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December 5, 2024

The Honourable Kinga Surma
Ministry of Infrastructure
Room 5E200, 5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Subject: Addressing Ontario's Growing Infrastructure Deficit for Municipalities

Dear Minister Surma,

On behalf of the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS), we are writing to emphasize the urgent need for provincial leadership and federal advocacy to address the escalating infrastructure deficit faced by Ontario's municipalities, particularly in the maintenance and replacement of roads, bridges, and culverts. AORS remains steadfast in our commitment to the health and safety of Ontario's communities through the responsible construction and maintenance of core infrastructure. However, municipalities are grappling with an unprecedented financial burden that threatens the sustainability of this critical mandate.

In 2022, Dr. James Smith of Good Roads calculated a staggering $34.7 billion infrastructure deficit for Ontario municipalities, specific to roads, bridges, and culverts alone. The growing complexity and costs of asset management have placed municipalities in an untenable position, especially in light of the aging bridges that were originally funded under a 90/10 cost-sharing model. That funding model no longer exists, leaving municipalities struggling to bear the replacement costs on their own. Without a return to meaningful provincial and federal funding partnerships, the condition of these vital assets will continue to deteriorate, jeopardizing public safety and economic stability.

We strongly urge the province to work with AORS to advocate to the federal government for a dedicated green infrastructure fund specifically for roads and bridges. While existing green infrastructure programs address important priorities such as water, waste, and transit, no comparable funding opportunities exist for climate-friendly road and bridge projects. This is a missed opportunity, particularly for municipalities already implementing sustainable practices like cold-in-place recycling and other innovative approaches in their maintenance and replacement projects.

We propose that a portion of federal carbon tax revenues be allocated directly to municipalities to fund green infrastructure initiatives. Redirecting these revenues into local communities would not only address the infrastructure deficit but also advance climate-friendly practices, aligning with provincial and federal climate goals.

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Additionally, we recommend that provincial and federal funding programs explicitly prioritize *maintenance* and *replacement* of existing infrastructure rather than the construction of new projects. This targeted approach will maximize the impact of available funding and ensure the long-term viability of essential assets.

Minister Surma, we appreciate your ongoing support for Ontario's municipalities. AORS looks forward to collaborating with your ministry to develop practical solutions to this pressing challenge. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and explore how we can work together to secure the funding necessary to maintain safe, sustainable infrastructure for all Ontarians.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Joseph Reid, CMO, CRS-S, CET
President, AORS

John Maheu
Executive Director, AORS

Kelly Elliott
Marketing and Communications Specialist, AORS

cc (via email):

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation
Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Honourable Sean Fraser, Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities of Canada

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