DURHAM REGION

The Regional Municipality of Durham

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Pat M. Madill, A.M.C.T., CMM I
Regional Clerk

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June 9, 2003

REGI... YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE

FILE No. -

→ Chair ✓
CAO ✓ ✓
Comm. Finance ✓
H. Brown ✓
06/11/03
MG

The Honourable Ernie Eves
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

THE REGION'S RESPONSE TO EXTENDING THE *TAXPAYER PROTECTION ACT* TO INCLUDE MUNICIPAL TAXES AS PROPOSED IN "THE ROAD AHEAD; PREMIER ERNIE EVES' PLAN FOR THE FUTURE" (#2003-F-44) OUR FILE: L14-00

Honourable Sir, the Finance and Administration Committee of Regional Council considered the above matter and at a meeting held on May 28, 2003, Council adopted the following recommendations of the Committee, as amended:

"THAT the following proposed resolution be approved for distribution to Ontario Premier Ernie Eves, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and all local MPP's, and that copies be forwarded to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Durham's local Area Municipalities, other Regions and the Opposition parties:

THAT whereas, the three main political parties in Ontario have now issued their policy platforms and the Progressive Conservative Party platform includes a proposal to extend the force of the "*Taxpayer Protection Act*" to municipalities;

THAT whereas *"...Voter approval will be required before a municipal council introduces a new tax or increases the rate of an existing tax"* **("The Road Ahead: A Fair Deal for Municipalities Policy Paper" – Attachment #1 to Report #2003-F-44).** Further, while municipalities under the Progressive Conservative Party proposals would be able to propose new taxes to raise money for a 'specific' program or project, rules include requirements to tax only gasoline sales, rental of hotel or motel rooms and/or the use of parking spaces. Also, the targeted program or project is required "to be clearly identified in a referendum question," with the municipality then "clearly accounting for how the new revenue was spent";

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THAT whereas this would have a significant negative effect on day-to-day operations of municipal governments, which differ greatly from that of the Province;

THAT whereas the cost of requiring a referendum across the Regional Municipality of Durham for upper tier purposes could reach approximately $500,000 to $600,000 with a similar cost to the lower tier municipalities for a total unnecessary cost of $1,000,000 to $1,200,000 for Region of Durham taxpayers;

THAT whereas these costs exclude additional costs related to the launching of public education programs, printing and staff time required to disseminate sufficient budget information for an informed vote on a referendum question;

THAT whereas municipal governments are very different from the Provincial Government in a very fundamental way, since municipalities are the only government level without indexed revenues. While Provincial and Federal Governments have revenues that increase over time, municipalities have no similar 'automatic' adjustment and can only increase tax rates through direction of Council (despite many costs e.g. salaries, utilities and fuel, fluctuating with inflation levels);

THAT whereas increased property values as a result of annual Province-wide reassessments do not result in increased municipal tax revenues, since tax rates are adjusted to make reassessments revenue neutral;

THAT whereas municipalities are already subject to constraints in setting property tax increases due to Provincially mandated rules regarding property tax capping regulation and policies;

THAT whereas municipalities are already required to maintain balanced budgets, and already have very significant revenues and costs that are beyond the control of the municipality, including fluctuations in Provincial and Federal subsidy levels, requirements to maintain service standards developed by the Province, and significant and fluctuating GTA Pooling impacts;

THAT whereas the proposal to appoint an Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor to annually review the spending of large municipalities (over 50,000) and look at smaller municipalities upon request, seems to be contrary to Provincial practice, when the Province has refused previous requests from GTA partners to have a Provincial Auditor verify GTA Pooling figures and other Provincially mandated programs which significantly impact Municipal tax payers every year;

THAT whereas the Provincial legislation (*Taxpayer Protection Act*, 1999 and *Balanced Budget Act, 1999*) contains a number of exemptions for the Province, including exemptions for federal tax law changes and revenue decreases, it is unclear whether municipalities will receive similar exemptions for budget fluctuations beyond municipal control;

