to address labour shortages in small and rural communities. Furthermore, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario recommended increasing immigration pathways for international students.

Input from the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) focused on highly-skilled immigrants, recommending that Ontario ensure sustained support for proven employment bridging programs and for the work of the Ontario Fairness Commissioner to include reducing red tape for immigrant professionals.

### *Job Creation*

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recommended introducing new financial incentive programs for training skilled and unskilled workers. To assist blind or partially-sighted workers in particular, the CNIB Foundation suggested the government invest \$3 million (over three years) to support its “Come to Work” program which connects participating individuals with employers.

## **Education**

### *Elementary and Secondary Schools*

As the Committee was traveling to consult on the Budget, teachers were negotiating new collective agreements with school boards. Both sides were unable to discuss details of the negotiations.

## Administration and Funding

Witnesses raised concerns about overall funding levels, suggesting they were insufficient to address the needs of schools and should be increased. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association indicated that the top funding pressures are special education and mental health supports, student transportation, and capital related costs. Specific recommendations included:

- continuing to allow school boards to use accumulated surplus funds;<sup>17</sup>
- exploring options for shared services agreements and co-locating schools, which one organization suggested would be more effective than board amalgamation;<sup>18</sup>
- accounting for the high cost of delivering services in Northern Ontario;<sup>19</sup>
- requiring funds for school libraries and library staff to be spent on these priorities;<sup>20</sup>
- enhancing Daily Physical Activity funding;<sup>21</sup>
- introducing a dedicated Equity in Education Grant to ameliorate ethno-racial learning outcome inequities and disparities;<sup>22</sup>
- revising the student transportation funding formula to reflect school needs as influenced by enrollment density, geography, the number of special needs students and safety hazards;<sup>23</sup> and
- reducing restrictions (enveloping) on operating funds to increase school board flexibility.<sup>24</sup>

## Classroom and Curriculum

Organizations representing educators in elementary schools asked the Province to keep class sizes small and the kindergarten program in its current form.<sup>25</sup>

Those representing high school educators expressed concern about the Province's intention to introduce mandatory e-learning requirements.<sup>26</sup> The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, for example, suggested that e-learning will result in fewer resources for the classroom, higher failure rates for some students, and yield little educational value. The Ontario English Catholic

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<sup>17</sup> District School Board of Niagara.

<sup>18</sup> Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association.

<sup>19</sup> Lakehead District School Board.

<sup>20</sup> Ontario School Library Association.

<sup>21</sup> Start2Finish.

<sup>22</sup> Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change.

<sup>23</sup> Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association.

<sup>24</sup> Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association.

<sup>25</sup> CUPE Local 2141, CUPE Local 9102, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Lakehead District School Board, Ontario Federation of Labour.

<sup>26</sup> CUPE Local 2141, CUPE Local 9102, Lakehead District School Board, London and District Labour Council, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Ontario Federation of Labour, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Teachers' Association Niagara Secondary Unit asked that high school class sizes not increase in order to ensure that students have access to all types of courses, especially those required for careers in STEM.

Junior Achievement Central Ontario asked for \$1 million to deliver the More than Money program, which teaches financial literacy to children. The program would be offered in 1,000 classrooms in urban areas, and a digital tool would be developed for all teachers.

### Infrastructure

Witnesses urged the government to make greater investments in capital infrastructure.<sup>27</sup> For example, Fix Our Schools described a 20-year history of inadequate funding for school infrastructure, resulting in concerns about the safety of Ontario's schools. They asked that the Province develop a standard of good repair which addresses classroom temperatures, lead in water, air quality, and washroom and lunchroom conditions, and to begin to meet this standard by investing \$1.6 billion per year.

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association asked for a multi-year program to address capital needs to add an element of predictability for planning purposes.

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) asked that the Province modify or remove the restrictions in s. 10 of Ontario Regulation 20/98, under the *Education Act*, to allow all school boards to qualify for education development charges. The TDSB maintained that this revenue-neutral proposal would allow the Board to expand existing schools or build new schools in neighbourhoods experiencing significant population growth.

### Special Education

The Special Education Grant provides for special education teachers, psychologists, and various types of classroom supports such as educational assistants who work one-on-one with special needs students. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario explained that a significant portion of this grant is allocated based on a statistical model which uses demographic data rather than actual student need to allocate funds. Witnesses asked the Ministry to review the funding model and asked that the Committee recommend that overall investment levels be increased.<sup>28</sup> The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association added that resources are needed to address bullying and violence against teachers and educational workers.

### Child Care

Stakeholders asked for investments in child care in order to make it more accessible and affordable for parents. This included a number of local YMCAs

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<sup>27</sup> The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Toronto District School Board, and Waterloo Region District School Board are among those who also asked the government to invest in educational infrastructure.

<sup>28</sup> Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Thunder Bay ECE Unite, Toronto District School Board.

and the YMCA Ontario which welcomed additional investments in schools-based care but also asked that government expand community-based care. Some witnesses expressed concern that 2020 allocations to municipalities were reduced, and asked the Committee to recommend reinstating this funding.<sup>29</sup>

Witnesses also suggested:

- allocating \$635.5 million to base funding to support low or no fees for parents;<sup>30</sup>
- raising wages of child care educators to \$25 per hour to professionalize the sector and improve quality;<sup>31</sup>
- ensuring capital funding goes to non-profit and public organizations;<sup>32</sup> and
- continuing the \$2 per hour wage enhancement grant for child care staff, and expand it to include staff in EarlyON programs.<sup>33</sup>

The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario asked that the Province make legislative changes to make it easier for independent licensed centres to open and expand. It also recommended the creation of a self-service portal to allow families to apply for financial support.

## **Energy, Northern Development and Mines**

Many stakeholders described the high costs of electricity and argued that Ontario's rates, in comparison to other jurisdictions, are uncompetitive.

Several voiced concerns over the Global Adjustment fee in particular. The Global Adjustment is charged to all Ontario electricity customers, varies from month to month, and is intended to cover the cost of generating capacity and conservation programs in Ontario. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business called for increased transparency by providing more details on electricity bills regarding what is contained in the Global Adjustment fee. The Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario called on the government to reduce the Global Adjustment fee by reevaluating existing contracts and reducing Ontario Power Generation's revenue requirements. One individual suggested charging the Global Adjustment on export orders, arguing that the import of electricity was wasteful due to existing generation capacity.

There were also various recommendations for providing electricity rate relief, particularly to address business and industrial concerns. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business called for a 12% reduction in hydro rates for residents, small business owners and farmers, and the elimination of time-of-use

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<sup>29</sup> Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, Ontario Campaign 2000, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Owl Child Care Services of Ontario, Unifor.

<sup>30</sup> Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Owl Child Care Services of Ontario.

<sup>31</sup> Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and Owl Child Care Services of Ontario.

<sup>32</sup> Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

<sup>33</sup> Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

pricing for small business. Many stakeholders also commented on Ontario's Industrial Conservation Initiative, a program that allows customers to manage Global Adjustment costs by reducing demand during peak periods of energy use.

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters stated that high electricity rates for the manufacturing sector could be dealt with by, among other things, introducing a competitive industrial rate and returning the Industrial Conservation Initiative program to its original design criteria (3 megawatts). The Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario recommended Ontario adopt a "portfolio approach" for industrial electricity rate options in particular, which includes alternative rate options in addition to the Industrial Conservation Initiative. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recommended Ontario eliminate time-of-use pricing for small business and replace it with a model based on usage or other more flexible options.

Additionally, the Ontario Society for Professional Engineers stated the Ministry could implement new regulations where surplus emission-free electricity is priced separately from dependable electricity, and revise current legislation and regulations which prevent consumers from purchasing surplus emission-free electricity at its wholesale market energy price.

### *Energy Conservation*

Reep Green Solutions recommended the government implement energy labelling of homes at the time of sale.

### *Energy Supply and Alternative Forms of Energy*

Many stakeholders made recommendations regarding energy supply infrastructure. The Society of United Professionals recommended that Ontario Power Generation begin the process of investing in a new, publicly-owned and operated nuclear power station to replace the Pickering generating station. One individual suggested that bringing in generated electricity from Quebec could replace the loss of power from Pickering. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture suggested government continue to expand natural gas into rural areas.

The Canadian Solar Industries Association and the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers spoke to the need for expanding renewable forms of energy and allowing for distributed energy resources (i.e., small systems which offset the need for supply from the provincial system). The Canadian Solar Industries Association recommended that Ontario enable third-party ownership of solar in Ontario, permit Virtual Net Metering (also known as Community Solar), which allows for the purchase of solar electricity credits without the need to install solar systems, and remove the 1% Net Metering Limit under the Distribution System Code (Section 6.7.2) and replace it with a limit based on evidence.

The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers encouraged the government to invest in hydrogen technology and to specifically establish an industry forum that would bring engineers and business leaders together to develop a comprehensive strategy promoting the safe adoption and use of hydrogen. Additionally, a consortium of firms from the forest sector recommended reducing the base stumpage for biomass to encourage its use to produce heat and

electricity.<sup>34</sup> One witness made comments regarding wind power, stating it was expensive, intermittent, and out-of-sync with demand and that it should be phased out as contracts end.

### *Minerals and Mining*

A few recommendations were made with respect to expanding Ontario's mining sector. The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers called on the government to develop the Ring of Fire. Among specific policies to encourage development, the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce recommended the government provide front-end investments for mining projects, such as for infrastructure. A local prospector recommended implementing reforms to make the provincial system of mineral claims and land acquisition more equitable to all prospectors and technicians. This individual specifically recommended that access to Crown Land should require notification, rather than permission, for early low impact exploration.

Indigenous stakeholders generally noted the need to work with First Nations as partners in the course of land development. For example, Taykwa Tagamou Nation (TTM) recommended that the current notification systems be streamlined through a whole-of-government approach to uphold the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent. TTM also asked for funding to establish a lands and resources office to keep up with the current volume of permitting notification requests.

### *Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation*

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs sought to encourage snowmobiling by amending eligibility requirements for programs such as the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to include trail grooming. Film Ontario also suggested that NOHFC should continue to be supported to help build the film industry in Northern Ontario.

