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**Sent:** Tuesday, July 8, 2025 2:57 PM

**Subject:** Council Members Opposed to Strong Mayor Powers

**Please share with the council.**

On behalf of **V.O.I.C.E.** (*Vocal Ontario Integrity Coalition for Electeds*)

July 8, 2025

**To: All Ontario Municipal Council Members**

**Re: United Opposition to Strong Mayor Powers – A Call to Action**

Dear Council Members,

We are writing to you as a coalition of concerned municipal council members from across Ontario, united under the banner of V.O.I.C.E. Our group was formed out of growing concern over the increasing use and impending expansion of Strong Mayor Powers in this province. These powers, which grant outsized authority to a single elected official, fundamentally undermine the democratic role of local councils and the balance of decision-making entrusted to them by their constituents.

At present, more than 126 municipalities have expressed their opposition to these powers, and this number is growing. As of this writing, we understand that the balance of over 200 additional municipalities may see inclusion in the Strong Mayor framework this coming fall. The potential impact on municipal governance across Ontario is immense. The time to act is now.

As a coalition, we are pursuing a two-pronged strategy to address this issue.

### **1. Advocacy and Awareness at the 2025 AMO Conference**

We have requested dedicated meeting space through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to hold an event during the 2025 AMO Conference, taking place in Ottawa from August 17 to 20. We are pleased to announce that Councillor Mark Hunter of the City of Stratford, a practising lawyer and experienced municipal representative, will serve as our keynote speaker. We invite you and members of your council to attend this session and connect with others who share these concerns. Additional details will be made available during the AMO event.

### **2. Municipal Resolutions and Coordinated Legal Action**

We are calling on municipal councils to pass formal resolutions opposing Strong Mayor Powers. Councils should also consider if they are willing to financially support this cause with any amount your municipality deems appropriate, toward a potential Charter challenge. This legal route would be pursued only if collaborative efforts with the

province fail to achieve meaningful dialogue or reform. The basis of such a challenge would be that the Strong Mayor Powers may violate our rights protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

To support this initiative, we have included a sample motion that councils may adopt or adapt as they see fit. If your municipality passes a motion in opposition, please forward a copy to our communication contact, Paula Banks. We also recommend consulting your municipal solicitor for legal advice and to assess your capacity to contribute, should litigation become necessary. Funding authorizations can be made contingent upon the challenge moving forward collectively, with participation from a critical mass of municipalities. Our intention is to retain a constitutional law expert to lead the case or work in partnership with municipal legal teams.

We believe this issue is too important to face alone. By acting together, we gain two crucial advantages:

1. Shared responsibility and financial efficiency, reducing the burden on individual municipalities.
2. A united and credible voice, clearly signalling to the province that we do not support the erosion of democratic governance in our communities.

If your council shares our concerns and wishes to support this cause, we encourage you to reach out as soon as possible. Our target, if necessary, is to file a potential legal application by early fall 2025, and timely participation is essential to the coordination of any collective effort.

Should you have questions or wish to discuss your municipality's involvement, please contact us at the details below.

Thank you for your time, your commitment to good governance, and your service to your community.

If you are interested in joining our mailing list, please email Paula Banks.

**See you at AMO.**

Sincerely,

Council Members Opposed to Strong Mayor Powers

On behalf of V.O.I.C.E. Ontario

*Vocal Ontario Integrity Coalition for Electeds*

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