



COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKAGE

SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

1. **C-2022-037**

Correspondence dated December 31, 2021 from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs respecting a request for municipal Councils to submit a letter to CN Rail regarding drainage maintenance concerns.

2. **C-2022-038**

Correspondence dated February 9, 2022 from the Corporation of the Township of Perth South respecting a motion regarding a motion of support on Catch and Release Justice.

**Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs**

**Ministère de l'Agriculture, de
l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales**

Office of the Minister

Bureau du ministre

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Ontario

December 23, 2021

Jean-Jacques Ruest
President and CEO
CN Rail
jeanjacques.ruest@cn.ca

Dear Mr. Ruest:

I am writing to you with regards to drainage in Ontario.

Drainage infrastructure is critical to support agriculture and food production in rural Ontario. Ontario's Drainage Act is a very important piece of legislation to meet the drainage needs of a variety of stakeholders including individual farmers, landowners, municipalities and, of course, railways. As resolving drainage issues can be complex and represent a significant financial impact for ratepayers, the Drainage Act was enacted to promote a fair and efficient process.

Historically, there has been infrequent and minimal conflict between municipalities and the railways around drainage. Railways have generally complied with their obligations under the Drainage Act. However, recently I have received a significant amount of correspondence from stakeholders and municipalities in Ontario – including by delegations at both the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conferences – expressing concerns about difficulties they are having in their dealings with CN Rail on drainage issues and projects under the Drainage Act. It appears that CN Rail is now of the view that, as it is federally regulated, it is not required to comply with this provincial legislation.

Consequently, a variety of issues have emerged, including:

- non-payment by CN Rail of statutory cost assessments and/or advising municipalities that all costs are the responsibility of the municipality;
- project delays related to administrative barriers created by CN;
- insistence that the municipalities enter into crossing agreements that shift costs to the municipalities, contrary to the provisions of Ontario's Drainage Act.

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To give you an indication of the severity of the issue at hand, there are at least 55 municipal drain projects currently being impacted by CN Rail's actions with more anticipated. If these works do not proceed and CN Rail uses the municipalities to carry its costs, it will take an unnecessary and unfair toll on those communities. This is a concern to our government as landowners within these drain watersheds count on a reliable, functional drainage system to support their businesses and agricultural operations thereby supporting their families, neighbours, and thriving communities.

Given that federally regulated railways are indeed subject to the Drainage Act, we expect CN Rail to pay its costs as assessed under the Drainage Act and not to hinder the progress of these projects or others in the future. To that end, I have recently written to my federal colleagues, the Honourable Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport and the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food about the issue and I have asked for their support to resolve this issue.

I am sure that you would agree with me that having a multitude of projects brought forward for adjudication does not represent an effective use of CN time or money. I welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further as finding a resolution is critical.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

c: Mayor Jamie McGarvey, AMO President, Mayor of the Town of Bracebridge
Mayor Robin Jones, ROMA Chair, Village of Westport
Fiona Murray, CN, Vice-President, Public and Government Affairs
Daniel Salvatore, CN, Manager Public Affairs Ontario
Hon. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport
Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation
Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

COVID-19 Reminders

- For vaccination booking details visit: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>
- Follow your local public health/safety measures: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/zones-and-restrictions>
- Practice physical distancing – stay 2 metres away from others in public
Get the facts - www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread



To help protect your privacy, Microsoft Office prevented automatic download of this picture from the Internet.
AMO Policy Update

January 5, 2022

AMO Policy Update – New Year Calls to Action and other issues of municipal concern

Call to Action – Joint and Several Liability

In 2018, Premier Ford committed to reviewing the matter of municipal joint and several liability. This review was conducted in 2019 with AMO and municipalities fully participating. Unfortunately, the results of this provincial review have not been released and municipalities are still awaiting news of how the Attorney General will address this important matter.

As municipal leaders are aware, liability and risks are one major driver of exponentially increasing insurance costs. However, managing risk and liability also has environmental impacts such as road salt application affecting wetlands and water quality in our lakes and streams.

To help drive the policy discussion, AMO submitted "[Towards a Reasonable Balance – Addressing Growing Municipal Liability and Insurance Costs](#)" in October 2019 that provides a refresh on the municipal argument to find a balance to the issues and challenges presented by joint and several liability, including implementing full proportionate liability and a cap on economic loss awards. It provided seven straightforward recommendations for actions to deal with this problem.

AMO is now asking for municipal councils to lend their support to the 7 recommendations contained in the AMO submission to re-establish the priority for provincial action on this issue. Councils are encouraged to pass a resolution when you next meet to ask the government to work with us to on a plan for resolution before the end of its current mandate.

