June 17, 2019

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Solicitor General (former Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services)
Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
Solicitor General
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Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6

RE: Bill 75 9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act and transition to Next Generation 9-1-1

The Corporate Services Committee, at its meeting held the 13th day of June, 2019 passed a resolution directing staff to forward a letter to our local MPP’s and the Sponsor of Bill 75 regarding 9-1-1 services.

In June 2017, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) directed all telephone and wireless service providers to update their networks to be ready to provide Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) services. Under Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2017-182, the CRTC directed all Telephone Service Providers (TSPs) to be ready to provide NG9-1-1 Voice service by June 30, 2020 and text with 9-1-1 by December 31, 2020. CRTC Decision 2018-188 further stated that NG9-1-1 related connections will not only include Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) but also Secondary Public Safety Answering Points (SPSAPs) in future NG9-1-1 network access tariffs.

The reason for the transition is that the current 9-1-1 system has reached end of life, and cannot keep up with evolving technologies or public expectations of a modern 9-1-1 system.

NG9-1-1 also provides enhanced situational awareness and new opportunities for collaboration and transformational change in 9-1-1 service delivery and emergency services operations. Interoperability amongst PSAPs across the Country will be a reality with NG9-1-1.
Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECS) and wireless carriers will be responsible for the construction, operation and maintenance of the NG 9-1-1 networks, with CRTC oversight and, are expected to support (PSAPs) through the transition period to June 30, 2023. The CRTC has requested ILECS decommission their existing legacy 9-1-1 networks. With this requirement to decommission the existing 9-1-1 infrastructure, there is the expectation (PSAPs) will be fully functional with NG9-1-1 by June 30, 2023. This is only four years away.

The delivery of 9-1-1 services throughout Canada is complex. It requires coordination between various parties, including telephone and wireless companies, provincial, and municipal governments, PSAPS, emergency services dispatching centres and emergency responders.

In most provinces across Canada, the delivery of 9-1-1 services (standards and funding) through PSAPS is mandated through Provincial Legislation. This type of legislation provides authority to the governing jurisdiction (provincial or municipal) to charge levies to support the delivery of the 9-1-1 Service locally. Ontario has no such legislation. In Ontario, the decision to operate and provide 9-1-1 services has been vested with Counties, Regions and Cities through agreements with the TSPs to provide the service to their residents. 9-1-1 Industry stakeholders are permitted to request through the CRTC the opportunity to apply tariffs to the subscriber’s service costs to help fund the cost of their infrastructure to support the 9-1-1 system. It is expected that Industry will apply to the CRTC to allow tariffs for NG 9-1-1.

Municipalities, on the other hand, are required to fund, operate and oversee their own PSAP either through their municipal police or fire departments or through Contracted Services of a Private Operator or OPP.

While there is still a great deal of uncertainty regarding the costs to municipalities to transition their PSAPs to NG9-1-1, it is generally agreed that the implementation of NG 9-1-1 services will have a significant budget impact to all municipalities. Additional costs would be required for new equipment and software, enhanced staff training, additional IT support and services, and future risk management resources such as increased cyber security.
It goes without saying, that the cost of improving and expanding NG 9-1-1 services will, under the current tax structure, be the responsibility of municipalities in Ontario either funded directly in Municipal Budgets or in the budgets of their PSAPs which will ultimately affect the municipal tax levy.

The opportunities and benefits that NG 9-1-1 will bring to public safety for Ontario residents is very much needed, but there is great concern among municipalities about how to financially support the incoming system through municipal tax levies. In order to ensure an effective transition to NG9-1-1 and the continued operation of a viable 9-1-1 system in Ontario, the County of Bruce requests:

1. That the Province investigate and provide a framework to establish an Ontario 9-1-1 Governance structure similar to other Canadian Provinces. Such a structure would help municipalities plan and coordinate tools such as GIS, standards, resources, public education and funding to implement NG9-1-1 consistently across Ontario, and further,

2. That the Province consult with Municipalities and their PSAPs (primary and secondary) regarding opportunities to support the development of appropriate Provincial legislation for Ontario to help guide and fund NG 9-1-1 in the Province now and into the future.

Respectfully submitted.

Darlene Batte
Deputy Clerk

cc: France Gélinas, Critic, Health Care (Sponsor of Bill 75)
Hon. Bill Walker, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Hon. Lisa Thompson, MPP Huron-Bruce