## **Environment, Conservation and Parks**

Recommendations concerning the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks were focused on water protection, climate change, and the operation of the Province's conservation authorities.

### *Access to Safe Drinking Water*

Testimony and recommendations regarding drinking water were focused on the need to ensure safe drinking water for Indigenous communities, in which access to this resource is a longstanding issue. In light of this, the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians recommended Ontario develop a new regulatory framework for drinking water that ensures funding for First Nations is triggered as soon as water does not meet quality standards. It also requested that Ontario place a moratorium on water bottling until there is conclusive evidence that water resources will not be compromised for future generations.

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<sup>34</sup> WRC Timber Inc., White River Forest Products Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Lumber Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Power Inc. (co-presented).

### *Climate Change*

Many stakeholders called for action to combat climate change. The Citizens' Climate Lobby recommended putting a high price on carbon and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, using the proceeds to compensate households and invest in retrofits and public transportation. Green Economy Canada called on the government to increase investments focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in programming to support the small and medium-sized business community with emissions reductions. The Anglican Diocese of Ontario recommended the government stop legal challenges against the carbon tax and commit Ontario to becoming carbon-neutral by 2050. The Society of United Professionals recommended fighting against climate change by supporting the shift towards electrification.

At the municipal level, the City of St. Catharines asked that the government take a more proactive approach in mitigating climate change and introduce legislation to support innovative green technologies, as well updated floodplain mapping.

### *Watershed Management and Flood Protection*

Conservation Ontario and the Ontario Society for Professional Engineers spoke to the need to develop effective policies to protect the watershed approach and build resilient watersheds necessary to address changing conditions created by climate change, including flooding. The Ontario Society for Professional Engineers specifically recommended updating the Province's flood plain and flood risk mapping, and developing a provincial strategy for flooding focused on prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. The Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario requested Ontario also work with the federal government to develop a National Flood Action Plan, which among other things, would map high risk areas.

However, while effective watershed management was widely supported, there were differing opinions regarding funding for Ontario's conservation authorities, the Province's 36 local watershed management agencies. Conservation Ontario asked the Ministry to reinstate conservation authority funding which was reduced in 2019, and to ensure sustainable funding for conservation authorities to deliver natural hazards programs and services. On the other hand, the Northumberland Federation of Agriculture called for limiting funding to conservation authorities to ensure they do not operate above and beyond their core mandate and outside of the regulated areas, and to improve overall governance, oversight and accountability of the authorities.

### *Other*

Other policy recommendations include the following:

- The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers requested the government develop a policy on plastic use, including a ban on single use plastics.
- The Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association of Canada recommended establishing a 25% rebate up to a maximum of \$1,000 to replace uncertified wood burning appliances with cleaner-burning alternatives, which would reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and other harmful emissions.

- Conservation Ontario recommended Ontario update technical guidelines that support an effective hazards policy.
- The Ontario Beekeepers' Association requested the government not proceed with the proposal to eliminate the tracking of pesticide sales and applications.
- The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario called on the government to ensure appropriate implementation of updated excess soil regulations.

## **Finance**

Different strategies were proposed with respect to Ontario's overall fiscal policy. Labour representatives recommended increased program spending and stated that increasing tax rates on larger businesses and individuals could generate revenue.<sup>35</sup> Industry representatives recommended Ontario continue on its path to balancing the budget within the current mandate, but did not support increases to business taxes.<sup>36</sup> Other stakeholders commented that while it is important to manage costs and the provincial debt responsibly, the budget must allow for strategic investments necessary to promote economic growth and prosperity.

### *Alcohol*

A number of stakeholders spoke of the need to improve the market for local beer, spirits, and wine, with notable representation from craft beer, craft wine, and spirit producers in particular. The Committee heard testimony that many Ontario brands of beer, wine, and spirits, are sourced entirely from the Province's agricultural products.

The Ontario Craft Cider Association requested that craft cider have a similar taxation structure to craft beer. Spirits Canada noted that spirits are taxed higher than beer and wine, recommending that Ontario immediately allow spirits to be sold in the grocery stores licensed to sell beer and wine, and that the Province lower the mark-up on spirits to balance out the increase federal excise duties on beverage alcohol.

A number of representatives from the wine industry also proposed changes to how wine is taxed. Ontario Craft Wineries asked that Ontario eliminate the VQA Retail Store Tax (i.e., 6.1% Wine Basic Tax) as it disadvantages smaller wineries that sell their wine at their wineries. They also urged Ontario to adopt the principles of a three-tiered distribution model and stop import taxing VQA/100% Ontario Grown Wine. The Grape Growers of Ontario specifically recommended Ontario maintain and extend the minimum floor price of \$10.95 at the LCBO and other new markets and that current tax subsidies should only be available to companies producing wines that are 100% grown in Ontario.

Until retail modernization is implemented, the Winery and Grower Alliance of Ontario and Grape Growers of Ontario asked that the VQA Wine Support Program (which provides grants to wineries) continue to operate.

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<sup>35</sup> AMAPCEO, Ontario Public Service Employees Union, CUPE Local 9102.

<sup>36</sup> Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario, Investment Industry Association of Canada.

## *Insurance*

Submissions this year were focused mainly on auto and flood insurance.

The Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario, the Co-operators Group, and Josslin Insurance urged the government to continue with reforms to auto insurance and lower costs. These groups recommended that Ontario support a risk-based approach where rates charged are proportionate to risk. The Co-operators also called for a focus on limiting the adversarial nature of the claims system, which could increase returns to consumers.

The Ontario Trial Lawyers Association called on the Province to implement reforms to auto insurance which ensure a fair and efficient tort system, a simple, easily accessible no-fault model that provides immediate short-term access to treatment and financial support, as well as reasonable protection with few potential areas of dispute and minimal transaction costs.

The Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario recommended the Province develop, with the federal government, a National Flood Action Plan that includes investments in flood defences, provides Canadians with access to affordable insurance, and ends the building of infrastructure and homes on flood plains. The Insurance Bureau of Canada also recommended Ontario work with the federal government and other provinces to develop high-risk insurance pools for residents in high-risk areas.

Aside from auto and flood insurance, the Co-operators Group recommended that licensed life insurance agents be able to use the title of “financial advisor” without being subject to the requirements of the *Financial Professionals Title Protection Act, 2019* or any accompanying regulations.

## *Financial Services*

Stakeholders from the financial services industry spoke in support of the government’s plans to modernize many aspects of the sector.

The Investment Industry Association of Canada supported modernisation of the securities regulatory framework, and suggested, as part of provincial efforts to support the modern capital market, the Province should repeal the *Toronto Stock Exchange Act* and amend the *Securities Act* to allow the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) to issue blanket orders.

The Ontario Co-operative Association recommended a five-fold increase on the limits for exemptions to submitting offering statements to the Financial Services Regulatory Authority, as prescribed under regulations to the *Co-operative Corporations Act*. According to the Association, these increases would account for inflation and other factors since the regulation was implemented, and are necessary for cooperatives to raise capital for growth and operations.

The Mortgage Professionals of Canada recommended that Ontario reconsider its suggested dual regulation of mortgage syndicators by both the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) and the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC), while continuing to support FSRA as it evolves its oversight over mortgage brokers. It also asked the Province to request the federal government make changes to the mortgage stress-test rules and increase the mortgage

amortization period for first-time buyers. Additionally, the Appraisal Institute of Canada (AIC) requested the Province ensure prudent underwriting procedures, including a requirement for an appraisal, are applied to and followed by Mortgage Investment Corporations (MICs).

Lastly, Concentra Bank recommended it be involved as part of the Ministry of Finance's modernization of the *Credit Union and Caisses Populaires Act, 1994*.

### *Tobacco and Vaping*

The Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division and the Heart and Stroke Foundation held similar views regarding tobacco and vaping, recommending an annual fee on the tobacco industry to subsidize tobacco control programs, and a tax on vaping products to curb youth vaping.

Imperial Tobacco Canada also noted the need to prevent youth from vaping, but recommended that policy decisions on vapour products not undermine their potential as a lower-risk alternative for adult smokers. The company recommended that Ontario introduce a harmonized excise tax regime applicable on liquids regardless of nicotine concentration with a minimum of 2 mL per closed system cartridge, and that tobacco taxes be maintained at their current level.

### *Tax Benefits*

The following recommendations regarding tax deductions and credits were made:

- The Council of Ontario Universities proposed new tax credits for small businesses that partner with universities to offer work-integrated learning opportunities.
- The Rural Opportunity and Investment Coalition suggested the Province provide a rural investment tax credit (RITC) designed to invest private capital into rural and northern areas of the Province, targeted to small to medium-sized business.
- Film Ontario recommended modernizing and streamlining film and television tax credits in Ontario to reduce red tape for business owners.
- The Christian Labour Association of Canada recommended the introduction of a volunteer firefighter tax credit for volunteer firefighters.
- The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario called on the government to expand the new Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) tax credit so that more families qualify for it, financed by repurposing child care funding.
- The Schizophrenia Society of Ontario supported a proposal to make tax credits for caregivers, such as the new Low Income Individuals and Families Tax (LIFT) Credit, refundable.
- One individual proposed that pet expenses should be tax deductible up to a reasonable amount.

- The Canadian Federation of Independent Business proposed to increase the Employer Health Tax (EHT) exemption threshold to \$1 million and index it to inflation annually.
- Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters called for the introduction of a “patent box” tax incentive which would reduce corporate taxes paid on earnings from new products in order to foster commercialization of products locally.
- The Ontario Association of Mental Health Professionals and the Partnership of Registered Psychotherapist Associations recommended that psychotherapy services be HST exempt.
- Aurora Cannabis requested that Ontario remove the provincial excise tax, as well as HST, on medical cannabis products ordered and provided through the federally-managed process.
- The Ontario Historical Society asked that corporations be exempt from property taxes if they are good standing members of the Ontario Historical Society.

## Francophone Affairs

The Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario asked that the Province take into account the Francophone perspective as it prepares the Budget, ensuring the sustainability of Franco-Ontarian institutions and full compliance with the *French Language Services Act*.

