



Staff Report to Council - for Direction

Title: Government Relations Policy Update

From: Aaron Stauch, Director Government Relations

Date: June 5, 2025

Report Number: GR-2025-008

Staff Recommendation:

That Council endorses the priorities identified in this report as part of the ongoing Government Relations policy agenda.

Report Summary:

This report outlines the accomplishments of the Government Relations Department; highlights progress made on previous advocacy priorities and introduces refined and emerging areas of strategic focus for the 2025 AMO and ROMA conferences.

Background/Analysis:

Since the previous update to Council in Spring 2024, Bruce County has continued to advance its government relations strategy and advocacy agenda. Key activities include:

Advocacy Restart: Following the provincial election, letters of congratulation were sent to newly appointed Ministers, reiterating Bruce County's key advocacy positions and seeking re-engagement.

Pre-Budget Submission: Ahead of the 2025 Ontario Budget, Bruce County submitted a detailed proposal outlining funding needs across infrastructure, energy host community support, poverty reduction, rural transit, community safety and wellbeing, rural healthcare, housing affordability, and long-term care.

AMO 2024: At the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference, County representatives held delegations focused on securing support for energy host communities, infrastructure funding, rural social supports, and health and housing needs.

ROMA 2025: At the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference, the County engaged with the Solicitor General and Attorney General on equitable funding for court security (supporting the Municipality of Brockton), and participated in panels on energy procurement, protection of municipal staff from harassment, and land use planning reform.

In addition to these signature events, the Department has supported issues management (e.g., tariff impacts), local MPP engagement, and coordination with key advocacy partners including the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC), Nuclear Innovation Institute (NII), and AMO.

Priority Update

As part of our annual business cycle, the Government Relations Department conducts a semi-annual review of advocacy priorities to ensure alignment with local needs and partner organizations. This process informs planning for AMO and ROMA and strengthens our influence with provincial and federal stakeholders. The following renewed priorities are recommended for endorsement:

Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness:

- Agri-Food Investment & Supply Chain Resilience: Strategic investment in agricultural processing capacity and regional supply chain infrastructure is needed to address trade disruptions and shifting global markets. As a rural hub with strong energy assets and agri-food potential, Bruce County is well-positioned to anchor a nationalized, resilient supply chain that supports Ontario's food security and economic growth.

Minister of Energy

- Capacity Funding for Bruce C: Request equitable capacity funding for Bruce County, consistent with support offered to municipalities hosting 'new' energy infrastructure.
- Direction to OPG on Legacy Issues with SON: Request that the Minister direct Ontario Power Generation to address outstanding legacy issues with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.
- Community Benefit Agreement with OPG: Propose the establishment of a formal Community Benefit Agreement to ensure tangible, ongoing benefits to Bruce County as a long-standing nuclear host, that addresses historical property tax challenges.

Minister of Finance

- Capacity Funding for Bruce C: Reinforce Ask for nuclear host community support through the Ministry of Finance to reflect the financial pressures of growth.
- Support for AMO's Social and Economic Prosperity Review: Request that the Ministry formally support this review, with a specific focus on including Development Charges. Bruce County urges the province to modernize DC legislation to reflect the rural context and introduce flexible funding mechanisms that support Asset Management Plan (AMP) requirements and enable sustainable rural growth.

Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery & Procurement

- Procurement Reform in the Face of Tariffs: Advance Bruce County's resolution to modernize Ontario's municipal procurement legislation. Emphasize the need for flexibility and tools that support local economic resilience in response to global tariff volatility and supply chain constraints.

Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing

- Upper-Tier CIP Authority: Request regulatory authority for upper-tier municipalities to implement Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) to better support local and regional housing initiatives.
- Progress on Housing and Homelessness Plan: Request updates and action on Ontario's housing and homelessness plans, ensuring policy direction is understood and progress is made on these 10-year plans. This aligns with AMO's recent recommendations on homelessness.

Minister of Long-Term Care

- Renewed Ask for LTC Funding Reform: Reintroduce Bruce County's call for modernized long-term care funding models. Stress the urgency of addressing enforcement burdens, funding erosion, and workforce development challenges, which are especially acute in rural settings.

Attorney General

- Continued Ask for enhancements to the existing court security grant program to ensure timely and adequate financial support aligned with municipal budgeting cycles.
- Ask the Attorney General to consider the exploration of new court space in Bruce County.

Bruce County will also seek opportunities to meet with key federal partners during the AMO conference – including the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC), Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the Prime Minister's Office, and Finance Canada – to advance shared priorities related to energy infrastructure. We will also engage with CMHC and federal housing officials to better understand the future of housing investments under the new government and ensure equitable rural access to federal funding.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal, or IT considerations.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Government Relations consulted with the Senior Management Team and Local CAOs on the priorities outlined in this report.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

NA

Report Author:

Aaron Stauch, Director Government Relations

Departmental Approval:

Aaron Stauch, Director Government Relations

Approved for Submission:

Sean Morphy, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

NA