

To: Delegation during ROMA Conference January 2025

From: FONOM Board

Date: January 21, 2025

Subject: Negative Impact of current Crown Attorney approach has on Communities

ISSUE:

Property crime has wide-ranging impacts on communities, influencing everything from the social fabric to business operations and municipal budgets.

RECOMMENDATION:

Property crime's impact on communities, businesses, and municipal finances is complex. While increased security measures and police budgets may temporarily alleviate some concerns, the deeper effects—social fragmentation, economic strain, and potential public disillusionment—require comprehensive solutions that balance law enforcement with social support programs and long-term strategies for improving the fabric of society. The public's readiness for extreme measures like forced confinement will likely depend on the broader societal conversations about justice, fairness, and the role of government in addressing crime.

Therefore, **FONOM would ask again that the Province amend the Mental Health Act and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to recognize addiction as a substance use disorder. Specifically, we proposed a review of legislation for the temporary detention of individuals found intoxicated by drugs or other substances without charge for their safety and that of the community.**

Further, some are concerned with an individual's rights, and our recommendations impede them. FONOM would suggest that this already happens in Ontario. The Public Guardian and Trustees make financial decisions for adults who have been found mentally incapable and acts as Substitute Decision

Maker (SDM) of last resort to make substitute treatment or long-term care admission decisions for incapable individuals. We know that the Public Guardian and Trustees only become involved when it is known that the individual has no Power of Attorney and assets greater than \$50,000. If Addictions were to be included in the Mental Health Act, we recommend that the Public Guardian and Trustees office become the advocate for those entering treatment.

ANALYSIS:

1. Impact on the Community

- **Loss of Trust and Security:** Property crimes, such as burglaries, car thefts, and vandalism, erode a community's sense of safety. Neighbors may become more isolated, as people fear becoming victims or assume others won't help if something happens. Trust in one another weakens, leading to a breakdown in social cohesion.
- **Increased Anxiety and Fear:** A rise in property crimes can make individuals feel unsafe in their own homes, increasing stress and anxiety levels, which can lead to health problems over time. Families may take extra precautions, like installing security systems or limiting outdoor activities, which further isolates them.
- **Displacement and Reduced Quality of Life:** In some cases, people might move away from neighborhoods with high crime rates, reducing local diversity and engagement, and weakening community networks. This can lead to long-term stagnation in affected areas.

2. Effects on the Social Fabric

- **Erosion of Social Capital:** A strong sense of belonging, mutual assistance, and collective efficacy is key to healthy communities. When property crimes are prevalent, it disrupts these community norms. The fear of crime leads to a breakdown of cooperation between neighbors, and people become less willing to get involved in local initiatives or take responsibility for the environment. Victims of property crime may feel betrayed by their local authorities

3. Business Fortification vs. Repeated Break-Ins

- **Increased Costs for Businesses:** Many businesses, especially in high-crime areas, invest heavily in fortification measures such as security systems, surveillance cameras, reinforced doors, and lighting. While these efforts reduce the likelihood of a break-in, they are not always foolproof.
- **Repeated Break-Ins:** Even well-fortified businesses can be targeted multiple times, leading to a significant financial burden. Repeated thefts and damages erode profits and force businesses to divert resources away from growth and innovation to security measures. Some businesses may even close, leading to job losses and economic stagnation in the area.
- **Psychological Toll on Business Owners:** Small businesses, in particular, may face emotional burnout from the stress of constant threats to their livelihood. The sense of vulnerability can lead to decreased morale and reluctance to invest further in the local community.

4. Impact on Municipal Budgets (Increased Police Budgets)

- **Allocation of Resources:** As property crimes rise, police departments often see their budgets increase in response. Law enforcement is tasked with investigating crimes, improving community safety, and deterring future offenses. This, however, can take a substantial portion of municipal budgets, leaving fewer resources available for other crucial services like municipal facilities and infrastructure development.
- **Traffic Enforcement and Crime Prevention:** Many municipalities prioritize not just property crime prevention but also traffic enforcement, which can further strain budgets. The need to fund both proactive policing and reactive crime investigations can create fiscal imbalances, forcing cities to either increase taxes or reduce other essential services.
- **Public Frustration:** While an increased police presence may address some immediate concerns, it often generates frustration due to the perception that funds are not being allocated effectively. Residents may feel that more investment in social services, mental health programs, or community-based prevention could yield better long-term results than just increased law enforcement.

5. Public Readiness for Forced Confinement

- **Debate Over Forced Confinement:** In response to rising crime rates, some governments have explore more drastic measures, such as curfews or forced confinement for repeat offenders. Public reactions to these measures can vary widely. While some may see it as a necessary step to ensure safety, others may view it as an infringement on personal freedoms.
- **Effectiveness and Public Sentiment:** There is also skepticism about whether such measures would truly address the root causes of crime or simply perpetuate a cycle of incarceration without rehabilitation. Many people worry that forced confinement might disproportionately affect marginalized groups or create a "prison pipeline" that disproportionately punishes certain communities.
- **Alternative Approaches:** Public readiness for forced confinement could depend on how well governments can demonstrate the effectiveness of alternatives like restorative justice programs, community policing, or social interventions that target the underlying factors contributing to property crime.

To: Delegation during ROMA Conference January 2025

From: FONOM Board

Date: January 20, 2025

Subject: Ask that the Ministry of Health discuss a funding partnership with Hope Air

ISSUE

Hope Air is Canada's only national charity providing air travel and accommodations for Canadians in financial need who must access medical care far from home. Hope Air and our members have passed many resolutions asking the Ministry of Health to meet with Hope Air to discuss a funding partnership with the Ontario government.

