

**Pre-Budget Consultations
Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry
January 2017**

Summary of Recommendations

- **Advanced Education and Skills Development**
 - Match professional training and education to workplace demand and ensure the job market is not over-supplied in areas and specialties where there is insufficient demand for new workers
 - Train and educate people based on local marketplace demand with a specific focus on preserving a healthy local supply of skilled labour
 - Build a strong work and study ethic in the education system in order to make graduates and job-seekers more attractive for employers
 - Dramatically improve the young workforce's skills for operating in a computer-based business environment, such as spreadsheet, word processing, databases and software coding

- **Agriculture**
 - Reverse the neonicotinoid ban, as it causes significant yield loss and is not supported by solid scientific evidence
 - Tackle the increasing cost of running a farm business in Ontario to stop the decline in the number of farms
 - Reduce the large regulatory and administrative burden on farmers in Ontario, focusing on maximizing the time farmers can dedicate to operating their business, growing and innovating.
 - Ontario to maintain its commitment to the Risk Management Program (RMP) and the Self-Directed Risk Management Program (SDRM) used by the horticulture industry. In times of volatile global markets, the RMP and SDRM programs are more critical than ever.

- **Community Safety & Correctional Services**
 - Protect public participation by educating citizens on their rights, obligations and limitations when organizing gatherings and protest initiatives, in order to ensure all those involved comply with existing laws and can express their views freely
 - Restore 100% funding for the Community Paramedic Program

- **Community & Social Services**
 - Increase availability and funding for respite services for caregivers of physically and developmentally challenged Ontarians
 - Increase group home base funding to cover increased running costs
 - Build more group homes to tackle long local waiting lists
 - Build supported living residences for physically disabled Ontarians with mild or no cognitive challenges
 - Maximize the utilization of surplus public infrastructure, such as disused schools and hospitals, in order to expedite the provision of extra assisted and supported living options

- **Economic Development & Growth**

- Make it easier for employers to apply for training services and receive them, for instance by making online program applications available to all businesses
- Promote the availability of training and employment grants to ensure all program funds can be applied for and disbursed
- Ensure a steady supply of seasonal workers in areas where low-to-mid skilled jobs are in high demand in industries such as logistics.
- Incentivize hiring younger workers, apprentices and graduates
- Improve awareness and literacy in the financial, retirement and succession planning field to encourage older workers to retire
- Tackle any regulatory, licensing or tax barriers that make offshore manufacturing more attractive than keeping jobs in Ontario
- Consider implementing a different minimum wage for new employees in probation or training to create an incentive to hire and train
- Focus on restoring Ontario's affordability as a place to do business
- Improve job market awareness among all new and young job-seekers to ensure salary expectations are aligned with local job market realities
- Work together with the private sector to increase broadband capacity and access in rural Ontario while reducing its cost, as it is deemed an essential service and is a driver of economic growth.
- Deploy latest cellular and data technologies when building new communication infrastructure (e.g. build for 5G capability)

- **Education**

- Recognize rural schools' function as an attractor of residents and businesses to a community, which contributes to property assessment values, economic growth and sustainability
- Study the impact of larger schools and longer commute times on dropout rates prior to closing any rural schools under the current Pupil Accommodation Review process
- Put specific policies and funding in place to support the school community hub principle
- Adapt student transportation schedules and methods to allow students to access extra-curricular activities in the community they are bussed to for schooling
- Acknowledge the economic and social value of the lifelong relationships built in rural education
- Prioritize school maintenance and building funding independently of closures or overcrowding
- Hold off any rural school closures and/or consolidations until a detailed study of future enrolment can confirm the need for consolidation
- Ensure that every distinct geographic area is served by a dedicated school
- Use bussing routes and course/program availabilities to maximize efficient resource use
- Use technology and remote delivery to increase course offerings and availability at rather than increasing school sizes.
- Review provisioning and funding rules for low density areas
- Examine options to achieve administrative savings through combining administration, e.g. several schools under same principal
- Maximize public access to and use of school facilities built with taxpayers' dollars to ensure school boards are inclusive