THAT whereas since these bills were proclaimed, the Province has passed legislation allowing it to override rules, so that promised income and corporate tax cuts (2002), subsequently revoked, would not be deemed to be tax increases;

THAT whereas there was no indication of a referendum policy at pre-consultation meetings under the 'Memorandum of Understanding' or during discussions leading to the new *Municipal Act*, that resulted in stringent public notice and consultation requirements for the preparation of municipal budgets and tax rates;

THAT whereas the new *Municipal Act* was initially heralded by the Provincial Government as a route to greater autonomy and flexibility for Ontario municipalities and the new legislation and its regulations and current election platform proposals take us farther from these goals;

THAT whereas municipalities already are accountable to constituents through regularly scheduled elections held every three years and also regularly report to constituents in a number of ways, including publication of Performance Measurement Reports, annual audited financial statements, annual remuneration and expense disclosures for elected officials and staff (over $100,000 per annum) and public meetings for financing proposals such as annual budgets and development charges; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional Municipality of Durham strongly urges the Progressive Conservative Party to exclude any requirement for referendums on new taxes, tax rate increases and/or new sources of revenue, as this policy would be unnecessary, unworkable in the municipal context, not cost-justified and would have serious ramifications for municipalities trying to provide essential services to constituents, while paying for services downloaded from the Provincial Government. Further, Municipalities already have very open and accountable financial and budgeting systems, MPMP reports, internal accountability measures, new *Municipal Act* accountability measures, and accountability requirements for grant programs which are workable."

For your information, enclosed is a copy of Report #2003-F-44 of the Commissioner of Finance.

P.M. Madill, A.M.C.T., CMM I
Regional Clerk

PMM/ab

Enclosure

c: Hon. D. Young, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing
Hon. Janet Ecker, M.P.P. (Pickering/Ajax/Uxbridge)
Hon. J. Ouellette, M.P.P. (Oshawa)
Hon. J. Flaherty, M.P.P. (Whitby/Ajax)
J. O'Toole, M.P.P. (Durham)
C. Hodgson, M.P.P. (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock)
K. Boschoff, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
M. de Rond, Clerk, Town of Ajax
G.S. Graham, Clerk, Township of Brock
P.L. Barrie, Clerk, Municipality of Clarington
S. Kranc, Clerk, City of Oshawa
B. Taylor, Clerk, City of Pickering
K. Coates, Clerk, Township of Scugog
W.E. Taylor, Clerk, Township of Uxbridge
D.G. McKay, Clerk, Town of Whitby
T. Agnello, Clerk, The Regional Municipality of Halton
T. Hollick, Clerk, The Regional Municipality of Niagara
C. Gravlev, Clerk, The Regional Municipality of Peel
K. Fletcher, Clerk, The Regional Municipality of Waterloo
U. Watkiss, City Clerk, City of Toronto
D. Kelly, Clerk, The Regional Municipality of York
Hon. Howard Hampton, Leader, New Democratic Party
Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Leader of the Official Opposition, Liberal
R.J. Clapp, Commissioner of Finance

"HAND OUT"

The Regional Municipality of Durham
Report to: The Finance and Administration Committee
From: R.J. Clapp, Commissioner of Finance
Report No.: 2003-F-44
Date: May 28, 2003

SUBJECT:

Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario Policy Platform "*The Road Ahead*," Which Proposes Mandatory Referendums for New Sources of Revenue and Increases in Property Tax Rates, and Proposes the Appointment of an Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the Finance and Administration Committee recommend to Regional Council that the following proposed resolution be approved for distribution to Ontario Premier Ernie Eves, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and all local MPPs, and that copies be forwarded to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Durham's local Area Municipalities, other GTA Regions and the Opposition parties:

