

January 23, 2025

Submitted online and via email to EMOPolicy@ontario.ca

Emergency Management Policy and Governance Branch
Emergency Management Ontario
Treasury Board Secretariat
315 Front St. W
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

RE: ERO 019-9467: Proposed Amendments to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act as part of Bill 238.

The City of Guelph appreciates the opportunity to provide input regarding the amendments to the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) proposed as part of Bill 238. We recognize the extent of stakeholder consultations undertaken as part of the EMCPA modernization process, and appreciate the integration of this stakeholder feedback as part of the currently proposed amendments to the Act. This submission builds on the [City's comments](#) submitted as part of the initial consultation process, and contains some additional considerations for Emergency Management Ontario as it implements an updated emergency management framework.

Summary of Proposed Amendments:

The proposed Bill 238 – the *Emergency Management Modernization Act*, 2024, introduces amendments to the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* which pertain to emergency management governance, roles, and responsibilities. Among the proposed changes is the clarification of the powers and duties of the Minister and the Commissioner of Emergency Management, as well as regulations to set out the conditions for the development of emergency management plans.

Notably, Bill 238 would also amend section 4 of the EMCPA to provide more direction for the declaration of emergencies by municipal heads of council. This was one of the key amendments requested by the City of Guelph in its original submission, and is a step towards ensuring that the emergency declaration powers granted under the Act are aligned with the intention of emergency management.

Additional Comments for Consideration:

As Bill 238 is subjected to further consideration, the City would like to come back to recommendations as outlined in the City's original submission.

There remains a need for a clear consolidation of all related legislation and Community Emergency Management Coordinator obligations under the EMCPA. To enable greater clarity and legislative compliance by all

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stakeholders, the City would appreciate the publication of all related legislation and obligations either within the EMCPA itself, or elsewhere.

Additionally, the proposed amendments to the EMCPA do not address the need for a standardized provincial identification for municipal Emergency Operations Control Group (EOCG) members. EOCGs are typically composed of various municipal staff and local officials, meaning that there is no standard accepted form of identification for EOCG members. To enable better communication between local authorities and EOCG members and avoid misunderstandings arising from cross-municipal boundary travel by EOCG members during emergencies, the City greatly encourages the creation of a standardized form of EOCG identification either as part of the EMCPA or through staff-level work going forward.

Finally, we want to reiterate our original comments on the need for specific criteria for the declaration of an emergency by municipal heads of council under section 4 of the Act. While we appreciate the proposed amendments that defer to local emergency management plans and the discretion of local heads of council for the declaration of emergency, the legislation in its current form still leaves the door open for potential declarations of emergency for non-emergency issues. This goes against the intention of the EMCPA, and can lead to a misuse of emergency management resources, as neither Emergency Management Ontario nor municipal EOCGs are equipped to deal with issues outside of immediate emergencies and disasters. As such, we encourage the inclusion of more specific conditions for the declaration of an emergency under section 4 of the Act that go beyond general guidelines, and ensure that the powers granted under the Act align with the broader definition of an emergency under the EMCPA.

We encourage you to refer to the City's [original consultation submission](#) for additional information on the requests summarized above.

Closure:

We appreciate this opportunity to provide input on the proposed amendments to the EMCPA and would like to once again thank you for your consideration of stakeholder input received as part of previous consultations. Should you have any questions about the feedback provided, or require additional details please do not hesitate to contact the City at intergovernmental.relations@guelph.ca.

Sincerely,

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