- Pool capital and administrative resources across all boards (French/separate/etc) to ensure every community can have a local school
 - Improve communication and coordination between School Boards, the Ministry and municipalities in order to work together in students' interests
 - Deliver a new strategic plan for boards and communities focused on growing enrolment
 - Amend education sector collective agreements to remove limitations to alternative service and course delivery methods
 - Allow student mobility across school catchment areas on a case-by-case basis when certain courses are not available at the student's local school
 - Reinstate the mandate for school boards to consider the economic impact of their decisions on communities, including the potential effect on local assessed property values
 - Protect public participation rights of school board trustees and staff
 - Suspend all current Pupil Accommodation Reviews until a strategic rural education plan is completed, engaging all rural school boards, school communities and municipalities
- **Energy**
 - Cancel or buy out all LRP projects that have not yet been built
 - Restore decision-making power to accountable levels of government and rein in bureaucracies
 - Stop wind projects that require deforestation for funneling in areas with rare species e.g. the butternut tree.
 - Focus funding on refurbishing, maintaining and expanding Ontario's hydro-electric and nuclear production
 - Reduce the cost of management/executive salaries at public agencies that contribute to the cost of electricity
 - Increase investment in revitalizing the electricity delivery grid
 - Consider breaking Hydro One's monopoly to bring competition to delivery and distribution
 - Expand natural gas distribution to rural Ontario through joint public and private investment
 - Commit to a 20-year program, investing \$75 million annually to provide rural Ontario with access to natural gas through pipelines. Access to affordable energy will bring new money and jobs to rural Ontario. Our farms, businesses and neighbors will save over \$1 billion per year in energy costs for heating and appliances with access to natural gas. It is simply the best and most effective investment the province can make in rural Ontario.
 - Reduce home heating rates
 - Continue using nuclear energy and ensure generating plants can continue to run
 - Purchase source materials for energy generation from the most cost-effective source, with a focus on maximizing opportunities for local resource use.
 - Recognize the positive economic impact of Energy East and other pipelines
 - Reform or abolish Hydro One's letter of credit requirements for providing service to a new subdivision
 - Abolish the water rental fee altogether, leading to a \$6 per month reduction for electricity ratepayers
 - Examine energy generation, distribution and management best practices across other jurisdictions and implement those with the strongest downward impact on cost
 - Delay Cap & Trade until a continental plan can be established and implemented.
 - Equalize the distribution costs for electricity across the province. Rural customers bought and paid for the Hydro One distribution assets. These assets are now being sold to pay for urban transit projects. It is only fair that rural Ontario sees some benefit from its investment.

- **Environment**

- Either rescind cap-and-trade or guarantee its revenue-neutrality
- Direct revenue from cap-and-trade towards lowering the tax burden
- Consider shifting emission reduction initiative spending to areas and industries around the world where the same amount of funding can have the highest impact on worldwide emissions
- Stop tree clearing by farmers by burning, as it is both a health hazard and a nuisance
- Do not implement carbon pricing unless there is a concerted global initiative or at least a continental plan in place involving, at least, all the United States
- Do not buy credits from jurisdictions that have not yet met their carbon footprint reduction targets
- Increase the transparency and accountability of Cap-and-trade, including transparent accounting

- **Finance**

- Support municipalities whose tax base has been eroded by declining assessments
- Take action to curb increases in municipal expenditures by focusing on municipalities' ability to pay
- Preserve and improve OMPF funding levels by ensuring any OMPF transfer reductions do not exceed the net increase in provincial upload benefits
- Increase municipalities' share of the total tax take in their area (above current level of approximately 0.08 cents for every tax dollar)
- Acknowledge that there is only one ultimate tax payer
- Encourage Ontarians to preserve and promote heritage by creating favourable assessment frameworks for properties that host museums, including private ones.

- **Government and Consumer Services**

- Reduce the overall time and cost for businesses to comply with financial, corporate, licensing and other reporting requirements
- Deliver more user-friendly services to businesses and individuals facing compliance and reporting requirements or needing information and guidance from the Government
- Publish design and inspection standards for regulated industries, such as electrical contractors, boilers, pressure vessels and fuels and reduce inspectors' discretion to deviate from these standards
- Allow Ontarians to choose which of their registered names appear, and in which order, on their provincially-issued ID

- **Health & Long Term Care**

- Deliver a significant net funding increase to hospitals in order to tackle wait times, maintain access to care and accommodate the health care needs of Ontario's growing and increasingly complex patient population
- Abolish the senior residence inspection fee, which is being passed on to residents and is making senior housing less affordable for those already on low or fixed incomes
- Increase financial incentives for physicians to practice in rural and low-density areas
- Promote public awareness of the need for trade-offs in public healthcare
- Improve communication between care providers, health professionals, patients and patients' families

