



Ontario
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

CORRESP06-028

ERNIE HARDEMAN, M.P.P.
Oxford

Queen's Park Office:
Room 413, Legislative Bldg.
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A8

Tel. (416) 325-1239
Fax (416) 325-1259

Constituency Office:
12 Perry Street
Woodstock, Ontario
N4S 3C2

Tel. (519) 537-5222
Fax (519) 537-3577

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MAYOR'S OFFICE

September 25, 2006

Mayor Sylvia Sutherland
City of Peterborough
500 George Street North
Peterborough, ON K9H 3R9

Dear *Sylvia* Mayor Sutherland,

Today the Ontario Legislature debated and passed my resolution to provide relief to municipalities. The resolution, which I have enclosed, called on the provincial government to balance the delivery of municipal services with the ability to pay, by expediting the promised Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service review.

I am writing today to ask you and your council to add your support by passing a resolution, such as the one enclosed, asking the provincial government to provide real relief for municipalities and taxpayers before the next municipal budget cycle.

I believe that the need to balance the delivery of municipal services with the ability to pay is urgent.

The last study of Provincial-Municipal services was completed almost ten years ago. Our Party understands that since then the cost of delivering services has increased substantially and municipalities have been left with the additional cost. Municipal expenses are expected to again increase substantially once the government passes the Clean Water Act.

We understand the pressures that our municipalities are facing and the difficult choices you are left with – to raise property taxes or cut services to try to make ends meet.

Since the announcement of the Provincial-Municipal review, over six weeks ago, there has been no news of progress – not even the appointment of a single member to the committee to conduct the review. We believe that if the government had started working on the problem immediately, significant progress could have already made.

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Unfortunately, the Liberal government has decided that municipalities and ratepayers can wait another 18 months for relief. They demonstrated this belief by voting against my resolution to conduct the review expeditiously.

Despite the Liberal party's opposition the members of the Legislature (both Progressive Conservative and New Democratic) made it clear that we want this resolved quickly and before the next provincial election.

Our party will continue pressing the government to complete the review quickly. We would appreciate your support in this effort. I ask that if your council passes a resolution urging the government to move more quickly, such as the one enclosed, that you forward a copy to my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ernie Hardeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the top.

Ernie Hardeman
M.P.P. for Oxford
Progressive Conservative Critic for Municipal Affairs

Sample resolution for Municipal Council

WHEREAS the gap between the transfers from the province and the cost of social programs is growing and is now estimated by the Association of Municipalities at over \$3 Billion; and

WHEREAS delays in balancing the cost of delivering services with the ability to pay are resulting in delayed maintenance of infrastructure, reduced municipal services and property tax increases across the province; and

THEREFORE BE IT resolved that in the opinion of the Council of (name of municipality) that the provincial government's currently proposed Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review (which will not be completed until February 2008, after the next provincial election) is needlessly drawn out and that a full review to balance the delivery of service with the ability to pay should be completed much more expediently, in order to avoid hitting taxpayers with unsustainable property tax hikes or significant reductions in service.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Ernie Hardeman MPP
Oxford**

For immediate release
September 28, 2006

Ontario PC Resolution Calling For A Faster Solution for Municipalities Passes Despite Liberal Opposition

QUEEN'S PARK – Today the Ontario Legislature passed a resolution calling for a quicker review of the fiscal relationship between the province and the municipalities, despite Liberal opposition. The resolution was introduced by Ernie Hardeman M.P.P. for Oxford and Progressive Conservative critic for Municipal Affairs.

“John Tory and I have been calling on the government to give municipalities the resources to deal with increasing costs, instead the Liberals have continued to heap more expenses onto municipalities,” said Ernie Hardeman. “Municipalities have been forced to raise property taxes to try and make ends meet.”

The last study of municipal services was completed almost ten years ago. Since that time costs have increased substantially. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario now estimates that the gap between municipal transfers and the cost of social programs is over \$3 Billion. This amount is expected to increase substantially once the government passes the Clean Water Act.

On August 14, 2006 the McGuinty government committed to study the problem with a report due in spring 2008, in order to dodge the issue until four months after the provincial election.

“Municipalities, taxpayers and all three parties in this legislature know what the problem is – local service costs have increased and provincial transfers haven't kept pace,” said Hardeman. “Now is not the time for another long drawn out study. Now is the time to take action to protect municipalities and ratepayers.”

Mr. Hardeman's Private Members' resolution called on the government to complete the Municipal-Provincial Fiscal and Service review expeditiously and take action to balance the delivery of services with the ability to pay. In a recorded vote the resolution was supported by the Progressive Conservative and New Democratic parties and opposed by the Liberal party.

“By delaying the review the Liberals once again proven that they will say anything to get elected but won't take real action to help Ontario's communities,” said Hardeman “It is clear from today's vote that the members of the Ontario Legislature want this resolved before the next election.”

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For more information, contact:
Ernie Hardeman, MPP Oxford
(416) 325-1239

RESOLUTION

Introduced by Ernie Hardeman, M.P.P. for Oxford

Passed by the Ontario Legislature September 28, 2006

That, in the opinion of this house, the proposed Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, which will not be completed until February 2008, after the next provincial election, is needlessly drawn out and that a full review to balance the delivery of service with the ability to pay should be completed much more expediently, in order to avoid hitting Ontario taxpayers with unsustainable property tax hikes or significant reductions in service.