

LUMCO

Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario

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For Immediate Release
March 23, 2016

ONTARIO'S BIG-CITY MAYORS' APPLAUD THE FEDERAL 2016 BUDGET

The Federal Government's 2016 Budget is a historic one for Cities. First and foremost, we are pleased to see the priorities expressed by Federation of Canadian Municipalities were central to the budget, and that FCM itself has a role in implementing these priorities, including infrastructure and affordable housing.

On February 19, 2016, Mayor Lehman as Chair of the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario presented to the House of Commons Finance Committee as part of the Pre-Budget Consultations. He called for the need to invest in city infrastructure to improve the quality of life for all Canadians; job creation to grow and diversify our economy; and a real commitment to affordable housing in Canada.

"We are pleased that the Federal Government made good on their election commitment to municipalities. Investing in our cities strengthens our country's economy and ensures Canada's long term prosperity" stated Mayor Jeff Lehman, Chair of LUMCO.

The government's commitment to spending \$120 billion on public infrastructure projects over 10 years, including public transit, green infrastructure and social infrastructure, is welcomed by Ontario Big City Mayors. More important, however, is the expansion to 50% funding of certain projects, and the inclusion of design costs in project cost eligibility.

"It is encouraging to see for the first time the federal government is investing in design costs of municipal infrastructure projects, which is what we called for as part of the pre-budget consultations. This reflects that the government is listening to cities and understands the realities of public works projects." added Lehman.

Affordable housing is a critical issue facing cities across Canada. With housing markets on overdrive, many Canadians are priced out of major cities. Worse, lower income Canadians cannot find housing at all and face long wait times for social housing.

"This is a critical problem which requires a commitment from all levels of Government. I am pleased to see the Federal Government make investments today in the budget to begin to address this critical issue, especially the doubling of funding for the affordable housing initiative, and the funding for Housing First initiatives" notes Lehman.

The Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO) represents 67% of Ontario's population with Mayors of 27 communities over 100,000 residents. LUMCO advocates for issues and policies important to Ontario's largest cities. Jeff Lehman, the Mayor of Barrie is the Chair of LUMCO. Visit ontariobigcitymayors.ca for more information.

City of Barrie

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With a renewed federal partnership, Ontario's cities are ready to get to work addressing both deferred maintenance and then investing in new infrastructure. The list of projects are long and the urgent need for reinvestment in existing road and water networks, building new transportation links, affordable housing units and community infrastructure cannot be overstated.

The Mayors of Ontario's largest cities look forward to continue working with the Federal government to solve issues for the benefit of our communities and in fact will be in Ottawa in mid-April to meet with the government about these important issues.

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