- Prepare information material for health provider waiting rooms to help keep the public informed about major issues in the health care system
- Minimize travel requirements for Ontarians to receive health services
- Fast-track long term care placements for re-uniting spouses
- Inform the public about the level of private participation in the health system today and the way this affects policymaking in the health sector
- Improve communication and coordination between family physicians and hospitals to reduce unnecessary wait times during referrals
- Fund more physician positions in our clinics
- Adapt size and time criteria and targets for rural hospital funding to ensure they can provide high-quality and timely service.
- Commit to matching hospitals' yearly operating cost increases in addition to improving base funding
- Deliver diagnostic tests in a timely manner to allow for appropriate triaging of emergency patients
- Enforce current care standards in nursing homes through increased compliance inspections and stronger reporting requirements
- Ensure funding for LTC facilities isn't reduced without prior consultation with other funding partners, who might have to absorb the additional costs on short notice
- Increase home care resources and funding to deliver services to more Ontarians and allow PSWs to assist clients with essential housework that will help them maintain their independence
- Commit to reducing wait times for PSW services
- Ensure that Ontarians' physicians and/or Nurse Practitioners are the primary determiners of a patient's needs, rather than outside agencies
- Acknowledge that health services are being rationed in Ontario
- Increase the number of available LTC beds within SD&G and Champlain area
- Reduce medical product waste in home care by improving supply replenishment policies
- Ensure home care providers, nurses and PSWs can act promptly to address emergency situations arising at any time of the day, e.g. a patient requiring an IV replacement.
- Increase the number of PSWs to ensure patients can stay in their home without sacrificing their quality of life, thus reducing pressure on retirement and LTC facilities
- Consider universal drug coverage
- When covering treatments, cover the delivery tool as well (e.g. the specific needle required by the device)
- Improve funding formula for small hospitals
- Restore funding to Glen-Stor-Dun Lodge and make funding levels reflect increasing acuity in LTC facilities
- Apply the hospital funding formula properly to preserve services and staffing at high-quality hospitals regardless of their size.
- Reform LTC home funding formula and design standards to reflect local realities, as the One-size-fits-all approach does not work for small long-term care homes such as Dundas Manor
- Increase funding and staff resources for mental health services across the Province
- Provide a dental care coverage program to senior Ontarians

- **Housing**
 - Provide a clear and strong enforcement mechanism for tenants on social assistance who default on their rent obligations
 - Build more social housing units, prioritizing those areas of the Province with a higher proportion of the population in need of social assistance

- **Infrastructure**
 - Increase infrastructure funding to rural municipalities based on the amount of infrastructure they own and have to maintain
 - Facilitate customer connections to the electricity grid, including through reducing the customer-end infrastructure cost
 - Transit infrastructure must be planned for several years ahead – major urban areas in Ontario have fallen behind, resulting in gridlock
 - Increase infrastructure spending outside the GTHA
 - Release infrastructure grant funding in the same year it is awarded
 - Ensure all available infrastructure program funding is assigned and released every year
 - Ensure all available infrastructure program guidelines, forms and applications are clear, consistent and any changes are communicated to potential applicants well in advance
 - Implement clear procedures for funding regional projects involving several municipalities working in partnership.
 - Reduce the cost and time needed to prepare and file applications for infrastructure project grants
 - Invest in rural infrastructure – Roads, bridges, drainage, and connectivity are vital to maintain and grow our food system.
 - Work with municipalities across rural Ontario to develop and adopt a cost-effective infrastructure replacement program including roads, bridges and drainage. Rural communities have a disproportionately large stock of infrastructure compared to their local tax base.

- **International Trade**
 - Engage with our trade partners directly to determine a common way forward

- **Labour**
 - Balance the rights of organized labour and small employers
 - Reduce the bureaucratic and cost impact of the College of Trades, WHMIS and other programs on small businesses
 - Tackle the serious shortfall in skilled labour by making hiring and training apprentices easier through adjusting apprenticeship ratios
 - Restore adjudicative power in skilled trade matters entirely to the courts
 - Restore the obligation for skilled trade work to be completed by certified and licensed tradespeople

- **Municipal Affairs**
 - Untie provincial funding from the municipality's financial performance – municipalities with healthy balance sheets should not be penalized as they are under the current system
 - Stabilize funding for municipal services and make it predictable, including making OMPF reflect the growing cost of downloaded services and the lower per-capita income in some municipalities which affects their tax base
 - Ensure municipalities have sufficient funding for infrastructure, maintenance and operations despite commercial assessment loss
 - Provide funding for municipally funded LTC facility capital work
 - Reform joint and several liability to tackle rising municipal insurance premiums
 - Act upon prior municipal input on arbitration reform to make the system fairer,
 - Reform the Building Code and associated codes to make them simpler to comply with and enforce
 - Work with affordable housing providers to ensure reforms to the Building Code won't have a negative effect on the supply of safe affordable units
 - Reduce or abolish building officers' powers to order additional work when all codes have already been complied with
 - Take clear legislative and regulatory action to fix the arbitration system

- **Seniors**
 - Tackle long wait times for affordable senior housing and help bring down the cost of private retirement residences

- **Transportation**
 - Reduce or waive the excessive fees charged for Functional Assessment Services
 - Establish a five business day service guarantee for the reinstatement of a medically suspended license following a favourable physician's report

- **Treasury Board**
 - Recognize the impact of higher public sector starting salaries on small and rural businesses' ability to hire young workers and graduates
 - Establish clear guidelines for hiring Ministry and OPS staff to ensure they are qualified in their related fields

- **Miscellaneous**
 - Policy development
 - Examine total financial and infrastructure needs for implementing a policy prior to announcing it, e.g. evaluating the total cost of upgrading electrical infrastructure before announcing a complete shift to electrical heating.
 - Red tape
 - Recognize that every layer in a permit application process creates costs and delays – commit to rapid service, consolidate the steps required for a permit or abolish some of the agencies involved
 - Delivery of services
 - Consider bringing competition to the delivery of public services, including initiatives such as school vouchers