



**Office of the Regional Chair | Jim Bradley**

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, PO Box 1042 Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Telephone: 905-980-6000 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215 Fax: 905-685-6243

Email: [jim.bradley@niagararegion.ca](mailto:jim.bradley@niagararegion.ca)

[www.niagararegion.ca](http://www.niagararegion.ca)

---

October 31, 2024

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Bldg Rm 281, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Sent by e-mail: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

**RE: Made in Ontario Action Plan – Homelessness, Mental Health and Addictions Support**

Dear Premier Ford,

At the October 24, 2024, meeting of Niagara Regional Council a motion was passed calling on the provincial government to appoint a responsible Ministry and Minister with the appropriate funding and powers to be a single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs that include mental health, addiction, and wrap around supports.

We join with Ontario's Big City Mayors in their request to take immediate action to reduce the pressures on municipalities and shift the burden of solving this crisis. Homelessness, mental health, and addictions have reached critical levels on the streets of Ontario's cities.

Currently, the responsibilities associated with managing the complex challenges associated with homelessness are spread across multiple ministries including Municipal Affairs and Housing, Children, Community and Social Services, and the Ministry of the Attorney General (to name a few). We believe there will be numerous tangible benefits to establishing one singular ministry that is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the various issues related to homelessness, not the least of which being one member of cabinet who can effectively advocate for this pressing issue with the other members of your cabinet.

Of note, a letter the Niagara Region received from the St. Catharines Downtown Association dated August 9, 2024, made many similar recommendations to those contained in our motion. It is important to point out there appears to be strong alignment between the local businesses in one of the areas most impacted by homelessness and Regional Councillors.

If the province fully commits to solutions, and works collaboratively and quickly to implement them, communities across Ontario will recover and our cities will thrive once again.

To this end, as directed by Regional Council, I want to formally request that a collaborative process be undertaken to develop and implement an action plan, and funding, that provides municipalities with the tools and resources necessary to transition those in encampments to more appropriate supports, when deemed necessary.

The approved Niagara Region motion is attached for your review and consideration. I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Bradley, Chair  
Niagara Region

cc: The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
The Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions  
Niagara's 12 Local Area Municipalities  
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP, Niagara West  
Jeff Burch, MPP, Niagara Centre  
Wayne Gates, MPP, Niagara Falls  
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens, MPP, St. Catharines  
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)  
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)  
Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM)  
St. Catharines Downtown Association

JB:bn  
Enclosure

**Motion Respecting Endorsement of Ontario Big City Mayors’ “Solve the Crisis” Campaign**

Regional Council, at its meeting held on October 24, 2024, passed the following motion:

WHEREAS an unprecedented number of Ontarians are homeless, living in encampments and other unsafe spaces, and too many are dying from addictions and mental health issues;

WHEREAS the province has provided additional funding for mental health, addictions, and homelessness programs, it does not adequately address the growing crisis and the financial and social impact on municipalities and regions across the province;

WHEREAS, together with various community partners, the Region of Niagara has been tackling this issue head on, funding various programs and spaces to find solutions;

WHEREAS despite the success of many of these programs, the crisis continues to grow and regions and municipalities need help; and

WHEREAS all of these issues fall primarily under provincial jurisdiction, and regions and municipalities should not be using the property tax base to fund these programs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Region of Niagara, through a letter written by the Regional Chair, **JOIN** Ontario’s Big City Mayors in calling on the Provincial Government:
  - a) To appoint a responsible Ministry and Minister with the appropriate funding and powers as a single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs as well as mental health, addictions, and wrap around supports; and
  - b) Have this Minister strike a task force with broad sector representatives including municipalities, healthcare, first responders, community services, the business community, the tourism industry and those with lived/living experience, to develop a Made in Ontario Action Plan;
  - c) To provide municipalities with the tools and resources to transition those in encampments to more appropriate supports, when deemed necessary;
  - d) To commit to funding the appropriate services these individuals need, community by community, where there are gaps in the system; and
  - e) To invest in 24/7 Community Hubs / Crisis Centres to relieve pressure on emergency centres and first responders; and

2. That the Regional Chair's letter and this motion **BE CIRCULATED** to The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health; The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; The Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services; The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions; Niagara's 12 local area municipalities; Niagara's four MPPs; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM); Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM); and the St. Catharines Downtown Association.