



January 3rd, 2025

The Honorable Paul Calandra
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
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Subject: *Recommendation from Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell regarding Bill 2024*

Minister Calandra,

On December 12, you informed Ontario municipalities of the introduction of Bill 2024, proposing amendments to the Municipal Act, 2001 and the City of Toronto Act, 2006 to strengthen the municipal code of ethics and the integrity commissioner framework. The proposed changes, if passed, would:

- enable the creation of a standard municipal code of conduct and standard municipal integrity commissioner investigation processes to help ensure consistency across all Ontario municipalities;
- create a role for the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario in municipal code of conduct and integrity commissioner matters, including providing training to municipal integrity commissioners; and
- establish a mechanism to remove and disqualify members of council and certain local boards for a period of four years for the most serious code of conduct violations following a recommendation from the local integrity commissioner, a concurring report from the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario, and a unanimous vote of council.

At the time of the announcement, you also invited Ontario's elected municipal officials to share their views on the bill. Since our organization, [Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell](#), brings together elected women municipal officials and represents the interests of women in leadership positions, we are writing to share our reaction to Bill 2024.

We welcome this bill, which we have been awaiting for over a year and for which we have called for government action. We believe that the creation of a uniform code of ethics for all municipalities, accompanied by sanctions that can go as far as dismissal and exclusion, is a good way of discouraging reprehensible behaviour on the part of elected officials, whether towards their colleagues on council or municipal employees, and thus ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for all.

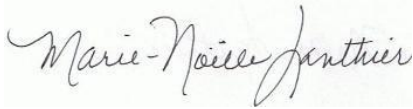
However, the bill stipulates that removal and expulsion could only take place on the recommendation of the Municipal Integrity Commissioner, followed by a report from the Ontario Integrity Commissioner to the same effect, and then a unanimous vote of the municipal council. We believe that a unanimous vote of the municipal council should not be a mandatory condition in the removal process.

We believe that the removal of an elected official should not require the approval of the other members of his or her municipal council, once the local Integrity Commissioner's investigation and the provincial Integrity Commissioner's report have recommended it. Firstly, putting the final decision to expel an elected official in the hands of council colleagues brings into the political arena a decision that isn't political in nature. Such a decision does not constitute an infringement upon the democratic process of citizens, but rather aims solely at putting an end to impunity for those who demonstrate serious unacceptable behaviour towards others in the municipal environment.

Secondly, the requirement of a unanimous vote by the municipal council would give a single council member the power to reject the commissioners' recommendations, allowing the offending elected official to keep his or her seat despite the serious unacceptable behaviours corroborated by both integrity commissioners.

For these reasons, we recommend that the requirement of a unanimous vote by council be removed from the procedure proposed in Bill 2024.

Respectfully,



Marie-Noëlle Lanthier

Chairperson - presidente.lfpr@gmail.com

With endorsement from:

Lisa Deacon, Councilor, Municipality of Russell

Julie Séguin, Councilor, Municipality of Hawkesbury

Diane Choinière, Councilor, Municipality of Clarence-Rockland

CC: Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Stéphane Sarrazin, MPP, Glengarry-Prescott-Russell
Stéphane Parisien, Chief Administrative Officer, United Counties of Prescott-Russell
CAOs and mayors of Prescott-Russell municipalities
Michelle Boileau, Chair of Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario (AFMO)