

FONOM

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

Bill 175, Safer Ontario Act, 2017

Submission to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy

By

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The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) is pleased to have the opportunity to provide comments to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on Bill 175, Safer Ontario Act, 2017. We hope that our comments are taken into consideration.

FONOM is a membership-based association that is the unified voice of Northeastern Ontario, representing and advocating on behalf of 110 cities, towns and municipalities. Our mission is to improve the economic and social quality of life for all Northerners and to ensure the future of our youth.

Bill 175, Safer Ontario Act, 2017 is an extensive, all encompassing Bill that aims to replace the Police Services Act, 1990 and amend several other Acts. FONOM has extended support of the recommendations outlined in AMO's Policing Modernization Report and believes the government took the right approach on some of the recommendations however; significant concerns remain with respect to lack of concrete action to reduce the rising costs of policing as well as the implementation of several new requirements for municipalities.

Intro comments:

Ontarians pay the highest costs in the country for policing.

The municipal sector has been asking for changes for years and has been actively engaged in addressing concerns.

While there are positives in the legislation including increased oversight for example, there are elements of the Bill that will only increase costs to municipalities, which is of utmost concern and currently unsustainable.

Focus on

- Reduction of policing costs through civilianization
- Community Safety Well-Being Plans
- Consolidation of OPP Police Services Boards.

It is well known that the cost of policing has continuously increased, beyond the point of sustainably managing. While we were hopeful that the legislation would help to address this issue, we believe it did not. Civilianization of specific functions could have been taken, such as directing traffic around construction sites. We are left wondering if the province intends to address the issue of reining in policing costs at all given the opportunity in this legislation that the province did not take.

This legislation outlines increased mandates and responsibilities for municipal governments without the financial support to develop and implement. For example, municipalities will be mandated to develop and implement Community Safety and Well Being (CSWB) plans. While we support the promotion of increased collaboration between municipalities, police and other sectors to benefit our communities we do not appreciate the additional mandate without any financial support. These plans will either require extensive human resource hours to develop or the hiring of a consultant, both of which will be added expenses. As part of the CSWB plans, all municipalities will be required to establish an advisory committee with a broad membership of community representatives. Should a municipality fail to comply with this requirement, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has the authority to appoint a planner to develop one for the municipality. This would come at the expense of the municipality.