



Hastings Highlands

Beautiful By Nature

Mayor Vic A. Bodnar
Mayor

Suzanne Huschilt
Municipal Clerk

The Municipality of Hastings Highlands
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August 17, 2019

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier
Legislative Building Rm 281, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1
premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford,

Re: MUNICIPAL AMALGAMATION

Please be advised that at its Regular Meeting of Council held on August 14, 2019 the Council of the Municipality of Hastings Highlands supported the Township of McKellar and passed the following resolution:

Resolution 533-19

WHEREAS there are 444 municipalities in Ontario that are very efficient and well governed, and who respond quickly to ratepayer's needs;

AND WHEREAS in the 1990's the Conservative Government forced many municipalities to amalgamate on the guise they would become more efficient, effective, save money, lower taxes and ultimately reduce the provincial deficit;

AND WHEREAS there has never been a valid evidence-based study that supported these outcomes;

AND WHEREAS forced amalgamation actually accomplished just the opposite: ill feelings, increased animosity and mistrust, job losses, rise in local taxes and an increase in the provincial deficit;

AND WHEREAS there are many positive examples of small rural and northern municipalities working together in a

collaborate and cooperative manner via shared agreements that responds to local needs without amalgamation and provincial interference;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has a large deficit due to their own decision-making;

AND WHEREAS recently the same Conservative Government recently reduced one large regional municipal government by 50%, without “consultation”;

AND WHEREAS this same Conservative Government is presently reviewing other provincial regional governments through a purported “consultative” approach with a view to reduce or eliminate them;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government should investigate all other internal ways of reducing their deficit and becoming more fiscally responsible over time rather than downloading to the one level of government that is the most efficient, has the lowest cost and is closest to the electorate which will not put a dent in the provincial deficit;

AND WHEREAS the Province could look at what other provinces have done to reduce the debt with one singular education system, organizing unorganized municipalities, controlling OPP costs, substantially increase fines, and find a way to collect millions and millions of dollars in unpaid fines and instead, invest in the north to create jobs and stimulate and enhance economic development;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that before the Provincial Government forces amalgamation in any of the 444 municipalities in Ontario, our AMO Organization go beyond requesting “consultation” and “demand” that the Provincial Government do the following:

Hold a local referendum letting the citizens decide to amalgamate or not

Conduct an evidence-based study to show that amalgamation actually saves costs, jobs, lowers taxes and reduce the provincial deficit

Allow those municipalities to work out their own local collaborative agreement that best suit their local needs and to be permitted to do so on their own time line and volition

To ensure that there is absolutely no conflict of interest in this consultative process

To emphasize the political reality of forcing amalgamation on the many rural and northern municipalities across Ontario

AND FURTHER that a copy of this resolution be sent to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier; Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs; Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party; and Daryl Kramp, MPP.

AND FURTHER that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA), the Township of McKellar and all municipalities in Ontario.

CARRIED

Sincerely,



Suzanne Huschilt
Municipal Clerk