> WHEREAS, the three main political parties in Ontario have now issued their policy platforms and the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario platform includes a proposal to extend the force of the "*Taxpayer Protection Act*" to municipalities,
>
> AND WHEREAS "*...Voter approval will be required before a municipal council introduces a new tax or increases the rate of an existing tax*" (**"The Road Ahead: A Fair Deal for Municipalities Policy Paper") – Attachment #1.** Further, while municipalities under the Tory proposals would be able to propose new taxes to raise money for a 'specific' program or project, rules include requirements to tax only gasoline sales, rental of hotel or motel rooms and/or the use of parking spaces. Also, the targeted program or project is required "to be clearly identified in a referendum question," with the municipality then "clearly accounting for how the new revenue was spent";
>
> AND WHEREAS this would have a significant negative effect on day-to-day operations of municipal governments, which differ greatly from that of the Province;

AND WHEREAS the cost of requiring a referendum across the Regional Municipality of Durham for upper tier purposes could reach approximately $500,000 to $600,000 with a similar cost to the lower tier municipalities for a total unnecessary cost of $1,000,000 to $1,200,000 for Region of Durham taxpayers;

AND WHEREAS these costs exclude additional costs related to the launching of public education programs, printing and staff time required to disseminate sufficient budget information for an informed vote on a referendum question;

AND WHEREAS municipal governments are very different from the Provincial Government in a very fundamental way, since municipalities are the only government level without indexed revenues. While Provincial and Federal Governments have revenues that increase over time, municipalities have no similar 'automatic' adjustment and can only increase tax rates through direction of Council (despite many costs e.g. salaries, utilities and fuel, fluctuating with inflation levels);

AND WHEREAS increased property values as a result of annual Province-wide reassessments do not result in increased municipal tax revenues, since tax rates are adjusted to make reassessments revenue neutral;

AND WHEREAS municipalities are already subject to constraints in setting property tax increases due to Provincially mandated rules regarding property tax capping regulation and policies;

AND WHEREAS municipalities are already required to maintain balanced budgets, and already have very significant revenues and costs that are beyond the control of the municipality, including fluctuations in Provincial and Federal subsidy levels, requirements to maintain service standards developed by the Province, and significant and fluctuating GTA Pooling impacts;

AND WHEREAS the proposal to appoint an Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor to annually review the spending of large municipalities (over 50,000) and look at smaller municipalities upon request, seems to be contrary to Provincial practice, when the Province has refused previous requests from GTA partners to have a Provincial Auditor verify GTA Pooling figures and other Provincially mandated programs which significantly impact Municipal tax payers every year;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial legislation (*Taxpayer Protection Act*, 1999 and *Balanced Budget Act, 1999*) contains a number of exemptions for the Province, including exemptions for federal tax law changes and revenue decreases, it is unclear whether municipalities will receive similar exemptions for budget fluctuations beyond municipal control;

AND WHEREAS since these bills were proclaimed, the Province has passed legislation allowing it to override rules, so that promised income and corporate tax cuts (2002), subsequently revoked, would not be deemed to be tax increases;

AND WHEREAS there was no indication of a referendum policy at pre-consultation meetings under the 'Memorandum of Understanding' or during discussions leading to the new *Municipal Act*, that resulted in stringent public notice and consultation requirements for the preparation of municipal budgets and tax rates;

AND WHEREAS the new *Municipal Act* was initially heralded by the Provincial Government as a route to greater autonomy and flexibility for Ontario municipalities and the new legislation and its regulations and current election platform proposals take us farther from these goals;

AND WHEREAS municipalities already are accountable to constituents through regularly scheduled elections held every three years and also regularly report to constituents in a number of ways, including publication of Performance Measurement Reports, annual audited financial statements, annual remuneration and expense disclosures for elected officials and staff (over $100,000 per annum) and public meetings for financing proposals such as annual budgets and development charges;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional Municipality of Durham strongly urges the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario to exclude any requirement for referendums on new taxes, tax rate increases and/or new sources of revenue, as this policy would be unnecessary, unworkable in the municipal context, not cost-justified and would have serious ramifications for municipalities trying to provide essential services to constituents, while paying for services downloaded from the Provincial Government. Further, Municipalities already have very open and accountable financial and budgeting systems, MPMP reports, internal accountability measures, new Municipal Act accountability measures, and accountability requirements for grant programs which are workable.

