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Subject Policing Update: Minister Announces Consultations on a New Legislative Framework

August 13, 2015

Policing Update: Minister Announces Consultations on a New Legislative Framework

Today the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Honourable Yasir Naqvi, announced a plan to consult on updating *the Police Services Act*.

The current legislative framework for policing in Ontario dates back to 1990. It has not been changed significantly in twenty-five years. The Minister announced that the consultation will seek input on how to:

- Enhance accountability and strengthen civilian governance of police services boards as well as how to ensure police oversight bodies are effective and have clear mandates.
- Improve interactions between police and vulnerable Ontarians, including enhancing frontline responses to those in crisis.
- Clarify police duties, modernize training programs and deliver services using a range of public safety personnel.
- Develop a provincial framework for First Nations policing to ensure equitable and culturally responsive policing for the province's First Nations communities.

Further information about consultation dates and how the public (and municipalities) can provide their feedback on the new strategy will be available in the coming weeks.

In April, AMO President Gary McNamara provided the Minister with a copy of AMO's Policing Modernization Report. The Report contains 34 recommendations, with ideas and a vision for the future of how this critical public service can be delivered. Two of the report's three priority recommendations are captured by the Minister's announcement. They include:

- Improve the quality of the existing governance and civilian oversight system.
- Make legislative changes to permit the greater transfer of specific functions to civilians or other security providers where appropriate.

More details regarding the Ministry's consultations are expected within days. The Minister will be addressing municipal delegates at AMO's upcoming AGM and Annual Conference in Niagara Falls on Wednesday, August 19, 2015.

AMO fundamentally believes in the need to advance the agenda of reform. This imperative is driven by the undeniable need to ensure that all Ontario communities can afford policing, along with all the other public programs and services that keep people not only safe, but healthy.

Ontarians currently pay the highest policing costs in the country. Per capita policing costs in Ontario are \$320 per year, well above the national provincial average of \$259. For at least a decade, police spending has been growing at three times the rate of inflation.

AMO supports this discussion and encourages municipal participation. Modernized legislation has the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in Ontario.

Links:

The Minister's announcement:

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcscs/en/2015/8/province-developing-a-new-strategy-for-a-safer-ontario.html>

AMO's Policing Modernization Report:

<http://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-PDFs/Reports/2015/AMO-Policing-Modernization-Report-Final-2015-04-27.aspx>

AMO President's Speech to the Ontario Association of Police Service Boards:

<http://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-Content/Speeches/2015/AMO-President-s-Remarks-at-OAPSB-Conference.aspx>

AMO President's Speech on Policing at the OSUM Conference:

<http://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-Content/Speeches/2015/AMO-President-s-Remarks-at-2015-OSUM-AGM.aspx>

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