## Government and Consumer Services

There were a small number of recommendations targeted at the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. In terms of government services, the Society of United Professionals requested the government undertake a review of services that have been contracted out, and identify which services should be brought back in-house. FSET Inc. recommended the government pursue cloud- and subscription-based IT services, to lower risk and costs and promote employee mobility. The Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic suggested that Service Ontario be required to provide identification cards to all low-income individuals without fees, to assist them in accessing services and employment.

On the consumer services side, the National Elevator and Escalator Association requested the Ministry bring forward legislation to standardize traffic analysis for buildings and ensure an adequate number of elevators are installed. Additionally, the Co-operators Group Limited encouraged that consumer protection amendments as part of Bill 159, the *Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, 2019*, be passed.

## Health

The Ministry of Health is responsible for the strategic direction of the health care system, monitoring and reporting on its performance. It also funds important components of the system, including hospitals, physician services, prescription drugs, and public health.

Given the size and scope of this Ministry, it is not surprising that this Ministry was a primary focus of consultations. The Committee heard from a broad range of presenters, medical professionals, unions, businesses and interested individuals who described parts of the system that required more investment as well as ideas for continuing to make the system more efficient and effective for patients and their families.

### *Home and Community Care*

Home and community support services are provided for people of all ages requiring care in their home, school, or community. These services help people stay in their home longer at a lower cost to the health care system than care that is provided in institutional settings. The Ontario Community Support Association explained that thousands of long-term care residents could have continued to live at home, if the right supports were available. They also indicated that the sector has trouble recruiting personal support workers and nurses because the compensation is lower in home care than in institutional care settings. The Association asked for an additional \$156 million a year to close the wage gap, \$125 million for home and community care providers, and \$208 million to increase service volumes by 5%.

### *Hospitals*

A number of witnesses explained that the unavailability or inaccessibility of preventative mental health services, and the lack of open long-term care beds leads, to the inappropriate use of emergency resources and hospital beds. However, a few presenters said that the focus on those waiting for care elsewhere was distracting from the urgent needs of hospitals or of the health care system more generally.<sup>37</sup>

The Ontario Hospital Association requested that hospital funding be increased by 4.85% or \$922 million this year, while other organizations suggested funding increases as high as 5.3%.<sup>38</sup> The Sudbury Chapter of the Ontario Health Coalition urged more investment in northeastern Ontario hospitals in particular.

The Ottawa Health Coalition asked that the new Civic Campus of the Ottawa Hospital not be developed as a public-private partnership.

### *Illness and Disease Prevention and Treatment*

The Committee heard from a number of organisations that provide services for persons suffering from illness and disease, recommending the following investments.

- The Alzheimer Society of Ontario asked for an additional \$1.55 million for the First Link® Care Navigation program.

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<sup>37</sup> Kingston Health Coalition, London Health Coalition, Northumberland Health Coalition.

<sup>38</sup> Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario, London Health Coalition, Ontario Council of Hospital Unions/CUPE, Ontario Federation of Labour, Ontario Health Coalition, Ontario Nurses' Association, Thunder Bay Health Coalition, Waterloo Region Health Coalition.

- The Arthritis Society asked for support for the Arthritis Rehabilitation and Education Program.
- Epilepsy Ontario requested \$3 million per year, for four years, to fund programs at community epilepsy agencies.
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation asked for \$1 million per year for the next three years to continue to support the FAST Signs of Stroke public awareness campaign.
- Wounds Canada requested \$810,000 to educate health-care professionals on best practices in wound prevention and management.
- Edwards Lifesciences asked that the Province continue to increase the number of funded transcatheter aortic valve implantation procedures to reduce wait lists.
- Individuals asked that the Province continue to fund the Clinical Environmental Health Post-Graduate Year 3 Fellowship Program at the Environmental Health Clinic at Women's College Hospital.<sup>39</sup>
- The Canadian Skin Patient Alliance asked that home narrowband-ultraviolet B phototherapy be funded for patients with photoresponsive conditions, including psoriasis.

### *Medical Service, Drug and Device Coverage*

#### **Devices**

The Assistive Devices Program provides support for equipment or specialized supplies to help with a long-term physical disability. Witnesses asked for funding to shorten wait times and expand the list of approved equipment.<sup>40</sup> They also recommended the Province extend the Ventilator Equipment Pool to allow the use of BiPAP devices at all long-term care and residential hospices, and fund Continuous Glucose Monitoring systems for Ontarians with type 1 diabetes.<sup>41</sup>

#### **Drugs**

To improve access to medication, supplies and devices for low-income Ontarians, Diabetes Canada and the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario asked that the deductibles associated with the Trillium Drug Program be reduced or eliminated. Merck Canada asked that the Province request the federal government revisit its regulatory amendments on the prices of patented medicines, suggesting its implementation in July 2020 will result in price reductions creating business uncertainty and reduced access to new medicines.

Other specific recommendations relating to drug coverage included:

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<sup>39</sup> Individuals.

<sup>40</sup> ALS Canada, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada Ontario and Nunavut Division.

<sup>41</sup> ALS Canada, Diabetes Canada.

- expand public coverage for take-home cancer drugs with no deductible or co-payment, as exists for in-hospital drugs;<sup>42</sup>
- list injectable hydromorphone on the Ontario Drug Benefit formulary to treat opioid use disorder and address barriers to accessing diacetylmorphine;<sup>43</sup>
- expedite and prioritize the Ontario Public Drug Program's reimbursement decision for Radicava (edaravone);<sup>44</sup>
- ensure access to a range of treatment options for Ontarians living with arthritis, including biologics;<sup>45</sup>
- implement a biosimilars switching policy;<sup>46</sup> and
- improve vaccination rates against cancers caused by the human papillomavirus.<sup>47</sup>

### Medical Services

Optometrists and dentists both noted the importance of providing government-funded services to uninsured, low-income individuals and seniors. However, they maintained that the current fee structure is inadequate to cover the costs of the services they deliver. The Ontario Association of Optometrists suggested the Province could de-list medically unnecessary services in order to reallocate funds to vision-threatening services. The Ontario Dental Association requested an additional \$50 million investment in Healthy Smiles Ontario phased over a two-year period to address the gap in compensation.

Other professional associations suggested expanding government funded services. These included the Ontario Association of Professional Audiology Clinics, which suggested creating a program for seniors to fund access to hearing tests performed by an audiologist; the Ontario Medical Association, which suggested expanding the availability of publicly-funded psychotherapy services; and the Ontario Association of Social Workers, which suggested funding to permanently place social workers in emergency departments.

### *Mental Health and Addictions*

Witnesses explained that many Ontarians with mental health and addiction issues struggle to get the help they need in a timely fashion. They are put on waitlists for community services and must rely on emergency services while their health deteriorates.

While witnesses acknowledged the government's commitment to providing \$1.9 billion in new mental health spending (with a matching federal commitment) over

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<sup>42</sup> Canadian Cancer Society Ontario division, CanCertainty Coalition.

<sup>43</sup> Alliance for Healthier Communities, Chatham-Kent Community Health Centres.

<sup>44</sup> ALS Canada.

<sup>45</sup> Arthritis Society.

<sup>46</sup> Canadian Biosimilars Forum, Merck Canada.

<sup>47</sup> Merck Canada.

the next decade, some expressed concern that investments were not happening fast enough.<sup>48</sup>

The Committee heard suggestions on how to allocate resources, including that the Province:

- provide community-based, 24-hour, crisis programs and mobile crisis intervention teams;<sup>49</sup>
- allocate \$150 million per year to services for children and youth;<sup>50</sup>
- develop programs and services for First Nations that contribute to healing from intergenerational trauma;<sup>51</sup>
- fund a centre for people with mental health and addiction issues in Thunder Bay.<sup>52</sup>
- fund a new 20-bed detox facility, a secure addictions treatment centre, and a psychiatric service based in Sioux Lookout;<sup>53</sup>
- create an intergovernmental table in Neskantaga First Nation to fund suicide prevention initiatives and crisis support;<sup>54</sup>
- include mental health and addiction counselling and support services in violence against women shelters as part of their core programming;<sup>55</sup>
- increase the base budget of Canadian Mental Health Association branches by 3%;<sup>56</sup>
- invest \$75 million over three years for services for post-secondary students;<sup>57</sup>
- provide funds for community outreach services which bring harm reduction and prevention services to homes and neighbourhoods affected by addiction;<sup>58</sup>
- allocate \$5 million per year to increase staff resourcing and project supports in consumption treatment sites;<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Children's Centre Thunder Bay and the Children's Mental Health Ontario.

<sup>49</sup> Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario.

<sup>50</sup> Children's Mental Health Ontario, Children's Mental Health Services for Hastings and Prince Edward, Pathstone Mental Health, The Hospital for Sick Children and SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health.

<sup>51</sup> Chiefs of Ontario.

<sup>52</sup> City of Thunder Bay.

<sup>53</sup> Sioux Lookout Friendship Accord.

<sup>54</sup> Neskantaga First Nation.

<sup>55</sup> Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, Faye Peterson House, Three Oaks Foundation.

<sup>56</sup> Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario.

<sup>57</sup> College Student Alliance.

<sup>58</sup> Positive Living Niagara.

<sup>59</sup> Alliance for Healthier Communities.

- establish a consumption treatment services site in Niagara Falls;<sup>60</sup>
- re-establish the Mobile Rapid Access Addiction Medicine clinic;<sup>61</sup> and
- invest \$15 million in a new “Naloxone Ready Communities Grant” enabling municipalities to develop and implement local plans.<sup>62</sup>

### *Palliative Care*

The Committee heard that only 3% of Canadians die suddenly. Most will know they are dying and could benefit from support to die with dignity in the place most suited to their individual circumstances. For many, witnesses explained, this could be at home with support or in a hospice centre.

Hospice Palliative Care Ontario asked that the Province adjust the funding formula for hospice care to cover all clinical operating costs and fund 225 new hospice beds. To improve care and save money, they also recommended the Province ease capital fund procurement requirements to allow hospices to accept donated goods or services; permit hospices to admit patients without pre-assessment from outside agencies; and exempt hospices from development charges and educational levies.

