November 2, 2026

Statement

Concerning Ontario's proposed actions to address landfill capacity

Issued by the Municipalities of Oxford County

As the Ontario Government considers changes to provincial legislation for new landfills, Oxford's municipalities are seeking a commitment to maintain existing "right to approve" for all municipalities.

Within its own borders, Oxford County, with its local municipalities, has been working to fulfill Strategic Plan commitments to reducing waste, maximizing resource recovery, and promoting a circular economy.

We are in agreement: Ontario should continue to explore waste management alternatives and revisit the strategy for a waste-free Ontario.

When it comes to Ontario's Proposed Actions to Address Landfill Capacity, however -- now undergoing public consultation through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO)-- we share a conviction that municipalities must maintain their right to approve future landfills in their communities.

This message was unequivocally delivered by 150 municipalities in 2018, led by the Town of Ingersoll in Oxford County as part of the "We Demand the Right" campaign. Bill 197 in 2020 subsequently provided municipalities with the right to approve or deny new landfills within their own communities and if the landfill is sited within 3.5 kilometres of an adjacent municipality.

We commend Minister Todd McCarthy for his public statement that municipalities will retain the ability to decide whether to accept a landfill in their communities. Maintaining this in legislation will continue to give Ontario's municipal governments and citizens the ability to engage with landfill proponents, and to ensure their needs are respected and addressed.

This right does nothing to diminish a proponent's ability to develop a fair proposal that fully considers the social, economic and environmental impacts of its operations. Amending section 17.5 of the *Environmental Assessment Act*, however, would leave municipalities without leverage or meaningful voice at the table, with little to no opportunity to negotiate the necessary terms to safeguard their communities.

We are committed to protecting the same rights for municipalities for landfill development as those afforded to other projects that have high local impact, such as nuclear waste storage and renewable energy. This is the only way to achieve the best possible outcome for all involved.

This issue is too important to Oxford County and all of Ontario for ambiguity: the right to approve must be protected. Oxford County municipalities will continue to collaborate with the province on this important issue. We will be working to raise awareness of the impacts of this potential legislative change, and encourage the residents of Oxford and beyond to share their thoughts through the ERO process: https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/026-1056

Please watch for further updates.

Oxford County Warden / Mayor Marcus Ryan
Zorra Township

Mayor Mark Peterson
Township of Blandford-Blenheim

Mayor Phil Schaefer
Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

Mayor Brian Petrie
Town of Ingersoll

Mayor Elect Adrian Couwenberg
Township of Norwich

Mayor Jim Palmer
Township of Norwich

Mayor Elect Craig Gillis
Township of South-West Oxford

Mayor David Mayberry
Township of South-West Oxford

Mayor Deb Gilvesy
Town of Tillsonburg

Mayor Jerry Acchione
City of Woodstock

Mayor Elect Katie Grigg
Zorra Township