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Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 11:11 AM

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Subject: AMO Policy Update - Submission on Municipal Environmental Assessments, Advocacy on Municipal Case Law, New Funding for Postsecondary Education

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AMO Policy Update – Submission on Municipal Environmental Assessments, Advocacy on Municipal Case Law, New Funding for Postsecondary Education

Top Insights

- AMO recommends the province aligns its proposed streamlined environmental assessment process for high-risk projects with existing planning and heritage frameworks.
- AMO has written to the Attorney General recommending a review of recent legal decisions that impact tools municipalities use to manage land.
- The Ontario government announces a new long-term funding framework for postsecondary education institutions.

AMO Submission on Changes to Municipal Environmental Assessments

The province has updated its proposed approach to streamlining environmental assessments (EAs) to address feedback, including those in [AMO's March 2024 submission](#). Changes include:

- Consistently applying the new EA process to private sector led water infrastructure projects.
- Strengthening requirements for Indigenous consultation.

AMO welcomes these changes, as they progress AMO's long-running call to reduce red tape for low-risk projects while ensuring that environmental checks and balances are in the right place.

New changes introduced in this round of public consultation are:

- Revisions to the new streamlined EA process and projects that would be subject to it.
- New archaeological assessment requirements.

[AMO's latest ERO submission](#) sets out three recommendations to reduce the risk of project delays and support effective Indigenous consultation:

1. Review how the new EA process fits within existing planning and permitting rules and timelines.
2. Work closely with Indigenous communities to design and roll out the new archaeological assessment process that's aligned with the province's broader heritage framework.
3. Provide clear guidance, training, and transition support to ensure consistent and timely application of the new requirements.

AMO Advocacy on Recent Municipal Case Law

AMO has [written to the Ontario Attorney General](#) outlining two court decisions and asking the province to review the decisions to determine if action is needed to protect municipal land management tools. The first case is a Supreme Court ruling that municipalities may lose property title when private owners encroach on parkland. The second is an Ontario Appeal Court ruling that limits the ability of municipalities to enforce contracts with property owners if part of a contract become void.

Ontario Government Announces New Funding for Postsecondary Education

The Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security has announced a new fiscal framework for post-secondary institutions including:

- A new long-term funding model with \$6.4 billion focused on delivering programs that align with student and labour-marked demand.
- Allowing public institutions to raise tuition by 2 per cent for three years, after which tuition increases may align with inflation.
- Aligning OSAP financial assistance for students at public institutions with other provinces'. This involves allowing up to 25 per cent of OSAP funding as grants, and a minimum of 75 per cent as loans, while removing eligibility for private career colleges students.

Municipalities recognize the value of postsecondary institutions play in supporting Ontario's economic competitiveness. We support measures to address the financial strain colleges and universities are under. These changes will help communities benefit from the economic and social benefits brought by postsecondary institutions.

An online version of this Policy Update is also available on the [AMO Website](#).

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