



## POLICY UPDATE

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January 24, 2023

# **AMO Policy Update – ROMA 2023 Conference, Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, RED Funding Intake Open**

## **ROMA 2023 Conference**

Over the past three days, more than 1500 delegates from across Ontario gathered at the first in-person Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference since 2020. The conference is an important annual event in Ontario's public policy calendar.

Housing and infrastructure remain at the forefront of the provincial-municipal relationship and featured prominently at the conference:

ROMA chair Robin Jones [highlighted](#) the need for provincial-municipal collaboration, and a plan that goes beyond municipal planning and approvals to focus on expanding municipal infrastructure and services and removing provincial policy barriers.

AMO President Colin Best [called for the province](#) to fully offset financial impacts of Bill 23 on municipalities, work in partnership with municipalities, and course correct where necessary.

Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark spoke to the importance of working collaboratively with municipalities to build affordable housing and acknowledged the need for investments in municipal infrastructure. Minister Clark signaled an openness to innovative solutions from municipalities to implement Bill 23 and inform future legislation.

Municipal representatives highlighted the need for urgent provincial action on homelessness as part of the housing crisis:

A commitment to improving mental health and addictions services and expanding community and supportive housing was highlighted both by a

mainstage panel on rural housing and homelessness, to be broadcast on TVO's The Agenda, and by Minister of Health Sylvia Jones as part of the Ministers' Forum.

Minister Clark announced Ontario's 2023-24 and 2024-25 allocation under the federal-provincial National Housing Strategy, totalling \$936 million. This includes an additional allocation of \$23 million for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.

Other areas of focus included property assessment, Indigenous relations, energy, waste management, and railway crossings and drainage:

AMO President Colin Best highlighted the need to proceed with re-assessment to ensure a stable and predictable property tax system.

Mississaugas of the Credit Chief Stacey Laforme, former ROMA Chair and mayor Allan Thompson, and Indigenous advocate and broadcaster Jesse Wentle all talked about the role of truth and reconciliation at the municipal level.

Minister of Energy Todd Smith, the Independent Electricity System Operator and others highlighted the critical role of municipal councils in the future of Ontario's energy system, and the need for them to be [informed](#) and prepared.

Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks David Piccini highlighted the need for an on-[schedule](#) Blue Box transition to full producer responsibility.

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Lisa Thompson and Minister Clark recognized the impact on municipalities of railways failing to pay for crossing and drainage costs and committed to action.

## **Intake Open for New Projects Through Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund**

The Government of Canada is accepting applications until July 19, 2023 for new construction and infrastructure projects through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund.

Eligible projects must have a minimum total cost of \$1 million and include new public infrastructure or the modification of existing public infrastructure that will help communities withstand natural disasters and climate-related risks.

Municipal, local, provincial or territory governments, public sector bodies, Indigenous organizations, not-for-profits or for-profit organizations in partnership with eligible applicants outside the private sector are all eligible

to apply for the more than \$1 billion available in the fund for eligible projects.

AMO has been advocating for an extension of the fund on behalf of Ontario municipalities and is pleased to see the new intake open. Interested applicants can click [here](#) for more information.

## **New Rural Economic Development Program Intake Now Open**

On January 23, 2023, the Minister of OMAFRA announced the next intake of the Rural Economic Development program is open until February 23, 2023. For more information click [here](#).

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