



Sent via fax
416-326-2807

March 13, 2009

Hon. John Milloy
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities
900 Bay Street
3rd Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Milloy:

I am writing to you to bring to your attention, a number of issues regarding the current implementation of Employment Ontario Services in communities across the province. We are aware that the government is currently engaged in re-designing employment supports as part of the federal-provincial Labour Market Development Agreement, and is vesting a leadership role with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities through Employment Ontario.

As you know, municipalities in Ontario have a vested interest in labour force development, as a key economic strategy, as well as for community health and well being. Municipalities are leaders and key players in local labour force development through the delivery and funding of Ontario Works Employment Assistance activities and through economic development. Currently, municipalities plan and facilitate community access to training programs for approximately 200,000 Ontarians.

We have recently learnt that growing confusion exists surrounding the roles of Training Boards, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, municipal service managers and the ongoing role of Service Canada in employment system redesign.

Many questions also exist regarding how to connect the system of the future to business development issues and local labour market needs. And, local employers report increasing uncertainty regarding who they should be dealing with.

AMO and municipalities share the government's commitment to sustainable labour markets with a commitment to employment.

It therefore seems prudent that more consistent and collaborative dialogue across the province between municipal service managers and MTCU during the policy and program development stages would enhance our shared objectives.

As you know, municipalities are also responsible for the funding and service delivery of affordable housing, child care and a number of other social and health services. Given the current economic situation, re-entry to the job market will often be simultaneously connected to housing, child care and other coordinated community supports in order for employment to be successful and sustained.

.../2



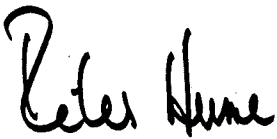
Integration of employment, housing and child care can best be achieved at the local level through connecting the planning of labour market needs to local economic development initiatives. A high degree of collaboration will allow for integration and alignment with provincial goals in economic recovery and poverty reduction. It is clear that municipalities need to have a direct and active role in the planning and service delivery processes under Employment Ontario.

Precedent has been set on productive and collaborative relationship between the government, AMO and municipalities. Municipalities currently have a well established working relationship with the Ministry of Community and Social Services through planning and implementing policies and projects for Ontario Works and previously, the Ontario Disability Support Program.

The Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review committed to the integrated planning of employment programs at the local level. This will include the participation of numerous provincial ministries including MTCU, MCSS, MED, MOL as well as AMO and the City of Toronto. While work has not yet commenced on this initiative, we would encourage that in the interim, municipalities be engaged in your ministry's local employment service redesign efforts. It should be noted, that AMO has been advocating for collaboration between AMO, municipalities and MTCU on this initiative for a number of years.

I look forward to your response and to working with the Ministry to achieve our mutual objectives.

Sincerely,



Peter Hume
President

cc. Hon. Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Dana Richardson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government and Planning Policy, MMAH
Janet Hope, Director, Ministry of Community and Social Services
Marcelle Crouse, Director, Employment and Labour Policy, MMAH
Erin Hannah, Director, Ontario Works Branch, MCSS
Kira Heineck, Executive Director, OMSSA
Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO), c/o Region of Waterloo
AMO Social Policy Task Force