Hospice Niagara and Hospice Quinte requested access to capital and equipment renewal funding as well as funding to support patients receiving care at home.

Pallium Canada suggested that more paramedics could be trained to provide palliative care at home. The Ontario Medical Association suggested lifting the freeze on the number of palliative medicine physicians able to provide services through the Community Palliative Care On-Call program.

### *Primary Care*

Community Health Centres are non-profit organizations that offer primary care services and health promotion programs. These Centres requested a 5% overall budget increase estimated at \$30 million, as well as an additional \$16.5 million to address increased costs and to support information management. They also suggested investing \$75 million over three years to create more team-based care, and \$20 million over three years to hire “social prescribing navigators” to help primary care professionals offer services to patients which fall outside of the traditional health care system.<sup>63</sup>

The Belleville Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic asked for \$340,000 to address its immediate needs and \$1.6 million for a satellite clinic; the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority suggested investing in trauma teams.

### *Public Health*

The government is currently engaged in public health modernization efforts. The Association of Local Public Health Agencies asked that the Province engage in

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<sup>60</sup> Positive Living Niagara.

<sup>61</sup> Addiction Services for York Region.

<sup>62</sup> Emergent Biosolutions.

<sup>63</sup> Alliance for Healthier Communities, Chatham-Kent Community Health Centres, Centretown Community Health Centre.

meaningful consultations and that it restore the previous provincial-municipal cost-sharing formula (75/25) for public health, or at the very least not make further changes to the 70/30 formula. The Ontario Public Health Association made a similar recommendation.

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit asked that the Province update the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to include First Nations.

### *Regulated Health Professionals*

A number of regulated health professionals asked that their scope of practice be expanded to provide more efficient and cost-effective services. For example, they recommended that the Province enable:

- registered practical nurses to complete the Assessment of Attendant Care Needs outlined in the *Insurance Act*,<sup>64</sup>
- pharmacists to assess and treat common ailments, renew prescriptions for up to 12 months, and administer the high-dose flu vaccine;<sup>65</sup>
- speech-language pathologists and audiologists to convey a diagnosis and refer patients to specialty medicine such as ear, nose and throat specialists;<sup>66</sup> and
- naturopaths, chiropractors, and physiotherapists to order select laboratory and diagnostic imaging tests.<sup>67</sup>

The Ontario Association of Mental Health Professionals suggested the Province create a single regulatory college to govern psychological services and work with the federal government to make services HST-exempt.

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario asked that the Province commit to adding 2,500 registered full time nurses per year to match the country's average registered nurse-population ratios.

### *Supportive Housing*

Supportive housing provides medical and/or social supports to allow people experiencing mental health and addiction issues and other challenges to live independently. Witnesses asked for funding to expand its availability.<sup>68</sup>

AdvantAge Ontario asked that the senior's campus model be supported, and the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network suggested incentivizing the private sector to work with non-profit organizations to provide supportive housing.<sup>69</sup> The Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario asked that the Province create at least 30,000 units over the next 10 years.

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<sup>64</sup> Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario.

<sup>65</sup> Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada.

<sup>66</sup> The Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists.

<sup>67</sup> The Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors, Ontario Chiropractic Association, Ontario Physiotherapy Association.

<sup>68</sup> Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association.

<sup>69</sup> Niagara Poverty Reduction Network.

The House of Friendship asked that the Province create new capital funding streams to support hybrid health and shelter facilities such as ShelterCare.<sup>70</sup>

The Ontario Homes for Special Needs Association asked that the Province increase the per diem rate available to private operators of Homes for Special Care/Community Homes for Opportunity and Housing with Supports.

### *System Transformation*

In February 2019, the Ministry of Health announced changes to the organization and delivery of health care services in Ontario, including the creation of an Ontario Health Agency and Ontario Health Teams.

The Ontario Health Agency has a broad mandate to manage service delivery, and takes on the responsibility of several previously distinct organizations. The Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division asked that the Ministry of Health ensure the focus of Cancer Care Ontario is preserved within the new agency, and that any savings incurred be reallocated into cancer care treatment.

The Canadian Mental Health Association commended the provincial government for establishing the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario Health and asked that it focus on developing core mental health and addictions services, a comprehensive data and performance measurement strategy, and quality improvement supports for community-based agencies.

Ontario Health Teams will consist of groups of health care professionals and organizations that are accountable for delivering a continuum of services to a defined geographic population. Specific comments relating to the teams focused on who would be involved and what services should be offered. Specifically, witnesses asked that the teams ensure:

- the role of care coordinator is located in primary care settings whenever possible;<sup>71</sup>
- that the registered nurses currently working as care coordinators in Local Health Integration Networks are transitioned to primary care and other community-based organizations;<sup>72</sup>
- the care coordinator provides patient/system navigation in order to address broader social determinants of health;<sup>73</sup>
- there are investments in information technology to facilitate information exchange and address cyber security issues;<sup>74</sup>
- that home and community care services are provided<sup>75</sup> and

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<sup>70</sup> House of Friendship.

<sup>71</sup> Ontario Medical Association.

<sup>72</sup> Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.

<sup>73</sup> Ontario Medical Association.

<sup>74</sup> Ontario Medical Association.

<sup>75</sup> Ontario Community Support Association.

- access to essential medical equipment for as long as patients need it, including long-term or indefinite use.<sup>76</sup>

## **Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries**

### *Arts*

Although Ontario Arts Council funding only represents a small part of most orchestras' revenue, witnesses indicated that it is needed to leverage funds from other levels of government and promotes stability in the sector. They asked the Province to increase its investment in the Ontario Arts Council by \$5 million and to re-launch the Ontario Arts Endowment Program which matched private sector donations with government funding.<sup>77</sup>

Film Ontario asked that the Province reinstate the \$10 million Intellectual Property Development Fund and increase the Ontario Creates Film Fund to at least \$15 million per year.

Chiefs of Ontario asked that the government restore funding to the Indigenous Culture Fund which assists in transmitting traditional knowledge, language and land-based activities.

### *Libraries*

According to the Ontario Library Association / Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, provincial funding for libraries has been frozen over the last 22 years and currently represents only 4% of local public library budgets. Nevertheless, these organizations noted that provincial funding is essential to the maintenance of library services, especially in rural and Northern Ontario. They recommended maintaining funding for Ontario's public libraries at current levels, providing an additional \$425,000 for the interlibrary loan program, and investing \$4.7 million next year to create an Ontario Digital Public Library which would allow libraries to access and share e-resources equitably (the required investment would grow to \$12 million in the digital project's third year).<sup>78</sup>

### *Tourism*

According to the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, Ontario leads all provinces in tourist visits and expenditures. The Association asked that the Province provide long-term sustainable funding. The organization's specific recommendations included providing three-year, rolling funding for Destination Ontario, restoring annual funding of \$40 million for Regional Tourism Organizations; and providing \$2 million a year to Indigenous Tourism Ontario.

## **Indigenous Affairs**

The Committee visits to Northern municipalities, including Sioux Lookout, provided the opportunity to hear testimony from Indigenous leaders and

<sup>76</sup> ALS Canada.

<sup>77</sup> Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Orchestras Canada.

<sup>78</sup> Belleville Public Library/John M. Parrott Art Gallery, Niagara Falls Public Library and Ontario Library Association / Federation of Ontario Public Libraries made similar recommendations.

individuals, who spoke to the distinct and significant challenges they face. All witnesses addressed the need to stop the jurisdictional “ping-pong” which takes place between the various orders of government, particularly federal and provincial governments, and which leaves Indigenous peoples falling through gaps in supports and services. The Committee also received testimony about the high rates of suicide in First Nations communities, particularly among young people, resulting from colonization and continued lack of access to services and supports. Overall, there were repeated calls to make northern and remote First Nations a priority.

In particular, the Matawa Chiefs Council requested they be equitable partners to develop a comprehensive approach to wealth creation and revenue generation. In order to advance the Matawa member First Nations and Ontario economies, the Chiefs Council stated that discussions must take place on a government-to-government basis and must include a time frame for specific deliverables and points of agreement.

The Independent First Nations Alliance noted that First Nations communities in Northern Ontario lack comprehensive emergency services and that there are gaps between services and support provided by the federal government, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the Provincial Emergency Operation Centre (PEOC). To remedy this, it was recommended that the Ontario government establish a new provincial First Nations Emergency Measures Organization that is First Nations-led, to ensure that all northern First Nations Communities have the capacity to respond to emergencies effectively and to ensure that “silos” and jurisdictional boundaries do not compromise community safety.

## **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure was noted as a tool that could help drive economic growth and mitigate climate change. Unifor recommended that infrastructure spending be leveraged through a “Buy Ontario” strategy. The Investment Industry Association of Canada noted that infrastructure could be leveraged to tackle climate change and build climate resiliency as well. In particular, the Association recommended that Ontario develop a policy framework to harness the capital and expertise of the private sector to fund infrastructure projects that promote low-emissions, climate resilience, and energy efficient projects.

### *Broadband Internet*

Several stakeholders noted the lack of high-speed (broadband) internet across Northern Ontario, in particular in First Nations communities, creating issues for schools, local businesses, health care services, and generally deepening the isolation felt by the region.<sup>79</sup> The Kwayaciiwin Education Resource Centre recommended extending fibre optic lines to all First Nations schools in order to provide 1gbps internet speeds. K-Net recommended that Ontario include an Indigenous stream as part of Ontario’s Broadband and Cellular Action Plan (“Up to Speed”), accompanied by funding. Grand Council Treaty #3 asked the

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<sup>79</sup> Includes Belleville Public Library/John M. Parrott Art Gallery, Grand Council Treaty #3, K-Net, Kwayaciiwin Education Resources Centre, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.

government to ensure all Treaty #3 communities have high-speed broadband access by supporting improvements to transportation and local infrastructure.

The Belleville Public Library/John M. Parrott Art Gallery noted that libraries serve as a hub for people looking to access the internet, and should be leveraged to improve access to broadband internet more broadly.