RECOMMENDATION:

Seeing how vital this service is to families in Northeastern Ontario, we ask that the Ministry meet with Hope Air to discuss whether a funding partnership is possible or if there is another way to work together to benefit our communities.

ANALYSIS:

The Ministry of Health has increased the travel grant for northerners attending appointments or hospital stays. Recently, a new Ornge facility was announced in Bracebridge (Ontario Connecting Northern and Rural Communities to Critical Care—Expanded Ornge Air Ambulance fleet and new hangar will better connect patients in rural and remote communities to urgent care—December 17, 2024).

Hope Air provides services to many families who do not have the financial means to travel to the hospitals in the larger communities of London, GTHA, and Ottawa. Plus, finances often are restrictive for the patient's caregiver, especially hotel stays. Hope Air's model has helped patients and families in every community in Northern Ontario. FONOM asks for a funding partnership to be discussed.

To: Delegation during ROMA Conference January 2025

From: FONOM Board

Date: January 9, 2025

Subject: Impact of the Asset Retirement Obligation is having on Small Communities

ISSUE

Many small municipalities do not have accountants or engineers on staff to complete the Asset Retirement Obligations (ARO), and this significant accounting change forces small municipalities to hire auditors and consultants to complete this work and causes a substantial financial burden to municipalities. An extremely high number of municipal treasurers from small communities are not aware of Ontario's AMP it Up program for municipalities

RECOMMENDATION:

The Province of Ontario allows small municipalities with a population of less than 12,500 to have engineering reports on assets every five years instead of three and those with less than 2,500 every seven years instead of three.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing should work with FONOM to educate our members on the value of the Provincial Created Tool, AMP it Up program for municipalities, which calculates the annual ARO after plugging in the annual inflation rate. These two changes will aid the smaller municipalities in dealing with this cost pressure.

ANALYSIS:

Smaller municipalities in the North are dealing with increasing cost pressures due to regulation changes. Fire training policy 34322 is considerably impacting our members and volunteers. Also, treasurers still reference changes to Accounting Standards, increasing the workload and cost to all our members.

More communities are discussing shared services; a few are talking about amalgamation. All are complaining about the cost pressures on their budgets. We hope that by making the recommended changes to the engineering requirement timelines below and working together to educate the Municipal Treasurers and Councillors on the value and cost savings by using **Ontario's AMP it Up program for municipalities**. These two initiatives will aid the municipalities by not paying fees to auditors and not paying engineering firms as often.

- The Province and Government of Canada allow Municipalities with a population of less than 12,500 to complete the engineering studies on their asset retirement obligations (ARO) every 5 years.
- The Province and Government of Canada allow Municipalities with a population of less than 2,500 to complete the engineering studies on asset retirement obligations (ARO) every 7 years.

To: Delegation during ROMA Conference January 2025

From: FONOM Board

Date: January 19, 2025

Subject: Continuing to Support the Forestry Sector

ISSUE

Many small municipalities are concerned about the survival of the Forest Sector. They are aware of the support this Government has provided to the Sector and are eager for in to continue in the next Budget or Election Platform.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Ontario Forestry Industry Association (OFIA) provided a 2024 Budget submission and will submit another to the Finance Department for the 2025 Budget. We are aware of the support the Northern Ministers have previously provided on behalf of the sector. FONOM would ask that you again advocate to the Minister of Finance for an ongoing commitment to the sector.

ANALYSIS:

Our members have made several points in their supportive Municipal Resolutions, asking the Province to implement the Ontario Forest Industries Association's 2025 Ontario Budget recommendations. They believe that attracting investment and maintaining forest operations and employment in Ontario benefits the entire Province.

- Ontario has an opportunity to market global investment in the bioeconomy, similar to critical minerals and electric vehicle manufacturing, and become a leading international jurisdiction

- Over the last 20 years, the North American pulp and paper sector has seen a significant rationalization in production capacity, with investment dollars going to competing international jurisdictions
- In the last year, Ontario has seen three pulp, paper, and containerboard mills idle or close, negatively impacting communities and the solid wood mills that depend on these facilities as markets for mill by-products and pulpwood
- U.S. tariffs on softwood lumber are expected to double in 2025, to approximately 30%
- Ontario continues to work with federal colleagues to pursue a softwood lumber settlement that works in the best interests of Ontario lumber producers and advocates for a financial backstop
- Ontario has an opportunity to procure more significant amounts of energy (i.e., electricity, heat, fuels, biochar, etc.) from forestry by-products and forests to assist in heavy industry decarbonization and Ontario's forecasted electricity demands
- Ontario's successful and oversubscribed Forest Biomass Program should continue post-2027
- Ontario will actively seek investment to restart idled softwood kraft lines in Ontario and Quebec to provide immediate relief for some sawmill producers
- Ontario's \$10 million Sawmill Chip Program, ending March 25, 2025, will likely need to continue and expand in the absence of an immediate restart of a currently idled pulp mill to avoid curtailments at solid wood facilities
- A 5-year bilateral power purchase agreement (PP As) with forest biomass-fired electrical generation facilities is insufficient and should be expanded both in terms of length and volume to provide communities, industry, and workers with a certain future
- The Forest-Access Roads Funding Program, which provides for the public use of Ontario's forests, should be increased to \$75 million/year to reflect inflationary pressures and support legacy infrastructure upgrades (i.e., roads, bridges, and water crossings)