1.0 REPORT

- By mid-May the Province's three main political parties had released their election platforms. The Provincial Tories' re-election party platform includes proposals that could significantly affect Ontario municipalities. While these proposals are included in Attachment 2: "May 23, 2003 AMO Communication Alert," the more significant proposals are as follows:

    - A requirement for voter approval before introducing new taxes or increases in the rate of existing taxes;
    - An avenue for municipalities to propose new taxes on gasoline sales, hotel and motel room rentals and/or the use of parking spaces to raise money for specifically defined programs/projects, subject to the targeted programs/projects being clearly identified within a referendum question;
    - An annual review of municipalities over 50,000 by an Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor with the same powers as a Provincial auditor; and,
    - The Provincial Government will assume responsibility for all bridges across Ontario.

- On May 21, 2003 the Finance and Administration Committee discussed the new Tory re-election platform and scheduled a special meeting to be held Wednesday May 28, 2003 to establish a position related to the municipal tax referendum proposal as part of the Ontario Government's re-election platform.

- This report recommends a resolution for distribution to Ontario Premier Ernie Eves, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and all local MPPs, with copies forwarded to AMO, Durham's local Area Municipalities, other GTA Regions and Provincial Opposition parties.

- The main concerns outlined in the proposed resolution are:

    - Incurring the significant costs of a referendum each time a municipality raised taxes is not an efficient use of taxpayer money;
    - Municipalities are the only government without indexed revenues, despite many costs (e.g. salaries, utilities and fuel) fluctuating with inflation;
    - Municipalities are already bound by constraints in setting property tax rates, due to Provincially mandated capping regulations and policies;
    - Municipalities already have significant revenues/costs beyond local control, including fluctuations in Provincial/Federal subsidies, Provincial service standards and GTA Pooling impacts, and it is unclear whether municipalities will receive exemptions for budget fluctuations beyond municipal control;

- An Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor to review annual spending is unnecessary given municipalities already have open and accountable financial and budgeting systems, MPMP reports, published annual audited financial statements, internal accountability measures, new Municipal Act accountability measures, and accountability requirements for grant programs, which are workable and successful. In addition, the public scrutiny is extended with the timely publishing of the annual wages and expenses of elected officials and municipal staff (over $100,000 annually);
- There was no indication of a referendum policy at pre-consultation meetings under the 'Memorandum of Understanding' or during discussions leading to the new *Municipal Act*, resulting in stringent public notice and consultation requirements for the preparation of municipal budgets and tax rates;
- Tory proposals remove autonomy and flexibility from Ontario municipalities, while municipalities already are accountable to constituents through scheduled elections held every three years and also regularly report to constituents in a number of ways, including Performance Measurement Reports and public meetings for financing proposals such as annual budgets and development charges. The referendum requirement would negatively impact the day-to-day operations of municipal government.

- Further background information on this issue is provided in the attachments to this report, including an AMO summary and analysis of key 2003 campaign promises for all three main provincial political parties, as well as a copy of Premier Ernie Eves' "The Road Ahead: A Fair Deal for Municipalities."

R.J. Clapp, CA
Commissioner of Finance

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

G.H. Cubitt, M.S.W.
Chief Administrative Officer

Attmts.

DLK\2003REPORTS\tory policy...

THE ROAD AHEAD

Policy Paper

A Fair Deal for Municipalities

Protection for Taxpayers
A Stronger Voice
Flexible Revenue Sources
Greater Accountability

EVES

A Fair Deal for Municipalities

Many of the important services that Ontarians rely on are provided by municipal governments. Police and fire departments, water, parks and recreation, local roads — municipalities are responsible for these priorities and many others.