Please send your supportive resolutions to the Attorney General, the Honourable Doug Downey at attorneygeneral@ontario.ca and copy the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Steve Clark at minister.mah@ontario.ca as well as the AMO President, Jamie McGarvey, at amopresident@amo.on.ca.

Call to Action – CN Rail and Drainage

AMO has prepared a [template letter](#) (also available for download in [.docx](#) format) for municipal Councils that are experiencing issues with drainage maintenance work, construction of new drains, and the collection of assessed costs to Railways for the *Drainage Act*. The template letter, which can be modified by each municipal Council, is intended to amplify support of the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)'s [letter](#) dated December 23, 2021. As the Minister states in her letter, "Given that federally regulated railways are indeed subject to the *Drainage Act*, we expect CN Rail to pay its costs as assessed under the *Drainage Act* and not to hinder the progress of these projects or others in the future."

Municipal Councils are encouraged to send the letter to each of the recipients copied in the letter and forward a copy to policy@amo.on.ca.

Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors and Building More Beds Act Receives Royal Assent

On December 9th, the *Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors, and Building More Beds Act, 2021*, received [Royal Assent](#). The legislation will repeal the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* and replace it with the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021*. This new Act establishes in law the commitment to provide an average of four hours of direct care per resident per day by March 31, 2025, with increasing interim goals to increase care; establish new compliance and enforcement tools, including doubling the fines on the conviction of an offence; and align the Residents' Bill of Rights with the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and recognize the role caregivers play in resident health and well-being. The legislation also makes changes to the *Retirement Homes Act, 2021*.

AMO provided both a [written submission](#) to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and presented to the Committee our feedback on the Bill. The legislature made a revision to include emotional needs in the preamble of the Act, but not as a fundamental principle as was advocated for by AMO and other organizations. The government is set to propose and publicly consult on regulations for the two Acts in the coming months. AMO will continue to provide input and advocate for increased funding for municipal homes to implement emotion-focused models of care.

Call for Ideas: Housing Accelerator Fund and Rent-to-Own Program

The federal Minister of Housing and Diversity has launched a Call for Ideas for two of the federal government's priorities outlined in the Speech for the Throne. The Housing Accelerator Fund would aim to remove barriers and help municipalities build housing more quickly in an ambitious and innovative manner, while the Rent-to-Own program would aim to help make it easier for renters to work towards home ownership. Municipalities, provinces and territories, Indigenous governments, organizations and

Template Letter for Municipal Councils

Sent via email to: jeanjacques.ruest@cn.ca

[Date]

Jean-Jacques Ruest
President and Chief Executive Officer
CN Rail
935 de la Gauchetière Street West
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H3B 2M9

Dear Mr. Ruest,

The framework through Ontario's *Drainage Act* supports agricultural productivity by reducing nutrient loss and soil on farmlands. It also provides environmental and economic benefits such as reducing flooding and increasing crop productivity and enhances natural habitats.

More than 45,000 km of municipal drains service nearly 2 million hectares of cropland in Ontario. As a result, drainage of agricultural land is critical as it removes excess water collected by roadside ditches, residential lots, schools, industrial and commercial lands, and any other properties in the surrounding areas.

The Ontario's *Drainage Act* establishes the process of how public utilities, including railways, participate in drainage. Railways along with other landowners benefit from and have participated in the *Drainage Act* process for decades.

That is why we are writing to amplify our support of the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)'s [letter](#) dated December 23, 2021. As Minister Thompson states in her letter, "Given that federally regulated railways are indeed subject to the *Drainage Act*, we expect CN Rail to pay its costs as assessed under the *Drainage Act* and not to hinder the progress of these projects or others in the future."

Municipal governments across Ontario are experiencing significant issues with drainage maintenance work, construction of new drains, and the collection of assessed costs to Railways for the *Drainage Act*. It is our hope that CN Rail will comply with the *Drainage Act* so that municipalities and our taxpayers are not left carrying the costs of these works that should be borne by railways.

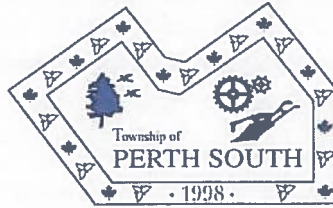
Sincerely,

[Head of Council]

- cc. [Mayor Jamie McGarvey](#), President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Mayor of the Town of Parry Sound
[Mayor Robin Jones](#), Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Chair, Village of Westport
[Hon. Omar Alghabra](#), Minister of Transport
[Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau](#), Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
[Hon. Lisa Thompson](#), Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
[Hon. Caroline Mulroney](#), Minister of Transportation
[Hon. Steve Clark](#), Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

[Local MPP]

[Local MP]



Corporation of the Township of Perth South

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February 9, 2022

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Re: "Catch and Release" Justice

At the regular meeting of the Township of Perth South Council held on February 1, 2022 the following resolution was passed:

That Council accepts the Community Policing Advisory Committee recommendation that they support the City of Sarnia resolution regarding Catch and Release Justice with the inclusion of the recommendations provided by the Stratford Police Services in their report dated January 19, 2022.

