



Media Release

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Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus Advocates for Rural Needs at AMO 2024 Conference

Ottawa, Ontario – The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) strengthened its vital partnerships with representatives from the Province of Ontario during the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2024 Conference, held from August 18 to 21, 2024.

Throughout the conference, the WOWC engaged in productive discussions with Provincial Ministers and Opposition Parties, effectively advocating for its strategic priorities. For the 2024-2025 year, the WOWC's key focus areas are:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Workforce to Support Economic Growth
- Mental Health, Addictions and Homelessness

“During our recent delegations with provincial representatives, we were pleased with the positive response to our discussions,” stated WOWC Chair Glen McNeil. “We emphasized the unique needs of our rural and smaller communities across Western Ontario, underscoring that the support required in these areas differs significantly from the needs of urban centers. Our recommendations aim to ensure that these distinct challenges are effectively addressed by the government.”

In advance of the conference, WOWC members engaged closely with regional MPPs and senior provincial staff to present comprehensive briefings, research, and recommendations on key priority issues. For detailed information on the WOWC's priorities, research, and the materials used for the AMO 2024 Conference, please refer to the briefing document [here](#).

Representatives at the WOWC's delegations with the government included;

- Hon. Kinga Surma, Ministry of Infrastructure
- Hon. Lisa Thompson, Ministry of Rural Affairs
- Hon. Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General

- Parliamentary Assistant, Patrice Barnes, Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

The WOWC also met separately with MPP Marit Stiles, Leader of the Ontario NDP and the Official Opposition; Ontario Liberal Party, Party Leader Bonnie Crombie; and MPP Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party of Ontario.

“The WOWC remains committed to ensuring that our research and insights help inform policies across the province,” stated WOWC Vice Chair Andy Lennox. “We value the constructive dialogue with our provincial partners and are hopeful that these discussions will lead to tangible outcomes. Our advocacy for rural Western Ontario will continue with the goal of securing the support our communities need to thrive.”

About

The ***Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (WOWC)*** is a not-for-profit organization representing 15 upper and single-tier municipalities in Southwestern Ontario, representing more than 1.6 million residents. The WOWC aims to enhance the prosperity and overall wellbeing of rural and small urban communities across the region. Caucus members work collectively to influence federal and provincial legislation and programs through advocacy, research, analysis, and education.

For more information, visit www.wowc.ca.

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