### *Infrastructure Procurement*

To promote innovation and sustainability, the Cement Association of Canada recommended that Ontario implement a modernized infrastructure procurement system using a “three-screen” lifecycle approach. Such an approach includes full lifecycle cost assessment to secure long-term value and performance, a comprehensive carbon assessment to promote low-cost green solutions, and an evaluation of “best available solutions” to attract innovations and help make Ontario a leader in infrastructure-based solutions to community wellbeing and prosperity.

In a similar vein, the Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario recommended that Ontario select and apply proper procurement models for public infrastructure projects by: developing standards and applying incentives at all stages of procurement rather than at release; realizing value for money through Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) of consultants for projects; and, better managing risks in P3 contracts by allowing for a more manageable schedule during the design process, among other things.

In addition, the Council of Ontario Construction Associations urged that community benefits clauses in Ontario government construction projects be explicitly defined, voluntary, and aspirational, without the use of hard quotas.

### *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program*

A number of specific requests were made to sponsor projects as part of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, a cost-shared program with the federal government:

- The City of Thunder Bay requested that Ontario nominate Thunder Bay’s multi-use, indoor turf project.
- YMCA of Central East Ontario asked for support of its submission for a \$22.5-million YMCA Centre for Life with various community partners.
- Queen’s University requested Ontario nominate Queen’s Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) application for the Agnes Etherington Arts Centre expansion and revitalization project, or work with Queen’s to identify other funding mechanisms for leveraging a prospective philanthropic donation.
- Lakehead University asked for support to build the Gichi Kendaasiwin Centre (a centre for Indigenous education) under the Culture and Recreation Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

(Recommendations related to public transit projects under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program are listed in the Infrastructure section of this report.)

## **Labour, Training and Skills Development**

### *Employment Standards and Labour Relations*

A number of witnesses who appeared before the committee referred to the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018* which made changes to employment standards and labour relations legislation. Some witnesses characterized the changes as a cut to employment standards and asked that these standards be restored.<sup>80</sup>

Another statute highlighted by witnesses was the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019*. A number of witnesses asked that this legislation be repealed because it limits public sector compensation increases to 1%.<sup>81</sup> A few others asked that exemptions be enacted for community-governed non-profit organizations, non-profit long-term care homes and intervenors who work with deafblind individuals.<sup>82</sup>

Witnesses also asked that the Province:

- increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour;<sup>83</sup>
- provide paid personal leave days;<sup>84</sup>
- provide equal pay for equal work;<sup>85</sup>
- ensure predictable work schedules;<sup>86</sup>
- extend card-based certification to all sectors;<sup>87</sup>
- hire more investigators to enforce employment and health and safety standards; and<sup>88</sup>
- determine requirements for paid leave based on business profit.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> London and District Labour Council, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Unifor.

<sup>81</sup> AMAPCEO, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Ontario Nurses' Association, Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Society of United Professionals.

<sup>82</sup> These witnesses were the Ontario Nonprofit Network, Christian Labour Association of Canada and DeafBlind Ontario Services respectively.

<sup>83</sup> Don Valley Community Legal Services, Income Security Advocacy Centre, Ontario Campaign 2000, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.

<sup>84</sup> Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Income Security Advocacy Centre.

<sup>85</sup> Anglican Diocese of Toronto, Ontario Campaign 2000.

<sup>86</sup> Ontario Campaign 2000.

<sup>87</sup> Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario, London and District Labour Council.

<sup>88</sup> Don Valley Community Legal Services, Income Security Advocacy Centre, Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre.

<sup>89</sup> Abigail's Learning Centre Inc.

### *Workplace Safety and Insurance Board*

The Thunder Bay and District Injured Workers Support Group argued that injured workers are not getting adequate benefits from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). It suggested that the WSIB stop withholding benefits based on pre-existing conditions and that it discontinue the practice of reducing benefits when an injured worker is deemed employable.<sup>90</sup>

The Council of Ontario Construction Associations asked that a policy be established to ensure there is a range within which funding levels can fluctuate without the need to adjust premiums, and that the 72-month lock-in provision be abolished.

### **Long-Term Care**

Long-term care homes offer services and accommodation to adults requiring nursing and personal care, including assistance with most or all daily activities. Most residents in long-term care homes are seniors, many with complex medical conditions or some form of cognitive impairment.

The Ontario Long Term Care Association and AdvantAge Ontario acknowledged the government's commitment to build 15,000 new beds and further indicated that the Province should address the sector's staffing shortage and high turnover rates.

To address the human resources challenges facing long-term care, witnesses recommended:

- the development of a human resource strategy for personal support workers;<sup>91</sup>
- providing incentives to organizations to provide growth and development opportunities, including career laddering for personal support workers and registered practical nurses;<sup>92</sup>
- supporting organizations to provide paid placements and on-the-job training through apprenticeship programs,<sup>93</sup> and
- regulatory and funding changes that would give employers more flexibility to hire and deploy the most appropriate staff.<sup>94</sup>

AdvantAge Ontario also cautioned that investment in new beds should be accompanied by an increase to the construction funding subsidy, a reduction in administrative barriers to development, and easier access to government land where affordable property is scarce.

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<sup>90</sup> The London and District Labour Council made a similar recommendation.

<sup>91</sup> AdvantAge, Champlain Region Family Council Network, Christian Labour Association of Canada, Ontario Long Term Care Association.

<sup>92</sup> AdvantAge.

<sup>93</sup> AdvantAge.

<sup>94</sup> AdvantAge, Ontario Long Term Care Association.

The Ontario Long Term Care Association said that the funding system is complicated and unpredictable, and that in this environment existing bed operators are concerned about the risks of building new beds. They suggested implementing a new funding model, providing a one-time base funding adjustment of \$83 million, and providing \$101 million to support homes in meeting the needs of residents.

To improve quality, a number of witnesses recommended requiring a minimum of four hours of care per resident per day.<sup>95</sup> The Ontario Nurses' Association asked that funding be increased to ensure one registered nurse per 20 residents each day, and one nurse practitioner for every 120 residents.

Witnesses also recommended the Province:

- reduce the administrative burden required by regulations in order to re-direct employee efforts to providing care;<sup>96</sup>
- offer specialized services for those with cognitive impairment in specialized facilities;<sup>97</sup>
- require public reporting of staffing levels in homes;<sup>98</sup>
- meet the need for designated French-language-services beds;<sup>99</sup>
- open more beds for persons with a disability;<sup>100</sup> and
- increase the Raw Foods budget to ensure better access to nutritional foods.<sup>101</sup>

Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre asked for additional long-term care beds, and the Alzheimer Society suggested the Province provide \$4 million so that it can offer U-First!<sup>®</sup> training in long-term care facilities across the province.

## **Municipal Affairs and Housing**

### *Administration and Finance*

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario explained that approximately 27% of aggregate municipal operation budgets are allocated to services that are considered a provincial responsibility in most other Canadian jurisdictions. It estimated that in 2017 municipalities spent \$3 billion on provincial services which

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<sup>95</sup> AdvantAge Ontario, Champlain Region Family Council Network, Christian Labour Association of Canada, CUPE Ontario, Northumberland Health Coalition, Ontario Health Coalition, Ontario Federation of Labour, Ottawa Health Coalition, Sudbury Chapter of the Ontario Health Coalition, Thunder Bay Health Coalition, Unifor Local 324.

<sup>96</sup> Christian Labour Association of Canada, Unifor Local 324.

<sup>97</sup> Ottawa Health Coalition.

<sup>98</sup> Ottawa Health Coalition.

<sup>99</sup> Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario.

<sup>100</sup> An individual.

<sup>101</sup> An individual.

were not offset by provincial grants. The Association asked that the Province not download additional services or funding responsibilities.

The Region of Peel recommended that the Ontario government work with other levels of government to address the financial implications of societal changes that are shifting the balance of property tax to the residential sector.

With regards to specific funding streams, the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario asked that the Audit and Accountability Fund and the Municipal Modernization Fund be aligned. The City of Thunder Bay asked that the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund be stabilized, its formula be amended to reflect the needs of Northwestern Ontario, and that the Province continue to provide early allocation notices to assist with budget preparations.

The County of Wellington recommends the Province convene stakeholders to review the assessment of aggregate properties, suggesting the current process underestimates their value compared to other residential, farm, commercial and industrial properties.

### *Affordable Housing and Homelessness Services*

The Committee heard about the high costs of living and the lack of affordable housing. Witnesses asked that the Province invest in a range of affordable housing types including transitional housing, safe homes, accessible housing for seniors, supportive housing, after care housing, non-profit rental housing, and non-profit and co-op housing.<sup>102</sup>

A few witnesses suggested governments could use their land divestiture processes to encourage affordable housing either by offering surplus lands to the non-profit or co-op sector below market value in exchange for the provision of permanent affordable housing, or by making the creation of affordable housing on- or off-site a condition of sale to private sector builders.<sup>103</sup>

Other suggestions included:

- funding municipal permit fees and development charges on behalf of non-profit affordable housing providers;<sup>104</sup>
- continuing to invest in homelessness prevention programs, specifically through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative;<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> AdvantAge Ontario, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, City of Guelph, Community Legal Services of Ottawa, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, CUPE Local 2141, Faye Peterson House, Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward-Hastings, City of Kitchener, Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario, Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, Ontario Campaign 2000, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, Poverty Roundtable Hastings Prince Edward, Sioux Lookout Non-Profit Housing Corporation, St. Stephen's Community House, Waterloo Regional Council of Union Retirees.

<sup>103</sup> Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward-Hastings, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association.

<sup>104</sup> Habitat for Humanity - Prince Edward Hastings.

<sup>105</sup> City of Kitchener, Niagara Poverty Reduction Network.