I have attached the letter received from the City of Sarnia as well as the report from the Stratford Police Services for your information.

Your consideration of this matter is respectfully requested.

Regards,


Lizet Scott
Clerk

Cc: Randy Pettapiece, MPP Perth-Wellington
John Nater, MP Perth-Wellington
All Ontario Municipalities



**THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF SARNIA
City Clerk's Department**

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December 16, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

RE: "Catch and Release" Justice

At its meeting held on December 13, 2021, Sarnia City Council adopted the following resolution with respect to "Catch and Release Justice":

That the City of Sarnia send a letter to the Federal and Provincial Governments requesting meaningful improvements to the current state of "catch and release" justice in the Ontario legal system. Police Services across Ontario are exhausting precious time and resources having to manage the repeated arrests of the same offenders, which in turn, is impacting their morale, and ultimately law abiding citizens who are paying the often significant financial and emotional toll of this broken system. This resolution should also be sent to other Municipalities throughout Ontario for their endorsement consideration; and

That the request also be referred to the Sarnia Police Services Board and be presented via AMO delegations for endorsement consideration.

Your consideration of this matter is respectfully requested.

Yours sincerely,

Amy Burkhart
City Clerk

Cc: Bob Bailey, MPP
Marylyn Gladu, MP
All Ontario Municipalities



CHIEF OF POLICE REPORT

DATE: 19 January 2022

TO: Stratford Police Services Board

FROM: Deputy Chief Gerry Foster

RE: "Catch and Release Justice"

BACKGROUND

Council for the City of Sarnia has passed a resolution on December 13, 2021, requesting the Federal and Provincial governments consider making meaningful improvements to the release of offenders. The so-called "Catch and Release Justice" refers to the release of offenders by the courts whereby the offender is re-arrested by police for breaches of the release conditions.

The resolution indicates this approach has a negative impact on police workload, officer morale, and potentially law-abiding citizens.

Locally, council has asked that the matter be discussed at the Police Service Board level and that *"a review of 'catch and release justice' in the City of Stratford be referred to the Stratford Police Services Board to outline current challenges."*

Further, council is requesting a resolution with recommended changes be brought back to council for January 24, 2022.

ANALYSIS

On its surface "Catch and Release Justice" is a reference to the increase in offenders being released after being arrested. This term mostly refers to release by the courts although police officers (Officer in Charge) have release authorities similar to that of the court.

In response to the request of council, a review of charges laid for these instances was completed. Approximately 60 more charges were laid in 2021 in comparison to the average of charges from 2018 to 2020. In reviewing the data this increase would represent an approximate 43% increase

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in breach of release condition charges being laid by members of the service. I would caution that the data, while it does show an increase from 2018-2021, could also be indicative of the COVID pandemic whereby the courts (and police) were actively exploring opportunities to keep offenders out of custody, where possible. The result was that more offenders were released on conditions where re-offending in the community could have occurred. Likewise, the stressful nature of the pandemic should not be discounted as a contributing factor on this data.

RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

- The Stratford Police Service has experienced an increase in repeat offenders being released into the community only to re-offend.
- The impact of the pandemic on the police, justice and corrections system has been challenging to navigate
- More and more offenders are being released into the community on judicial release conditions that are continually breached leading to more arrests, charges, and court appearances.
- The community is frustrated with the lack of accountability on offenders and feel that their safety is being jeopardized.
- Police officers are resorting to “Officer in Charge” releases when offenders should be going to the courts for judicial releases because of workload.
- The court dockets will most likely be cleared of low-level offences resulting in no accountability for offenders
- Victims are feeling re-victimized by the system and losing faith/trust in the system.

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For Council consideration:

That that City of Stratford endorse the Sarnia Catch and Release Justice resolution and add the following:

- The Federal and Provincial Governments recognize the linkage between mental health, addiction, homelessness, and crime.
- That all levels of government acknowledge that catch and release justice contributes to feelings of vulnerability within our communities and increases the cost of policing, social services, and health care in our communities.
- That all levels of government provide continued financial support to enhance funding in communities for Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Teams, Overdose Response Teams, Community Outreach Teams, Emergency Shelter facilities, Education and Awareness Programs, diversion programs, etc. under the umbrella of Community Safety and Well Being.
- That the Federal and Provincial Governments re-imagine a direct accountability framework specific to charges relating to failure to comply with release conditions.
- That consideration be given to provided holistic support to chronic re-offenders experiencing mental health, addiction, and homelessness issues with a multi-disciplinary team under one roof

Yours,

Gerry Foster
Deputy Chief of Police

Community-Partnerships-Service