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**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 12:18 PM

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**Subject:** AMO Policy Update - Conservation Authority Consolidation, New Buy Ontario Municipal Procurement Requirements, Proposals on Drug Enforcement

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## AMO Policy Update – Conservation Authority Consolidation, New *Buy Ontario* Municipal Procurement Requirements, Proposals on Drug Enforcement

### Top Insights

- The province finalizes plans to consolidate conservation authorities and provides details on governance, funding, and transition period timelines.
- The province has proposed new municipal procurement requirements that prioritize 'Ontario Made' and 'Canada Made' goods and services for light fleet vehicles and construction procurement.
- Following AMO's recommendations, the province is proposing to exempt municipal and other select housing operators from a new law that makes landlords liable for knowingly allowing illegal drug production or trafficking in their buildings.

- The province is considering new enforcement powers for transit special constables for drug offences.

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## Finalized Plans on Conservation Authority Consolidation Respond to AMO Recommendations

Following AMO advocacy, the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks has revised its approach to consolidating conservation authorities (CAs). The province's revised position takes steps against some of AMO's recommendations, which we'd shared in our [2025 comments](#), by:

- **Increasing the number of regional CAs from seven to nine**, better reflecting distinct geographies and regional development contexts across the province.
- **Introducing Watershed Councils and Transition Committees** to help maintain local expertise and relationships, and support business continuity.
- **Providing \$3 million of annual provincial funding** which is vital for transition support and delivering long-term service improvements desired by the province.

These legislative changes would come into effect once amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* are passed by the provincial legislature. The new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency is overseeing the transition and full regional integration is targeted for early 2027.

Implementation of these reforms entails significant risks for municipalities around the transition, budgeting, governance, funding, and public communications. AMO calls on the province to work collaboratively and transparently with municipalities, conservation authorities, developers, and Indigenous representatives to address these risks.

AMO will comment on the proposed legislative changes once they are tabled in the spring session.

Buy Ontario regulations for municipal procurement of light duty fleet vehicles, capital infrastructure and construction projects

AMO has [submitted feedback](#) to the province's [regulatory proposal](#) under the *Buy Ontario Act* which would require municipalities to give preference to Ontario and Canadian goods and services for light fleet vehicle and construction procurements. AMO supports these measures.

Last year, AMO consulted with the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement (MPBSDP) and the municipal sector on light fleet vehicle procurement. We applaud the province's decision to incorporate [feedback provided](#) by AMO and the municipal sector into their proposed fleet procurement rules. We are now advancing similar recommendations to help ensure an effective implementation of proposed construction procurement rules.

### Advocacy on Construction Procurement Policy

Since December 2025, AMO has held three consultation sessions in partnership with MPBSDP to gather feedback from senior municipal professionals working across 140 municipalities in procurement, finance, public works, and legal departments on the impact of the proposed procurement approach. Building on this feedback, [AMO's submission](#) puts forward recommendations to avoid undue time and cost increases:

1. **Keep Local Flexibility:** Provide municipalities with the flexibility to establish local policies that ensure value-for-money procurement while addressing the distinct needs and priorities of their communities.
2. **Clarify New Procurement Rules:** Provide clear definitions of "Ontario Made" and "Canada Made," guidance on compliance, and flexibility in scoring bids. Move implementation to 2027 to avoid disrupting 2026 budgets and construction seasons.
3. **Coordinate with Existing Funding Programs:** Ensure procurement rules do not conflict with provincial or federal grants, risking funding losses or project cancellations — especially for housing infrastructure.
4. **Match Supply and Demand:** Work with industry to ensure domestic capacity can be ramped up to meet the anticipated increase in policy driven demand.

## Regulations under Measures Respecting Premises with *Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025* (MRPIDAA)

AMO provided a [submission](#) to the regulatory proposal for the MRPIDAA. It recognizes the provincial government's positive change to remove long-term care homes and municipal, non-profit and co-operative providers of community, transitional, and supportive housing from the definition of 'landlord' in the regulations under the Act. This change reflects AMO's advice to the province about the implementation of Bill 10, the *Protect Ontario Through Safer Streets and Stronger Communities Act, 2025*.

Without this exemption in place, these landlords would be subject to legal risk and vulnerable clients could experience new housing barriers. Through these proposed changes, the government is helping to maintain a strong housing continuum for vulnerable people while still addressing illegal drug activity.

## Proposal to Extend Authorities to Transit Special Constables under the *Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025*

The government is [considering](#) extending certain police officers powers to authorized special constable transit employers and their special constables to charge and arrest for more drug offences.

In the legislative [submission](#) about Bill 6, the *Safer Municipalities Act*, AMO outlined its view is that while new powers may be useful in very specific situations, that enforcement should be not the primary response to homelessness and intersecting mental health and addictions crisis. We need significant and sustained provincial investments in deeply affordable housing plus improvements to income security and a comprehensive approach to mental health and addictions.

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