- leveraging the skills, capacity and expertise of Indigenous communities to determine what is needed and co-designing solutions while providing adequate funding streams through an Indigenous Housing Strategy;<sup>106</sup> and
- amending the Ontario Building Code to require all units in new residential buildings to be accessible.<sup>107</sup>

### *Infrastructure and Asset Management*

A number of witnesses asked that the Province prioritize local municipal infrastructure in order to attract housing developments or promote economic development in rural areas.<sup>108</sup> Specific requests included the development of sanitary sewer infrastructure in Leamington and a waste water treatment plant in Niagara.<sup>109</sup> The Ontario Good Roads Association suggested that savings could be realized if municipalities were encouraged to tender infrastructure projects, such as bridges and culverts, into one bid across municipalities.

By July 2024, municipalities will be required to have more complex asset management plans. The Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) said that these plans will provide invaluable information, but explained that smaller municipalities are “burdened” by having very complex assets and small populations. OGRA recommended that the Province support these municipalities as this deadline approaches.

The Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association suggested that municipalities with a population greater than 10,000 be required to operate water and wastewater systems on a full-cost recovery model.

### *Land Use Planning and Housing Supply*

The *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* amends several statutes as part of the government’s Housing Supply Action Plan. Organizations representing residential builders expressed support for these amendments and the government’s broader activities to increase housing supply. The Residential Construction Council of Ontario asked that the Province continue to streamline the development approval process by, for example, implementing a data platform for e-permitting, supporting legal challenges against municipal overreach to ensure provincial authority, and adopting changes to the National Building Code to allow 12-story mass timber buildings.

The City of Guelph asked for a delay in the implementation of new development charge rules and the community benefits charge framework. The Regional Municipality of Waterloo suggested the province reconsider the changes altogether, arguing they may ultimately slow down the process.

The Ontario Association of Architects said that changing the Site Plan Approval process would make the building approval process more efficient. Specifically, the Association suggested restoring Section 41 exclusions of the *Planning Act*,

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<sup>106</sup> Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association.

<sup>107</sup> Living in Place Campaign.

<sup>108</sup> Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers and Waterloo Region Home Builders’ Association made these recommendations respectively.

<sup>109</sup> Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Niagara Home Builders’ Association.

setting and enforcing timelines for municipalities to approve or refuse an application, and implementing independent adjudication of resubmitted applications in cases where a municipality has advised the applicant that the deficiencies have not been resolved.

Other witnesses recommended the Province reinstate the Development Charges Rebate program to stimulate the creation of more rental housing, and revise the definition of “employment area” in the *Planning Act* to specify that such areas can include mixed uses (institutional, residential and employment).<sup>110</sup>

## **Natural Resources and Forestry**

The Committee heard from stakeholders representing non-profit organizations as well as industry representatives in the natural resources and forestry sector.

Forests Ontario, a non-profit organization, recommended that the provincial government’s spring budget allocate \$2.5 million towards the 50 Million Trees Program, to be leveraged against federal and other funding sources. A number of private sector representatives recommended that Ontario restore the Forest Road Access Funding Program to \$75 million in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR)’s 2020 budget.<sup>111</sup> There were also calls to find a permanent solution to purported duplication between the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994* and the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*, and to bring fees affecting the forestry sector in line with other provinces.<sup>112</sup>

## **Seniors and Accessibility**

The Assaulted Women’s Helpline/Seniors Safety Line asked for \$165,000 per year to improve service delivery, undertake new programs and promote the Seniors Safety Line across the province.

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<sup>110</sup> City of St. Catharines and Penta Properties made these recommendations respectively.

<sup>111</sup> Miisun Integrated Resource Management Co., Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, WRC Timber Inc., White River Forest Products Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Lumber Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Power Inc.

<sup>112</sup> WRC Timber Inc., White River Forest Products Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Lumber Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Power Inc.

## **Solicitor General**

Stakeholders working in the justice sector called for investments in policing and corrections to increase community safety and to ensure the rights of people involved in the justice system are protected.

### *Corrections*

The Ontario Human Rights Commission, co-presenting with the Ontario Public Service Corrections Ministry Employee Relations Committee, called on the Solicitor General to make investments to address what has been called a crisis in Ontario corrections, including investments to support inmate and staff health and safety, reduce overcrowding, support frontline staff, ensure inmates have access to healthcare and rehabilitation opportunities, enhance oversight and accountability, and modernize infrastructure and information management systems.

The John Howard Society of Ontario recommended establishing release and discharge planners in the admissions units at five correctional institutions across Ontario, representative of the different regions. It also called on the Corporate Health Care and Wellness Branch at the Ministry to work closely with the Ministry of Health to explore ways to integrate correctional health care with the Ontario Health Team model.

### *Policing*

The City of Thunder Bay requested the Ministry provide funding to the Thunder Bay Police Service to help it address its guns-and-gangs issues. One Thunder Bay citizen called for increased accountability of police service boards, arguing that such boards should be allowed to fire chiefs who breach oaths of secrecy.

The National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco requested Ontario implement the “Quebec Model” to combat contraband tobacco and the organized crime groups involved, which includes allowing police services to partake in full contraband tobacco investigations, and funding local and regional police services who participate in illegal tobacco enforcement.

### *Other*

The Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee requested a \$500,000 increase in annualized funding to continue their work supporting Ontarians with mental health disabilities, substance use issues, and other human service needs that are involved with the justice system, as well as \$50 million dedicated specifically to enhancing direct services.

To ensure proper emergency response in Ontario, Team Rubicon Canada asked that the government set aside a \$1 million emergency fund to support the costs of rapidly mobilizing and sustaining skilled volunteers across the province following municipal requests for provincial assistance.

## Transportation

### *Active Transportation*

The City of Kitchener requested Ontario reinstate funding for commuter and cycling infrastructure (previously provided through the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program). This amounts to \$800,000 for the City of Kitchener.

The City of Guelph requested funding for active transportation (including a strong cycling network).

### *Airports*

Skycare asked the province to encourage the federal government to amend the National Airports Policy and officially recognize northern fly-in communities as Essential Service Airports, as well as to expand airport funding beyond the current Airports Capital Assistance Program.

Wasaya Airways called for improved maintenance in remote northern airport locations, extended hours of operation, and additional resources to allow Wasaya to perform safely and efficiently within Safety Management System requirements. They also requested the Ministry extend the lengths of airport runways and provide funding to certify all provincially-run airports to an instrument standard, in order to keep flights on schedule.

### *Public Transit*

Many stakeholders spoke about the importance of public transit investments.<sup>113</sup> Specific requests included the following:

- The City of Kitchener, the City of Waterloo, and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo requested the Province approve funding for the GO rail expansion on the Kitchener line, a project which has already received preliminary approval from Metrolinx. Waterloo also suggested the Province roll out the next intake phase for the public transit stream of the cost-shared Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program as soon as possible.
- The City of Guelph requested the Province advance interregional transportation between Guelph and Waterloo Region including support for public transit as well as investments to maintain Highway 7.
- The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce requested the Province provide financial subsidies to local transportation providers in Northwestern Ontario similar to those provided in other areas of the province.
- The City of Brampton asked that the government support light rail transit on Main Street to Downtown Brampton, and Queen Street-Highway 7 bus rapid transit. It also requested that a temporary solution for parking overflow issues at GO Transit stations in Brampton be found.

To cover costs associated with transit, stakeholders supported the use of provincial gas tax revenues for local transportation projects. The Ontario Public

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<sup>113</sup> Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre.

Transit Association specifically requested increasing the Expand the Dedicated Public Transit Fund to four cents per litre when the fiscal situation permits.

While supportive of mass transit, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) stressed the importance of mitigating the impact of major construction projects on local business. According to the CFIB, mitigation strategies could include a direct compensation program, improved contracting to include a bonus/penalty for the early/late completion of the project, and a business liaison officer to ensure the business community is regularly canvassed on their experience and updated on the project's progress.

The Ontario Public Transit Association also noted the need to develop funding programs and plans to help transit systems transition to zero-emission fleets.

### *Other*

The following additional transit related recommendations were made:

- The Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs requested regulating all-terrain vehicles in a manner similar to snowmobiles, and recognizing the federation as the leading and only all-terrain vehicle federation in Ontario.
- The Ontario Society of Professional Engineers recommended the Ministry increase electric vehicle adoption by developing and implementing an incentive program for electric and hydrogen power vehicles.
- The Cement Association of Canada recommended Ontario adopt a British Columbia-style system governing the issuance of permits for using and testing fuel.
- The Ontario Public Transit Association requested that the Driver Certification Program include a directive to analyze the passenger carrier industry separately and distinctly from the trucking industry.

## **Treasury Board Secretariat**

A number of union representatives asked the Committee to guarantee professional wages for public sector workers.<sup>114</sup>

### *Procurement*

The Consulting Engineers of Ontario asked that the procurement process in Ontario be improved. It recommended the Province be transparent about its broader procurement intentions, and develop what it called a Procurement Model Decision Making Framework to standardize how the various Ministries and government agencies select a procurement model. To improve outcomes and performance of procurements, including private-public partnerships ("P3s"), the Consulting Engineers of Ontario called for improvements to the P3 and design building project processes such as developing standard principles for all projects, and applying incentives to vendors at various stages of the procurement process, rather than exclusively at the release stage.

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<sup>114</sup> CUPE Local 2141, London and District Labour Council, Quinte Labour Council.

The Ontario Non-Profit Network recommended that the Province support social enterprise by setting targets for procurement from non-profit social enterprises.

*Ontario Public Service Employees*

AMAPCEO asked the Committee to recommend an end to the hiring freeze in order to stabilize the size of the Ontario Public Service, maintaining that Ontario has fewer public servants per capita than other provinces.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs submits the following recommendations to the Minister of Finance to inform the 2020-2021 Budget:

1. Continue on a path to put the province on sound financial footing, in order to ensure the sustainability of Ontario's critical public services.
2. Recognize life has become more expensive, and take action to make it more affordable.
3. Build upon the progress to date by continuing to reduce red tape and burdensome regulations, in order to improve Ontario's competitiveness.
4. Expand apprenticeship and training opportunities to provide more people greater access to high quality jobs.
5. Promote continued job creation in the province by encouraging investment in Ontario businesses.
6. Focus the government's mental health and addictions investments in services that will allow for early intervention, reduce wait times, and increase access to care, while recognizing the unique challenges in Ontario's rural, remote, isolated, and Indigenous communities.
7. Continue to take steps to address a shortage of space and long wait times by making targeted investments in the health care sector, and putting patients first by tackling the complex challenges in our health care system.
8. Invest in transit and infrastructure projects that meet local needs, strengthen local economies, and provide opportunity for growth for people across the province, recognizing the unique challenges in Ontario's rural, remote and isolated communities.
9. Work with municipalities, builders, and the construction industry to address the housing supply shortage in order to make housing more affordable.
10. Support Ontario's rural communities by continuing the expansion of broadband.

