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February 4, 2024

Minister Paul Calandra
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Via E-Mail: Minister.mah@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Calandra,

We are the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors representing thousands of municipal public works professionals from across the Province of Ontario. Our members range from Directors, Managers, Supervisors, Superintendents, Foremen, and Operators. On behalf of our Executive Committee and Board of Directors, we are proud to have the opportunity to advocate on behalf of our members on the need to support legislation that brings accountability to elected officials when they are found to have violated codes of conduct regarding the mistreatment of municipal staff.

In 2018, the Ontario Municipal Administrators' Association released a poll of their members that showed the real extent of the problem – 77% of respondents reported harassment and bullying by elected officials with 76% stating that had personally been at the receiving end of harassment by a member of council. We are confident in sharing that these statistics have not resolved. As Councillors fall outside of the employer-employee relationship, imposing sanctions for their misconduct are impossible. As there are no consequences for their actions, the mistreatment of staff by some only continues.

Municipal staff should have the right – as any other worker in Ontario – to a safe and respectful workplace environment. Abuse and harassment come from the public at alarming rates, and municipal staff should have the support of elected officials to turn to, not more abuse and harassment. Additionally, at a time when we are experiencing labour shortages and trying to attract more people into municipal public works, this is just another challenge we face when showing the benefits the municipal sector showcases.

We call on the Province of Ontario to enact legislation that protects municipal staff from the abuse and harassment by elected officials, and that has the ability to provide meaningful sanctions that can be imposed to those municipal elected officials who are found to violate codes of conduct with their actions. We would be pleased to work with your Ministry as a stakeholder in the development and future implementation of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Kelly Elliott
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cc: Premier Doug Ford (via e-mail)
Women of Ontario Say No (via e-mail)