



## **Ontario's Big City Mayors address Ontario budget priorities, support vaccination roll-out**

February 19, 2021 – Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) met to discuss updates on the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Taskforce and continued municipal advocacy efforts through the provincial budgeting process.

The OBCM caucus is thankful for the work of Rick Hillier and the provincial vaccination team thus far in communicating with municipalities and for their leadership in coordinating this significant effort. OBCM members remain committed to supporting the timely and equitable roll-out of vaccines to residents by leveraging municipally owned resources such as arenas and community centres, and relying on public health units, first responders and enforcement team members. In a roughly one-hour discussion, important details of the vaccination roll-out plans were reviewed and exchanged to help support and refine the Ontario plans.

OBCM municipalities will continue to work with the province to secure financial support required to prudently balance municipal budgets, including costs for vaccine deployment. Budget requests include the extension of the Safe Restart Agreement and additional investments in local businesses, mental health and addictions, as well as housing initiatives.

“These investments are critical to our ability as municipalities to continue supporting recovery efforts while delivering essential day-to-day services to residents,” said OBCM Chair, Jeff Lehman. “We are grateful for the support of the provincial government so far and look forward to our continued collaboration as we fight this pandemic together.”

The Mayors also discussed and passed motions regarding several current issues and new proposals at the February 19, 2021 OBCM meeting.

### **1. Provincial Offences Act – Unpaid Fines**

The caucus agreed to work together to share information on the status of unpaid POA fines in their respective communities, and continue working to advocate for improved tools for collection of unpaid fines for discussion at the next OBCM meeting.

### **2. Provincial/Federal Subsidy for Summer Day Camps**

OBCM endorsed the idea of a federal/provincial subsidy for day camps if public health conditions allow, and indicated their willingness to collaborate on a program to ensure its success.

### **3. In-store Alcohol Service at Convenience Stores**

Regarding the proposal by 7-Eleven to serve alcohol, the Mayors passed the following motion:



WHEREAS Ontario's Big City Mayors recognize the ongoing hardships faced by restaurants, pubs and other foodservice businesses as a result of mandated closures and patron limits due to Covid-19;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have been working hard to implement and advocate for business supports (such as providing restaurants the ability to access wine, beer and spirits at wholesale or discounted pricing) to ensure more local businesses survive the pandemic;

AND WHEREAS convenience stores have not been mandated to close during the pandemic and have not endured undue hardship like other industries;

AND WHEREAS 7-Eleven Canada has applied to introduce in-store alcohol service at 61 stores throughout Ontario to leverage their open status as a competitive advantage;

AND WHEREAS approval by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) would mean exposing an already vulnerable and hard-hit restaurant/bar industry to further competition;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Ontario's Big City Mayors oppose 7-Eleven Canada's proposal to serve alcohol;

AND THAT this motion be distributed to Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General; Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction; Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance; and local OBCM member Councils for consideration.

#### **4. Inclusion of all First Responders in Phase 2 COVID Vaccinations**

OBCM expressed its support for the inclusion all first responders – police, fire and EMS – in the priority list of Phase 2 of COVID-19 vaccinations.