



March 4, 2026

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

RE: Joint Letter from the Lower-Tier Municipalities of Niagara Region

The Honourable Premier Doug Ford,

We, the Mayors of Thorold, West Lincoln, Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Grimsby, Pelham, Wainfleet and the Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, write with a unified voice to present our agenda for modernizing governance in Niagara. We are taking decisive action to address the number of politicians, strengthen efficiency, and eliminate duplication to enable economic growth and long-term sustainability for our municipalities and the taxpayers we serve.

We have heard the Province's concerns clearly, and we are acting on them. We share the goal of building a governance model that is streamlined, transparent to the public, and results-driven, and are committed to implementing practical, evidence-based reforms that align with provincial priorities while maintaining strong, responsive local representation and preserving the integrity of our communities.

This is Niagara stepping up – not standing in the way.

At Niagara Regional Council on February 26, 2026, an overwhelming majority of Niagara's mayors and elected representatives passed a motion directing a comprehensive governance and service delivery review be initiated. Niagara is positioning itself as a provincial leader in responsible municipal reform – and we are moving forward with purpose. The review will include focus on the following priority areas, with a firm commitment to act where a clear fiscal business case supports doing so:

- Establishing one or more Water and Wastewater Public Corporation(s) under the *Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025*.
- Subject to a financial review, reforming local and regional services to drive savings and deliver better value for every tax dollar – such as transitioning the Regional road network and remaining services such as Social Services, Public Health and EMS to locally-governed Public Service Boards.

- Reducing the number of politicians by streamlining councils to reflect the needs and scale of each community.

These reforms reflect what our residents have told us directly: they want governance that is efficient, affordable, locally accountable, and reflective of the unique character of Niagara's small and rural communities. We are delivering on that mandate.

We are committed to a made-in-Niagara local and regional governance reform that will be reflected in the 2026 municipal election, as well as the ongoing support for the governance and service delivery review passed by Regional Council in February 2026.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this further and to outline how Niagara's municipalities can work collaboratively with the Province to advance these reforms. We are confident that, together, we can deliver a governance model that reflects shared priorities and achieves meaningful, lasting results for the people of Ontario.

Respectfully,

The Mayors of Fort Erie, Grimsby, Port Colborne, West Lincoln, Pelham, Thorold, Wainfleet, and the Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Wayne Redekop

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Mayor
Town of Fort Erie

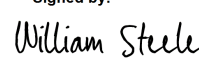
Jeff Jordan

Signed by:

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Mayor
Town of Grimsby

Bill Steele

Signed by:

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Mayor
City of Port Colborne

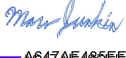
Cheryl Ganann

Signed by:

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Mayor
Township of West Lincoln

Marvin Junkin

Signed by:

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Mayor
Town of Pelham

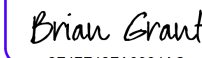
Terry Ugulini

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Mayor
City of Thorold

Brian Grant

Signed by:

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Mayor
Township of Wainfleet

Gary Zalepa

Signed by:

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Lord Mayor
Town of
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Enclosure: Niagara Region Committee of the Whole Meeting Motion – February 26, 2026

cc: Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP – Niagara West
Jeff Burch, MPP – Niagara Centre
Wayne Gates, MPP – Niagara Falls
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens, MPP – St. Catharines
Robert Dodd, Chief of Staff, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Bob Gale, Regional Chair
Regional Councillors c/o Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

Niagara Region – Committee of the Whole Meeting
February 26, 2026

MOTION REGARDING GOVERNANCE REVIEW

That Correspondence Item COTW-C 1-2026, being correspondence from Regional Chair Gale respecting Municipal Governance Reform **BE RECEIVED**; and

Whereas Regional Chair Gale has confirmed publicly that he has not engaged in any discussion with or received any directive from the Premier of Ontario or the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding a governance review in Niagara or potential municipal amalgamations;

Whereas there has been no data, business case or specific information presented that would confirm any anticipated cost savings, efficiencies, enhanced services, or improved outcomes for the residents of Niagara as a result of any proposed governance changes;

Whereas significant decisions on local governance that will have a multi-generational impact and should be informed by comprehensive public consultation with the Niagara communities;

Whereas Premier Doug Ford has publicly reiterated on February 25, 2026 that “if it’s going to go [governance changes], then it has to be from Niagara by Niagara. It has to have approvals from the majority of mayors, has to have approval for majority of the elected officials.”, and further that, “And hopefully 70- 80% of the population agree.”, which implies the necessity for public consultation and support on any proposed governance changes;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That a governance review of Niagara **BE INITIATED** to address areas of duplication and improve service efficiency based on data, a business case with financial analysis and public consultation, including local area municipalities, commencing this term of Council;
2. That Regional Council **DIRECTS** Regional Chair Gale to refrain from any further action and utilization of any further Regional resources or staff time, with the exception of the above, in connection with a review of Regional governance or municipal amalgamation; and
3. That this resolution and amendment **BE FORWARDED** to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.