



March 3, 2021

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
Minister of Finance
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Re: Urgent need for Hospital Funding in Windsor-Essex

The people of Windsor and Essex County have spoken loudly and clearly when it comes to the pressing need for a new state-of-the art hospitals system in our great and growing region. They've written letters to the editor, they've called into radio talk shows, they've discussed it with urgency on social media and they've planted lawn signs in front of their homes.

I see them every day, from the busy streets of Windsor to the wide-open rural roads of Essex County; dozens upon dozens of green and white lawn signs imploring the province to do the right and responsible thing and support the health and well-being of 400,000 Windsor-Essex residents while supporting the continued economic growth and diversification of this region.

Your government has an incredible opportunity to improve healthcare in Windsor-Essex for generations to come by providing funding for the next phase of this transformational project in your upcoming Budget. You also have the opportunity to back up with clear and concrete action the words of Premier Doug Ford, who, on August 13, 2020, said he would fight like an "800-pound gorilla" for a new Windsor-Essex hospital.

"I will fight tooth and nail for the hospital down there," Ford told reporters and this community after meeting with myself and other regional mayors. "Since it's their No. 1 priority, my No. 1 priority now is to give proper health care to Windsor-Essex, the entire region."

An estimated \$9 million in funding in the upcoming Budget is all that's required to allow Windsor Regional Hospital and its community partners to complete the functional program for the new facility – a significant undertaking that would take at least 18 months to complete.

A lack of funding will derail momentum for this project and send a disquieting message to Windsor-Essex residents, who are tired of paying for hospital projects in other regions while making do with cramped, outdated facilities that deliver, in the words of Mayor Drew Dilkens, "100-year-old health care."

County of Essex Council has passed three separate motions related to the pressing need for this project. The councils of each of the County's seven local municipalities have likewise affirmed their support, as has the Council of the City of Windsor. This unanimity is an important factor. These political leaders certainly wouldn't have done that if their constituents hadn't been telling them in the coffee shops and corner stores of their communities that they wanted to see a shovel in the ground as soon as possible.

This project isn't solely about the health of our residents, it's also about the health of our regional economy, which is facing continued uncertainty with the shutdown of the border and challenges associated with the decline of Ontario's traditional manufacturing and industrial base. There is a pressing need to continue the work of diversifying our economy and this hospital project will help us do that.

This project will generate more than 14,000 jobs over its lifetime, generating employee compensation exceeding \$1 Billion and taxes in excess of more than \$200 million, including more than \$68 million for municipal governments across this region. This project will attract to Windsor-Essex the best and brightest in the world of medicine and health care and it will attract more people and more families, fueling increased residential and commercial growth.

The benefits to this project are clear compelling as are the reasons to move it forward with funding in the upcoming provincial Budget.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require any further information.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara
Warden, County of Essex

Cc:


Doug Ford, Premier (doug.fordco@pc.ola.org)

Christine Elliott, Minister of Health/Deputy Premier (christine.elliott@pc.ola.org)

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