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CHAIR, FEDERATION OF ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES
CHAIR, TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
NIGHT ECONOMY CHAMPION, CITY OF TORONTO

September 10, 2025

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
Minister of Finance
7 Queen's Park Crescent, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 1Y7

Dear Honourable Minister Bethlenfalvy,

I am writing to you today as Minister of Finance to follow up on our meeting during the AMO Conference held in Ottawa this past August. I appreciated the opportunity to speak with you and would like to provide additional information regarding the items we discussed and formally introduce the initiatives for which I am seeking your support.

1. **The First Topic of Interest is the Heads and Beds Levy System.** The provincially prescribed rate of \$75 per full-time student, hospital bed and resident place has remained unchanged since 1987. In 2025, the city received \$20.8 million based on 276,999 heads and beds at this static rate. However, if the rate had been adjusted to reflect inflation and property tax equivalency, reaching \$182.79, the City would have received an additional \$29.9 million in tax revenue.

Thus, Toronto City Council is advocating for an increase in the heads and beds rate to reflect current inflation rates, tax equivalency and adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index. This update is essential to ensure adequate support.

2. **The Second Topic of Interest is the Railway and Utility Corridors Levy.** The existing per acre taxation system does not adequately meet the use requirements of railway and utility corridors in Toronto. The City of Toronto is advocating for a shift towards a tonnage-based levy system which better addresses the volume of goods transported, enhancing safety, reducing wear and tear and meeting the demands of high frequency freight and commuter traffic.

Western provinces have already adopted this model resulting in more equitable municipal revenues. If the rates had been adjusted over the past 20 years, Toronto would have generated approximately \$3.76 million in additional revenue. This shortfall continues to place a significant burden on municipalities.

3. **The Third Topic of interest is the Federation Ontario Public Libraries: Digital Infrastructure proposal.** Toronto City Council supports the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries and the Ontario Library Association's proposal to establish a province wide digital public library, **the Ontario Digital Public Library (ODPL)**. This initiative would provide universal and equitable access to high quality digital resources such as e-learning, tutoring, health information and job training for all Ontarians particularly those in vulnerable or underserved communities who face barriers to access.

A **\$9.4 million investment** would enable centralized licensing, reduce costs and promote digital literacy. By investing in a centralized digital infrastructure, we can empower communities and build a more equitable and inclusive Ontario where everyone has access to digital tools and knowledge.

4. **The Fourth Topic of interest is the Good Roads: Infrastructure Safety Proposal.** Toronto City Council supports the Good Roads Association in collaboration with the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors in advocating for improved safety across Ontario's rural road infrastructure. Despite only constituting 17% of the population, rural roads account for 55% of road fatalities. Unfortunately, municipalities lack the fiscal capacity to address these risks.

The proposed five-year, \$183 million **Rural Road Safety Program** will target the high-risk municipal roads, enabling the installation of modern safety infrastructure, implement collision mitigation measures and conduct road safety audits. This initiative is expected to prevent fatalities and injuries, reducing the pressure on the healthcare system and saving costs.

Please find enclosed briefing notes for your review. I appreciate your attention to these matters.

Thank you for your consideration, I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



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c.c. Mayor Olivia Chow, City of Toronto
Mayor Robin Jones, Westport Ontario, President AMO