Just like the provincial government, municipal governments face the challenging job of providing high quality services and first-class infrastructure at fair and reasonable tax rates. The big difference is that most funding for municipalities comes from property taxes. That means municipal revenues aren't very flexible, considering the needs of vibrant, 21st century communities.

On The Road Ahead, we will offer a Fair Deal for Municipalities. We will let them choose the tools they need to build and sustain strong communities, while continuing to protect taxpayers.

Working with Municipalities

Ontarians pay taxes to several levels of government, and they rightly expect all of these levels to work together in providing good public service. We have worked to disentangle the huge number of services that cross jurisdictional boundaries, to make services more efficient and accountable. We will continue to work with municipalities to meet this challenge on The Road Ahead –

• It's important that the provincial government have a clear picture of the challenges facing municipal leaders, and vice versa.

We will require that the Ontario Cabinet meet at least once per year directly with the leadership of Ontario's cities, towns and regions, led by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which is made up of the duly elected representatives of Ontario's municipalities.

• One of the requests from municipal leaders is for the province to take over responsibility for municipal bridges. These are vital links between communities, and need to be properly maintained. As part of our 'Fair Deal' arrangement, we will purchase and take responsibility for these bridges across the province.

Local Revenue

Municipal leaders have been asking for greater flexibility in generating the revenue to meet the needs of their residents. We think that decisions about local taxes should be made by the people who live in the municipality, and that taxpayers should not have a higher tax burden imposed on them without their consent.

It's the same logic that led us to create the *Taxpayer Protection Act* that prohibits the provincial government from imposing new taxes or hiking existing taxes without public consent (except for changes that do not increase the overall tax burden).

In order to provide the same kinds of rights and responsibilities to municipalities on The Road Ahead, we will -

• Extend the *Taxpayer Protection Act* to municipalities. Voter approval will be required before a municipal council introduces a new tax or increases the rate of an existing tax. Tax changes that are "revenue neutral" will not be affected. Municipal councils will only have access to new sources of revenue if they comply with the Act.

Also, as a special form of taxpayer protection, if the new revenue comes from only part of the population, then the referendum proposal would need approval from a majority of those directly affected before the measure kicks in.

This will be a landmark change for Ontario taxpayers. We will protect them against increases in their municipal tax burden, just as we have protected them against provincial tax increases.

Your municipal and provincial taxes will only increase with your approval. This is real democracy in action.

• Allow municipalities to propose new tax ideas to raise money for a specific program or project. These proposals will be subject to the following rules:

  • These taxes could be placed on only three activities within the municipality – sales of gasoline, rental of hotel/motel rooms, and use of parking spaces.
  • The new revenue would have to be completely dedicated to a legitimate, local municipal need such as building a new arena, expanding a community arts program or re-paving a municipal road.
  • The target project or program would have to be clearly identified in the referendum question.
  • The municipality would have to clearly account for how the new revenue was being spent (see 'Local Accountability').

Again, under our rules, NO tax will be imposed without the express approval of the majority of voters who live in the municipality. However, if the people of a city or township agree that they would like to raise more money for local needs by one of these methods, they will have the freedom to do so.

Local Accountability

If municipalities are allowed the power to propose new revenue ideas to their residents, they must also accept the responsibility for spending that new money fairly and effectively, and for being more accountable to taxpayers.

As part of the Fair Deal for Municipalities on The Road Ahead, we will –

• Require that any municipality introducing a new tax must show the public how that new money is being spent. There should be detailed, publicly available information on how much money is being collected and where it is going. That information will have to be clear, complete and easily accessible, including a posting on the municipality's website.

• Appoint an ***Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor.*** This independent official will have the same powers of investigation, auditing and reporting as the Provincial Auditor. The Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor will review the spending of large municipalities every year, and look at smaller municipalities (less than 50,000 people) when requested. The Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor will be the local taxpayers' watchdog, rooting out waste, mismanagement and inefficiency.

