

April 28, 2021

CL 8-2021, April 22, 2021

DISTRIBUTION LIST

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Re: Motion – Support Local Journalism and News Media

Regional Council, at its meeting held on April 22, 2021, passed the following motion:

WHEREAS a healthy and strong local media is essential for the proper functioning of our democracy;

WHEREAS the role of the fourth estate ensures that residents are well informed, and elected officials are held accountable for their actions and decisions;

WHEREAS local sources of journalism have struggled financially in recent years due to a decline of traditional revenue sources;

WHEREAS newspapers across Canada continue to have their content republished on online platforms (including social media) with little to no compensation, further disadvantaging local news media by exploiting their content;

WHEREAS local newspapers across Canada have been forced to significantly downsize, reduce coverage, and in many cases, cease production all together;

WHEREAS Niagara's local radio stations have been forced to reduce their coverage of local news, replacing it with less relevant syndicated content;

WHEREAS the importance of local news media has never been more important than during the COVID-19 crisis, as residents turn to trusted news sources for vital information and content;

WHEREAS the decline of trusted, balanced local news media across Canada, staffed by ethical journalists with integrity, has created a vacuum that has been filled by disinformation and slanted coverage, often fueled by social media;

WHEREAS nearly two out of every three Canadians support sending financial aid to struggling news providers, according to a Nanos Research poll of April 2020; and

WHEREAS the federal government allocated nearly \$600 million in aid for Canadian media over five years in its 2019 budget, including a 25-per-cent tax credit for newsroom salaries; a 15-per-cent tax credit for digital media subscribers; and charitable tax status for non-profit news outlets.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **FORMALLY RECOGNIZE** that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in the region and encourage residents to support local sources of credible news;
2. That Niagara Regional Council **ENDORSE** legislation and regulations to support, rejuvenate and create a level playing field for news outlets across Canada;
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to write a letter to the federal government urging them to move quickly to pass legislation to ensure an ecosystem for a healthy news media to serve all Canadians; and
4. That the Regional Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to forward this motion to the local area municipalities, local MPs and MPPs, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Yours truly,



Ann-Marie Norio

Regional Clerk

CLK-C 2021-075

Distribution List:

Local Area Municipalities

Dean Allison, MP, Niagara West

Vance Badawey, MP, Niagara Centre

Tony Baldinelli, MP, Niagara Falls

Chris Bittle, MP, St. Catharines

Jeff Burch, MPP, Niagara Centre

Wayne Gates, MPP, Niagara Falls

Sam Oosterhoff, MPP, Niagara West

Jennifer Stevens, MPP, St. Catharines

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Association of Municipalities of Ontario