

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement**

Bureau du ministre

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December 16, 2014

His Worship
Mayor

Dear Mayor

Please accept my warm congratulations on your success in the recent municipal elections. I want to thank you for your decision to serve the public and I look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

I got my start in municipal politics, first as a member of the City of Hamilton council and then as mayor of the former Township of Flamborough. From this experience, I can truly appreciate the importance of municipal government as it is closest to the people and impacts their lives daily.

My priorities as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing are outlined in the mandate letter given to me by the Premier. In reviewing the mandate letter – <https://www.ontario.ca/government/2014-mandate-letter-municipal-affairs-and-housing> - you will see how important and ambitious our work together will be over the next 4 years. My personal commitment is to work with you to strengthen local communities while acknowledging their diverse needs. One of my top priorities is to address the critical issues related to housing and homelessness. I would like to work closely with you and others in the private sector to find new and creative solutions to meet the need for more affordable housing across the province.

The current fiscal environment means the government will have to make tough choices. I'm proud that the government has chosen to commit more resources to housing and homelessness, and to continue our commitment to the upload of municipal costs in accordance with the 2008 Provincial Municipal Fiscal Service Delivery Review (PMFSDR) agreement. As a result of the upload, municipalities will benefit from more than \$1.7 billion in reduced costs in 2015 alone.

It is important to acknowledge that the removal of these costs off the property tax base benefits all local taxpayers including those residing in lower-tier and northern municipalities. We encourage upper and lower tier municipalities and northern District Social Service Administration Boards to engage in discussions to ensure that the savings resulting from the uploads benefit their shared taxpayers in the most effective way possible.

As a former mayor and councillor, I understand the important role that councils play in building communities. The Ministry has some information on its website, including the recently updated Municipal Councillor's Guide <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page5030.aspx> that you may find useful to you and your colleagues. If you have further questions related to the Guide, you may contact one of the Ministry's regional offices listed on the website.

I am committed to building on the positive partnerships we value with municipalities in all parts of this province. My door is always open. Let's work together to keep the lines of communication open.

Once again congratulations and best wishes to you and to council for success over the coming four-year term.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted McMeekin". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a prominent initial "T".

Ted McMeekin
Minister