We trust municipal councils, working with the public, to make the decisions that are best for their communities. And we are confident that the Fair Deal for Municipalities will help them grow and prosper on The Road Ahead.

Member Communication

Alert

Association of Municipalities of Ontario

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To the immediate attention of the Clerk and Council

***May 23, 2003* – Alert 03/030**

AMO URGES MUNICIPAL ACTION ON REFERENDUM PROPOSAL

Issue: Tory Party proposal would require municipalities to hold a referendum on any increase to local taxes.

Background:

As outlined in Alert 03/029, the Progressive Conservative Party has released its campaign platform for the next provincial election. Of principal concern is the proposal to require voter approval through a referendum before increasing local taxes – whether across the municipality or parts thereof. It will pose significant challenges to municipal operations and budgets and undermine the autonomy recently established with the government under the new *Municipal Act*. ***THIS PROPOSAL MUST BE WITHDRAWN.***

The policy is unworkable for many reasons and will result in multiple and costly referenda in each jurisdiction in Ontario. Councils are certainly not in favour of tax increases. Most of the municipal cost pressures come from:

- provincially mandated programs and service requirements, which represent the majority of municipal budgets;
- limitations of the property tax laws themselves; and
- lack of other sources of revenue.

As promised in Alert 03/029, an analysis of key municipal issues contained in platforms of the three parties is available on our websites.

Action: AMO urges all members to contact their PC MPPs, Cabinet Ministers, and other PC Party contacts to raise awareness of the serious ramifications of a referendum approach to tax policy.

For more information, please contact:
Pat Vanini, Executive Director at 416 971-9856 ext. 316 or
email: pvanini@amo.municom.com

ANALYSIS OF KEY CAMPAIGN PROMISES 2003

(limited to key issues arising from campaign materials that will directly impact municipal operations)

TOPIC	PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES (The Road Ahead)	LIBERALS (various platform documents)	NEW DEMOCRATS ("Public Power")	AMO COMMENTS
Property Tax	Referendum will be required on increases to municipal property taxes. If the new revenue comes from only part of the population, then the referendum proposal would need approval from a majority of those directly affected before the measure kicks in.	---------	Will address property tax unfairness, (rental property tax and commercial/industrial property tax) No further Downloads without Provincial funding.	*AMO does not support PC position and was not consulted.* *AMO has asked for review of current property tax rules and mitigation tools, such as capping.* *AMO has said no download without revenue sources.*
***New* Revenue Sources (Gas, Hotel, Parking)**	New municipal tax on gas, hotel and parking spaces allowed only if approved through a municipal referendum and if dedicated to a specific project.	Will share 2 cents of gas tax ($312 million/year) for public transit.	Will share 3 cents of gas tax for public transit, roads or highways. Will allow municipalities to raise hotel tax	*AMO asked for a 3-cent share of gas tax for transportation fund; hotel tax would fund economic development/tourism strategies.*
Municipal Finance Audits	Municipalities over 50,000 population will be reviewed annually by an Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor, with same powers as Provincial Auditor. Smaller municipalities audited "upon request".	Will give Provincial Auditor enhanced powers to investigate 'value-for-money' from transfer partners.	---------	*Municipalities have much more open & accountable financial and budgeting systems; MPMP Reports; internal audits; new Municipal Act accountability measures; CRF is not a specified service use; grant programs bring their own accountability requirements. This will be one more in an existing series of accountability measures. PC policy appears to make municipalities accountable more to Province than the community.*
Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF)	---------	Will ensure Rural/Northern receive "fair share" of provincial funding through CRF.	---------	*Northern communities have expressed concern with the formula*

ANALYSIS OF KEY CAMPAIGN PROMISES 2003

(limited to key issues arising from campaign materials that will directly impact municipal operations)