## LIST OF WITNESSES

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Abigail's Learning Centre Inc.	Written Submission
Addiction Services for York Region	Written Submission
AdvantAge Ontario	January 23, 2020
Alexandra Wilding	Written Submission
All Aboard St. Marys and AllRoads Dodge Chrysler Jeep Limited	Written Submission
Alliance for Healthier Communities	January 22, 2020
ALS Canada	Written Submission
Alzheimer Society of Ontario	January 21, 2020
AMAPCEO	January 24, 2020
Anglican Diocese of Toronto	Written Submission
Anil Bhalla	Written Submission
Anna Willats	Written Submission
Appraisal Institute of Canada	Written Submission
Arthritis Society	Written Submission
Assaulted Women's Helpline/Seniors Safety Line	Written Submission
Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario	January 22, 2020
Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario	Written Submission
Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians	January 23, 2020
Association of Local Public Health Agencies	January 17, 2020
Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario	January 24, 2020
Association of Municipalities of Ontario	January 24, 2020
Aurora Cannabis	Written Submission
Beef Farmers of Ontario	January 22, 2020
Belleville Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic	January 22, 2020

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Belleville Public Library/John M. Parrott Art Gallery	January 22, 2020
Bhakti Patel	Written Submission
Bonnie Keefe	Written Submission
Canadian Biosimilars Forum	Written Submission
Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division	January 21, 2020
Canadian Federation of Independent Business	January 17, 2020
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters	January 17, 2020
Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario	Written Submission
Canadian Skin Patient Alliance	Written Submission
Canadian Solar Industries Association	January 22, 2020
CanCertainty Coalition	Written Submission
Catherine Mitchell	Written Submission
Cement Association of Canada	Written Submission
Centretown Community Health Centre	Written Submission
Champlain Region Family Council Network	Written Submission
Chatham-Kent Community Health Centres	Written Submission
Chemistry Industry Association of Canada	January 24, 2020
Cheryl Card	Written Submission
Chiefs of Ontario	January 17, 2020
Child Witness Centre	January 23, 2020
Children's Centre Thunder Bay	January 21, 2020
Children's Mental Health Services for Hastings and Prince Edward	January 22, 2020
Children's Mental Health Ontario	January 17, 2020
Chris Geyer	Written Submission
Christian Labour Association of Canada	Written Submission

<b>Organization / Individual</b>	<b>Date of Appearance</b>
Citizens' Climate Lobby	January 23, 2020
City of Brampton	Written Submission
City of Guelph	Written Submission
City of Kitchener	January 23, 2020
City of St. Catharines	Written Submission
City of Thunder Bay	January 21, 2020
CNIB Foundation	January 22, 2020
College Student Alliance	Written Submission
Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change	Written Submission
Community Advocacy and Legal Centre	January 22, 2020
Community Legal Services of Ottawa	Written Submission
Community Living Essex County	Written Submission
Concentra Bank	Written Submission
Confederation College	January 21, 2020
Conservation Ontario	January 22, 2020
Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario	Written Submission
Consulting Engineers of Ontario	Written Submission
Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada	January 23, 2020
Council of Ontario Construction Associations	Written Submission
Council of Ontario Universities	Written Submission
County of Wellington	Written Submission
CUPE Local 2141, Northwestern Ontario CUPE Council	January 20, 2020
CUPE Ontario	January 22, 2020
Dairy Farmers of Ontario	Written Submission
Dawn Pierrynowski	Written Submission

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
DeafBlind Ontario Services	Written Submission
Diabetes Canada	Written Submission
District School Board of Niagara	January 24, 2020
Don Valley Community Legal Services	Written Submission
Dr. Justin Bell / Dr. Aaron Rothstein	January 20, 2020
Edwards Lifesciences	Written Submission
Eleanor Johnston and Yvon Hemsol	Written Submission
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario	January 23, 2020
Emergent Biosolutions	Written Submission
Epilepsy Ontario	January 17, 2020
Equation Angels	Written Submission
Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region	Written Submission
Family Lawyers Association	Written Submission
Faye Peterson House	January 21, 2020
Feed Ontario	Written Submission
Film Ontario	Written Submission
Fix Our Schools	January 17, 2020
Forests Ontario	January 22, 2020
Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre	January 24, 2020
Friends Helping People End Poverty	Written Submission
FSET Inc.	Written Submission
Grand Council Treaty #3	January 20, 2020
Grant Church	Written Submission
Grape Growers of Ontario	January 24, 2020
Green Economy Canada	Written Submission

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Habitat for Humanity Prince Edward-Hastings	January 22, 2020
Hamilton Social Work Action Committee	Written Submission
Health Providers Against Poverty	Written Submission
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario	January 17, 2020
Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association of Canada	January 24, 2020
Hospice Niagara	January 24, 2020
Hospice Palliative Care Ontario	Written Submission
Hospice Quinte	January 22, 2020
House of Friendship	Written Submission
Howard Meshake	January 20, 2020
Imperial Tobacco Canada	January 24, 2020
Income Security Advocacy Centre	January 17, 2020
Independent First Nations Alliance	January 20, 2020
Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario	January 17, 2020
Insurance Bureau of Canada	January 17, 2020
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	Written Submission
Investment Industry Association of Canada	Written Submission
Irene Breckon	Written Submission
Janet Leith	Written Submission
Jim Jeffs	Written Submission
John Howard Society of Ontario	Written Submission
Jon Powers	January 21, 2020
Josslin Insurance	January 23, 2020
Julia Wojczynska	Written Submission
Junior Achievement Central Ontario	January 24, 2020

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Kingston Health Coalition	Written Submission
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic	January 21, 2020
Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Orchestras Canada	January 23, 2020
K-Net, Keewatinook Okimakanak	January 20, 2020
Kwayaciiwin Education Resource Centre	January 20, 2020
Lakehead District School Board	January 21, 2020
Lakehead University	January 21, 2020
Lanadee Lampman	Written Submission
Lansdowne Children's Centre	January 24, 2020
Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario	January 23, 2020
Laura MacIntosh	Written Submission
Living in Place Campaign	Written Submission
London and District Labour Council	January 23, 2020
London Health Coalition	January 23, 2020
Loyalist College	January 22, 2020
Matawa Chiefs Council	January 21, 2020
Matthew Cordy	Written Submission
McKellar Structured Settlements	January 24, 2020
Melody Tomkow	Written Submission
Merck Canada	Written Submission
Mervyn Russell	Written Submission
Miisun Integrated Resource Management Co.	Written Submission
Mike Glanfield	Written Submission
Monica Warren	Written Submission
Mortgage Professionals of Canada	Written Submission

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada Ontario and Nunavut Division	Written Submission
Myron Daniel Steinman	Written Submission
National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco	Written Submission
National Elevator and Escalator Association	January 22, 2020
Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada	Written Submission
Nelly Sinclair	Written Submission
Neskantaga First Nation	January 21, 2020
Niagara District CUPE Council 9102	January 24, 2020
Niagara Falls Public Library	January 24, 2020
Niagara Home Builders' Association	January 24, 2020
Niagara Poverty Reduction Network	January 24, 2020
Northumberland Community Legal Centre	Written Submission
Northumberland Federation of Agriculture	January 22, 2020
Northumberland Health Coalition	Written Submission
ODSP Action Coalition	Written Submission
Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs	Written Submission
Ontario Association of Architects	Written Submission
Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies	January 21, 2020
Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses	January 17, 2020
Ontario Association of Mental Health Professionals	Written Submission
Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors	Written Submission
Ontario Association of Optometrists	January 23, 2020
Ontario Association of Professional Audiology Clinics	Written Submission
Ontario Association of Social Workers	Written Submission
Ontario Autism Coalition	January 22, 2020

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Ontario Beekeepers' Association	January 24, 2020
Ontario Campaign 2000	Written Submission
Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association	Written Submission
Ontario Chiropractic Association	Written Submission
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care	January 17, 2020
Ontario Community Support Association	January 24, 2020
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations	Written Submission
Ontario Co-operative Association	Written Submission
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants	Written Submission
Ontario Council of Hospital Unions / CUPE	Written Submission
Ontario Craft Cider Association	Written Submission
Ontario Craft Wineries	January 24, 2020
Ontario Dairy Council	January 24, 2020
Ontario Dental Association	January 24, 2020
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association	January 17, 2020
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association Niagara Secondary Unit	Written Submission
Ontario Federation of Agriculture	January 17, 2020
Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs	January 22, 2020
Ontario Federation of Labour	January 17, 2020
Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs	January 23, 2020
Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association	Written Submission
Ontario Good Roads Association	January 23, 2020
Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers	January 23, 2020
Ontario Health Coalition	January 17, 2020
Ontario Historical Society	January 23, 2020

<b>Organization / Individual</b>	<b>Date of Appearance</b>
Ontario Homes for Special Needs Association	Written Submission
Ontario Hospital Association	January 17, 2020
Ontario Human Rights Commission / OPSEU Corrections Management-Employee Relations Committee	January 21, 2020
Ontario Library Association / Federation of Ontario Public Libraries	Written Submission
Ontario Long Term Care Association	January 17, 2020
Ontario Medical Association	Written Submission
Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association	Written Submission
Ontario Nonprofit Network	January 24, 2020
Ontario Nurses' Association	January 17, 2020
Ontario Physiotherapy Association	Written Submission
Ontario Public Health Association	Written Submission
Ontario Public School Boards' Association	January 22, 2020
Ontario Public Service Employees Union	January 17, 2020
Ontario Public Transit Association	January 22, 2020
Ontario School Library Association	Written Submission
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation	January 17, 2020
Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association	Written Submission
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers	January 23, 2020
Ontario Trial Lawyers Association	January 22, 2020
Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance	Written Submission
Orchestras Canada	Written Submission
Oriane Falkenstein	Written Submission
Ottawa Health Coalition	Written Submission
Owl Child Care Services of Ontario	January 23, 2020

