

Provincial Government Releases Fall Economic Statement

Today the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Victor Fedeli, released the 2018 Fall Economic Statement. The statement appears to acknowledge and respect the fact that municipal governments and the provincial government both share the same taxpayer. Immediately after the speech, Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister, the Honourable Steve Clark, phoned AMO President Jamie McGarvey to discuss items that fell in his purview. AMO will undertake similar discussions with other Ministries in the days ahead.

Items of particular note to municipal governments include:

- Amendments will be tabled to "enable municipalities to employ full-time firefighters who volunteer in their own or other communities". This is a reference to double-hatter protection.
- The statement also indicates the intention to "reform collective bargaining arbitration between municipalities and firefighting associations to make it more transparent, efficient and accountable". Further AMO communications on the above two points will follow.
- With respect to provincial transfer payments to municipalities, "the government is committed to driving greater efficiencies and value for money. This commitment will also be required from all partners, including municipalities". AMO will seek additional information on this statement.
- AMO sought the municipal authority to determine rules regarding the consumption of cannabis and the provincial government intends to grant this authority.
- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will launch a Housing Supply Action Plan in the spring of 2019. Consultations with municipal governments, the public, and stakeholders will begin immediately to inform this plan.

In addition:

- Rural and northern areas will welcome the commitment to expand access to natural gas and broadband.
- The government remains committed to addressing delays with the Ring of Fire and "helping Northern towns and Indigenous communities share in the benefits of resource development from mining, forestry and aggregates".
- The statement also contains references to the potential consolidation of electricity distribution, rent control exemptions for new units, and the canceling of the Development Charges Rebate Program saving \$100 million.

AMO will continue to review the statement and provide details to members as needed. The government has also launched its pre-budget consultation process for 2019.

Further details can be found in the [2018 Background Papers](#) and a broad range of information on the Fall Economic Statement can be found [here](#).