TOPIC	PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES (The Road Ahead)	LIBERALS (various platform documents)	NEW DEMOCRATS ("Public Power")	AMO COMMENTS
Roads and Bridges	Will purchase and take responsibility for bridges across Ontario. Various provincial highway extensions* *(*for details see Tory Platform Policy Paper #10)*	Will fast track financial support for rural communities to improve their roads and bridges. Will fund and develop a long-term Northern highway strategy.	Will create funding program for transportation.	*AMO supports investment in municipal roads and bridges. It is unclear how the valuations for PC "upload" of bridges will be undertaken and the consideration of MTO's construction & maintenance when Province has title.*
Funding for Infrastructure	---------	We will fast-track provincial financial support for Rural and Northern communities to improve their water and sewer infrastructure. Will create "Dynamic Downtown Fund" for Brownfields investment	Will provide municipalities with funding to properly operate and maintain sewer and water systems. Will provide municipalities with the resources needed to bring the North's water treatment and distribution system up to standard.	*Significant infrastructure deficit across Ontario. AMO has advocated for investment in water and sewer infrastructure in Ontario from federal and provincial levels.*
Municipal Authority & Government Relations	Will require Ontario Cabinet to meet with AMO once per year.	Will create Northern Development Councils who will advise government directly on Northern issues.	Will create a Toronto City Charter. Will broaden municipal authority under Municipal Act.	*AMO supports a meaningful relationship with the Province that clarifies roles, responsibilities and fiscal arrangements in a timely manner.* *Not clear how these would affect current meetings under the Memorandum of Understanding*
Planning Authority	Will create independent Smart Growth Boards with authority to resolve issues before going to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).	Will reform OMB with clear provincial rules, more heed to local decisions and more time to review applications	Will reform the OMB Will introduce the New *Green Planning Act*, to fight urban sprawl and preserve agricultural land, wetlands, and other important natural areas	*AMO supports significant OMB reform and recognition of local decisions.*

ANALYSIS OF KEY CAMPAIGN PROMISES 2003

(limited to key issues arising from campaign materials that will directly impact municipal operations)

TOPIC	PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES (The Road Ahead)	LIBERALS (various platform documents)	NEW DEMOCRATS ("Public Power")	AMO COMMENTS
Fire Services	---------	Will review the state of fire services in rural Ontario through an independent audit of the Fire Marshall's Office.	---------	*AMO considers fire services as local matters and in principal, the Province should not intrude on this authority.*
Municipal Environmental Issues	Committed to implementing recommendations of Walkerton Inquiry. Watershed plans will be done by committee appointed by a Conservation Board.	Committed to implementing recommendations of Walkerton Inquiry. Will divert 60% of waste from landfills organic waste within five years.	Will implement Walkerton Inquiry recommendations and will establish Watershed planning boards that will produce watershed protection plans. Will ban "mega landfills" and incineration. Will not transport Toronto's garbage or southern Ontario toxic waste to the North	*Municipal role in waste diversion should be supported by industry and/or province.* *Municipalities will likely be designated the implementers of watershed protection plans and should therefore have a principal role in their creation. Will require detailed consideration of authority, enforcement and financial strategy.*
Housing	Women and children fleeing domestic violence situations to receive priority in subsidized housing.	Will match federal support to create 20,000 new housing units	Will give municipalities authority to prevent demolition of affordable housing Will build 32,000 affordable housing units and 112,000 supportive housing units Will require 10% new urban and 5% new rural affordable housing to be built fully accessible	*AMO supports more provincial funding for affordable housing programs. Income redistribution programs such as social/affordable housing is a Provincial responsibility. Municipalities should not be primary financers of housing.*
Social Services	Will introduce the Ontario Child Benefit to remove children from welfare. Increase funding for ODSP. Increase funding for mental health and create "Shared Care Teams" to take people living on the street into care.	Will make sure parents "have access to affordable, quality childcare". Will help "welfare recipients with skills training, childcare and affordable housing".	Will link ODSP to cost of living. Will provide funding for fully accessible transit and housing.	*Additional support for social services welcomed but additional costs should not be on property tax base.*