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Dear County of Middlesex Council:

On behalf of CUPE Ontario's nearly 125,000 active members of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS), I am writing today to express our serious concerns with OMERS' investment performance.

In 2020, OMERS posted a net loss 2.7%, representing three billion dollars in losses. This was during a year that comparable defined benefit pension plans and funds in Canada posted substantial investment gains. CUPE Ontario investigated further and tracked investment returns at OMERS for ten years. We found that OMERS has underperformed relative to other large pension plans and funds, as well as relative to its own benchmarks. We also found that OMERS no longer shares this critical information in their annual reporting, making it difficult for plan members to hold their investment managers accountable.

Attached you will find a report detailing OMERS investment underperformance. Also attached, you will find the analysis of a third-party actuary (PBI Actuarial consultants) who confirmed that our reasoning and conclusions were sound.

CUPE Ontario believes plan members and employers have the right to know why OMERS' investments have, over a ten-year period, underperformed other large defined benefit pension plans and funds. If OMERS had performed in line with the average large Canadian public pension plan, it would have a substantial, multi-billion-dollar surplus, versus the deficit it currently faces.

Considering the significant impact such underperformance could have on plan members and on all sponsors who hold the liabilities of the plan, **we are calling on OMERS to cooperate fully with an independent and transparent third-party review of its investment performance** transparent and accountable to plan members, sponsors like CUPE Ontario, other unions, and employers like the County of Middlesex.

We are hoping that the County of Middlesex Council will join our call for an independent expert review of OMERS. **We are asking you, and other municipal councils across the province, to debate the following motion or to pass a similar motion calling for a third-party expert review of OMERS.** The terms of such a review would need to be agreed upon by sponsors and they could explore whether reasonable costs could be funded from the plan.

Fred Hahn
President

PUBLIC SERVICES SAVE LIVES

Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

We simply cannot afford another decade of investment returns so far below other pension plans and funds. We know that ensuring strong investment returns is a goal shared by employers like the County of Middlesex and by unions like CUPE.

CUPE Ontario staff person Liam Bedard is available to answer any questions you may have. He can be reached at lbedard@cupe.on.ca.

All materials are available in French at cupe.on.ca/francaisomers.

It's time for all of us to work together to #FixOMERS.

Thank you,



Fred Hahn
President of CUPE Ontario

Proposed Motion – Independent Review of OMERS' Investment Performance

1. The County of Middlesex Council is calling for an immediate, comprehensive and independent third-party expert review of OMERS' investment performance and practices over the past ten years, conducted by the OMERS Pension Plan's sponsors and stakeholders.
2. Such a review would, at a minimum:
 - a. Compare OMERS plan-level, and asset class-level performance to other comparable defined benefit pension plans and funds, OMERS internal benchmarks, and market-based benchmarks.
 - b. Examine OMERS decision-making processes around the timing of various investment decisions.
 - c. Assess the risk management policies and protocols that were in place and determine if they were followed and/or if they were sufficient to protect the plan from undue risk.
 - d. Assess whether the disclosures provided to the OMERS Administrative and Sponsorship Boards were sufficient evidence to allow the Boards to respond appropriately and in a timely manner.
 - e. Examine executive compensation, investment fees and investment costs at OMERS in comparison to other major defined benefit pension plans and funds.
 - f. Examine other relevant issues identified by the third-party expert review.
 - g. Make recommendations for changes at OMERS to ensure stronger returns moving forward.
 - h. Issue their final report and recommendations in a timely manner.
 - i. Publicly release its full report and recommendations to ensure that it is available to OMERS sponsors, stakeholders, and plan members.
3. The County of Middlesex Council further calls on the OMERS Administrative Corporation to:
 - a. Provide all requested data, documentation and information required of the review panel to fulfill its mandate.
 - b. Establish a step-by-step plan, with OMERS sponsors and stakeholders, to implement any recommendations set out in the review report.

