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December 19, 2024,

Dear Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing,

Thank you for your recent communication regarding the changes to the Planning Act through the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, and the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024.

While we appreciate the government's efforts to address the housing supply crisis by promoting the creation of additional residential units (ARUs), we must express our concerns about the applicability of these changes in rural municipalities.

The "as-of-right" permission to develop up to three units per lot is only permitted in urban areas where municipal servicing is provided. In these areas, the demand for housing is high, and land is scarce. However, in rural municipalities, where population density is lower and land availability is not typically a constraint, these changes do not apply.

Rural municipalities often struggle with infrastructure limitations, specifically with water supply, sewage systems, and transportation networks. While these changes the Province has made does cut red tape for urban areas of Ontario, they do not address constraints rural municipalities deal with when trying to increase density without municipal servicing. Additionally, the increased residential density permitted by the amendments may not be compatible with the rural character and lifestyle that residents value.

We believe that a one-size-fits-all approach to ARU development may inadvertently overlook the distinct needs of rural communities. As municipalities in rural, Northern Ontario have before, we urge the government to consider creating tailored policies that recognize the specific conditions and requirements of rural areas, ensuring that any regulatory changes support sustainable and contextually appropriate growth.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our feedback and look forward to working collaboratively with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to develop solutions that are beneficial to all Ontarians and where they choose to live.

Sincerely,

Mayor, Cheryl Philip

On behalf of the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Kearney