



— OBCM —
Ontario's Big City Mayors



Motion on Coordinated Federal, Provincial, Regional and Municipal Response to Data Centre Infrastructure Capacity, Growth Readiness and Protecting Public Interest

Moved by Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Seconded by Mayor Rob Burton

August 16, 2026

Whereas municipalities across Ontario are receiving site plan applications for data centres; and

Whereas data centres complement Ontario's digital economy, and represent one form of enabling digital infrastructure that supports a wide range of industries, including advanced manufacturing, life sciences, financial services, and cloud computing; and

Whereas data centres require significant amounts of electricity, and these demands are in addition to hydro, wastewater and other city and regional infrastructure at a time when local municipalities are planning for significant residential and employment growth in support of Provincial housing and economic development objectives; and

Whereas the demand for data centres is expected to grow across the region and country, and municipalities will need to understand the impact on power, water and other infrastructure; and

Whereas the C40 Global Urban Data Centres Pact calls on governments and the data centre industry to advance a shared vision for sustainable, locally beneficial data centres that support community wellbeing, reduce environmental impacts, contribute to climate goals, and ensure that the economic benefits of data centre development are shared with host communities; and

Whereas the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) notes that while data centres enable growth across the economy, they require significant energy resources, and OCC has recommended that the Province establish a process to prioritize grid access based on expected benefits as well as transparency criteria to allocate scarce energy resources; and

Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) states that while domestic data centres are strategic opportunities to improve Canada's data sovereignty, cybersecurity, and high-tech sector, municipalities are experiencing an increase in data centre proposals, placing increased demand on our strained electrical distribution and transmission system; and

Whereas to address these challenges AMO has provided recommendations to the Province that proposed projects for data centres:

- not undermine the municipality's ability to deliver other provincial or municipal priorities;
- be from Canadian-owned companies;
- offer a community benefit agreement to ensure economic benefits accrue to host communities;
- include co-location of energy generation or storage to offset demand on the electrical grid;

- provide a collaborative process for the review of proposed facilities that involves municipalities; and
- commit to maintaining full municipal planning and development approvals after a decision is made regarding electrical grid connections; and

Whereas the Independent Electricity System Operator's Halton Integrated Regional Resource Plan has determined that the pace of demand growth could require major investments in large-scale transmission infrastructure; and

Whereas the electricity demand in the area is primarily being driven by urban growth, economic development, and the electrification of buildings and vehicles; and

Whereas IESO's draft forecast accounts for new developments, economic growth, data centres, and insights from municipal plans, community energy plans, climate action plans and decarbonization; and

Whereas the federal government has launched Canada's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy: AI for All to ensure sovereignty and control over our data, enable data for innovation and economic growth, and protect Canadians from the risks and harms of AI; and

Whereas the Provincial Government has introduced a proposed Playbook for data centre development and is currently seeking public input through a 30-day Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) consultation period; and

Therefore be it resolved that Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) and the Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO) request that the Provincial Government consult urgently with municipalities and municipal associations on the development and further build-out of the frameworks and requirements contained in the proposed Playbook, recognizing the significant implications of data centre development for municipal infrastructure, planning, energy, water, community priorities, and the need for community benefits;

And that a copy of this resolution be shared with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Robert Flack, Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement Stephen Crawford, Minister of Housing and Infrastructure of Canada Gregor Robertson, and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation Evan Solomon.