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cc  
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Subject AMO Breaking News - Bill 36, the Local Food Act, Passes Third Reading

## TO THE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF THE CLERK AND COUNCIL

November 5, 2013

### **Bill 36, the *Local Food Act* , Passes Third Reading**

Today, the Ontario Legislature proclaimed the *Local Food Act* . AMO was actively involved and provided input on behalf of municipal governments as the Bill was developed and considered by the Legislature.

The government has clarified the section on goals and targets in the legislation. The Minister of Agriculture and Food shall establish goals and targets to which the public sector is to aspire to in the following areas:

- improve food literacy regarding local food;
- encourage increased use of local food by public sector organizations, and
- increase access to local food.

Under the Act, municipalities have been identified as a public sector organization. Goals and targets shall be established by the Minister within one year after it comes into force. Consultation with public sector organizations must occur before a goal or target is established. The Minister must also prepare an annual report that summarizes the Province's activities regarding local food as well as other relevant information.

AMO continues to caution the government to not establish goals and targets that would oblige the municipal sector to have to develop yet more administration and reports from municipal governments. It is our view that municipal government resources are best devoted to leadership and network building to advance local food activities.

Much work has been already undertaken by municipal governments in partnership with local food producers. In August, the joint AMO/Ontario Municipal Knowledge Network/Ministry of Agriculture and Food project on [Best Practices in Local Food: A Guide for Municipalities](#) identified innovative case study examples to help inform and support a municipal role. It sets out local food initiatives, policies and programs that could be replicated to complement each municipality's local circumstance. Empowering and leading, not regulating and reporting, is the preferred way forward for municipal governments in advancing local food goals.

The Act was amended to create a non-refundable tax credit of 25% for farmers who donate excess agricultural products to community food programs such as food banks. AMO welcomes

this addition to the Act as it advances the intent of the legislation. As well, the Act proclaims a Local Food Week that will occur annually beginning the first Monday in June.

At this time, it is unknown how the government will proceed in encouraging increased use of local food as it applies to public sector organizations. AMO will seek clarification from the government, provide further advice on best paths forward and continue to advocate municipal interests as the legislation begins to be implemented.

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