<b>Organization / Individual</b>	<b>Date of Appearance</b>
Pallium Canada	Written Submission
Partnership of Registered Psychotherapist Associations	Written Submission
Pathstone Mental Health	January 24, 2020
Paula Rawlinson	Written Submission
Penta Properties Inc.	Written Submission
People First of Ontario	Written Submission
Positive Living Niagara	January 24, 2020
Poverty Free Thunder Bay	January 21, 2020
Poverty Roundtable Hastings Prince Edward	January 22, 2020
Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee	Written Submission
Queen's University	Written Submission
Quinte Labour Council	January 22, 2020
Reception House Waterloo Region	January 23, 2020
Reep Green Solutions	Written Submission
Region of Peel	Written Submission
Regional Municipality of Waterloo	January 23, 2020
Registered Nurses Association of Ontario	Written Submission
Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario	January 23, 2020
Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario	Written Submission
Residential Construction Council of Ontario	Written Submission
Robyn Bunting	January 21, 2020
Rural Opportunity and Investment Coalition	January 22, 2020
Ryerson University	January 17, 2020
Sabine Bluschke	Written Submission
Sage Irwin	Written Submission

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Sarah Christie	Written Submission
Schizophrenia Society of Ontario	Written Submission
Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority	January 20, 2020
Sioux Lookout Friendship Accord	January 20, 2020
Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre	January 20, 2020
Sioux Lookout Non-Profit Housing Corp.	January 20, 2020
SkyCare	January 20, 2020
Society of United Professionals (“the Society”), Local 160 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers	January 17, 2020
Spirits Canada / Association of Canadian Distillers	January 22, 2020
St. Stephen’s Community House	Written Submission
Start2Finish	Written Submission
Sudbury Chapter of the Ontario Health Coalition	Written Submission
Taykwa Tagamou Nation	January 24, 2020
Team Rubicon Canada	January 23, 2020
The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario	Written Submission
The Co-operators Group Limited	Written Submission
The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health	January 17, 2020
The Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists	Written Submission
Three Oaks Foundation	January 22, 2020
Thunder Bay and District Injured Workers Support Group	January 21, 2020
Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce	January 21, 2020
Thunder Bay District Health Unit	January 21, 2020
Thunder Bay ECE Unite	January 21, 2020
Thunder Bay Health Coalition	January 21, 2020

Organization / Individual	Date of Appearance
Tikinagan Child and Family Services	January 20, 2020
Tom Mobs	Written Submission
Toronto District School Board	Written Submission
Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council	Written Submission
Tourism Industry Association of Ontario	January 17, 2020
Tracey Allison MacKinnon	January 21, 2020
Unifor	January 17, 2020
Unifor Local 324, Princess Court Long-Term Care-Kenora Homes for the Aged	January 20, 2020
Wasaya Airways	January 21, 2020
Waterloo Region Community Legal Services	January 23, 2020
Waterloo Region District School Board	January 23, 2020
Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation	January 23, 2020
Waterloo Region Health Coalition	Written Submission
Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association	January 23, 2020
Waterloo Regional Council of Union Retirees	Written Submission
Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association	January 23, 2020
Winery and Grower Alliance of Ontario	January 24, 2020
Wounds Canada	Written Submission
WRC Timber Inc., White River Forest Products Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Lumber Limited Partnership, Hornepayne Power Inc.	Written Submission
YMCA of Central East Ontario	January 22, 2020
YMCA of Oakville / YMCA of Niagara	January 24, 2020
YMCA Ontario	Written Submission
YWCA Toronto	January 17, 2020

**APPENDIX A – DISSENTING OPINION OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

## **“Worse to Worser” – 2020 Pre-Budget Consultations Dissenting Report**

MPPs who traveled the province to consult with Ontarians heard a very different message than the one being presented by the Majority in this report. Whether committee members were in the North or South, East or West, organizations and Ontarians from all across the province shared stories of feeling squeezed by government decisions and they all came out to call on the government to reverse the cuts that are taking things from bad to worse.

### **Bad to Worse**

Committee members heard that after years of underfunding by successive governments, big cuts from everything to healthcare, education, and social services are putting an even bigger strain on organizations and families are already struggling just to get by. Again and again submissions to the committee said the decisions made by the government last budget are making things worse.

Here’s just a small sample of how the committee heard things were going from bad to worse:

- Submissions to the committee were clear that things were already in crisis under the previous government. So when everyday Ontarians are saying things are going from bad to worse, it reaffirmed our obligation to ensure these concerns were reflected in the report. Matthew Hoppe, who presented to the committee in Sioux Lookout summed up the problem perfectly when he said, “It has gotten worse to worser, if I may misuse grammar.”
- Not only are the government’s cuts to operating funding making life harder, their failure to create and support front line service jobs are making the situation even worse. When it comes to healthcare, Dianne Martin of RNAO told the committee that this government’s refusal to hire nurses and healthcare workers are only making the hallway healthcare crisis worse. She warned that, “without enough health professionals, hallway health care is bound to get even worse”
- Ontarians are getting fed up with government after government refusing to act. Jules Tupker, said that their presentation hadn’t changed in four years. “If I go back to my 2016 presentation to these pre-budget hearings, it’s almost exactly the same. Things haven’t changed. No matter how many times I come here and ask for improvements to the health care system, nothing ever happens. The previous Liberal government didn’t do anything, and certainly this new Conservative government is also doing very little to improve that.” That’s four years in a row Ontarians have had to beg their government to fund healthcare at a level that actually meets the needs of the families who rely on it. Ontarians deserve better than another year of inaction and failure from their government.

### **Making Life Harder**

In city after city, Ontarians all came out to tell the government the same message – the cuts in last year’s budget are hurting families and making life more expensive. Whether it was the elimination of the guaranteed annual income, heartless cuts to legal aid and supports for victims of crime, the firing of thousands of teachers and nurses, or the chronic underfunding and disregard of rural, remote, and indigenous communities, presenters to the committee all shared stories of how the cuts this government has made are making things

harder for their communities.

Here's just a small sample of how the committee heard that life is getting worse under this government:

- When asked about the government's decision to eliminate the guaranteed annual income, one Ontarian was blunt: "hope was taken away." Government decisions should always make life better, it's clear that this decision is making life worse
- "Our children's treatment centres have been chronically underfunded for the past 15 to 20 years. Our children who are on wait-lists due to being ill will become critically ill, and the unintended consequences are that they will die...we need our politicians and our current government to wake up..." – Shaun Bayis

### **The Wrong Priorities**

The government has again and again shown that their priorities are not the priorities of everyday Ontario families. This government continues to focus on the priorities of only a small group of insiders and allies. Over the last two years, we've seen a disproportionate focus on alcohol while schools and hospitals fight for adequate funding, and problematic patronage appointments for government partisans and donors. Many of the presenters to the Committee echoed the same concerns from past years and, in the wake of Budget 2019 reductions and underinvestment in the services everyday Ontarians depend upon, it is clear there are legitimate questions about where the needs of everyday families rank on the list of this government's concerns.

Here's just a small sample of how the committee heard that this government's priorities are out of sync with the priorities of Ontarians:

- The committee heard that if the government's priority really was on saving money and improving our economy, they'd reverse their cuts to front line services and instead work to strengthen and protect the services that everyday families rely on. Fred Hahn told the committee that supporting front line services should be an economic priority as well, "investments in our health care system, in education and in community and social services not only make lives better for people who are struggling to get by paycheque to paycheque, but they actually help our economy and they help to bring the budget back into balance. Investments matter."
- The government says that they're focused on what the people of Ontario want. Unfortunately for Ontarians, this government is all talk and no action. When it comes to putting their money where their mouths are this government's only priorities appear to be big corporations and those who have successfully cultivated relationships with the Premier's Office. Ellen Chambers told the committee that those priorities need to change, she said in that "it is essential that our children are as important as business, and they deserve adequate funding." It's up to the government to decide if voices like Ellen's will be reflected in the 2020-21 budget.
- In Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay, Indigenous communities drew attention to how insufficient investments in local health services, mental health and long-term care exacerbate the hallway medicine crisis and other issues facing First Nations and remote communities.

### **The Choice – Forward or Back**

As one presenter told the committee during the week long consultation, “you can’t do more with less.” But again and again that’s what this government – and the government before them – has been asking everyday Ontarians to do. While Budget 2019 showed that the government wasn’t interested in protecting what mattered to everyday Ontarians, Budget 2020 offers the government a chance to re-evaluate their priorities and make a different choice when it comes to cuts and rollbacks. Unfortunately for families across the province the government looks like they’re going to make the same choice.

Here’s a small sample of how the committee heard the government’s choices are taking Ontario backward:

- When it comes to healthcare, the choice the government has to make this budget is clear. As Jeff Hanks told the committee in Kitchener-Waterloo “this is a real crisis...you should be scared and alarmed that your family members have to go into the health care system right now.” Ontarians deserve a government that will choose to invest in public healthcare, not cut it.
- After decades of inaction from years of successive governments, submissions to the community showed exactly how bad the crisis in our communities are. When it comes to the lack of government support for front line services like healthcare, Chris Moonias told the committee loud and clear, “life is on the line and we need action.” Budget 2020 government needs to choose to invest in the services that everyday families rely on. Because life should never be on the line when it comes to services as fundamental as basic healthcare.

### **Recommendations**

Families need real, concrete action, and they need a government that’s committed to making life better for everyday people, not just those who have the best connections. This same sentiment was echoed again and again during pre-budget presentations.

The Official Opposition recommends that in Budget 2020 the government:

- Stops making life harder and more expensive for everyday families
- Reverse the cuts made last year that are taking the front line services like healthcare and education from bad to worse
- Start focusing on the priorities of all Ontarians – not just the priorities of the biggest corporations and those with disproportionate access to the Premier’s office.

