

THE VOICE OF NORTHERN BUSINESS



Timmins Chamber of Commerce
Chambre de commerce de Timmins



Chambre de commerce
du Grand Sudbury
sudburychamber.ca



Thunder Bay
Chamber
of Commerce

April 16, 2019

Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
President of the Treasury Board

Via email: Peter.Bethlenfalvy@Ontario.ca / Karl.Baldauf@ontario.ca

Honourable Greg Rickford
Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, and Indigenous Affairs
Via email: Greg.Rickford@ontario.ca / Nina.Chiarelli@ontario.ca

Dear Honourable Ministers:

Ensuring Provincial procurement policies provide best value to regional communities.

In order to directly engage the Provincial Government on policy issues of interest to our region, the Chambers of Commerce in Sudbury, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay and Thunder Bay wish to highlight our concerns around the Provincial Government's recent announcement of a major initiative to consolidate and centralize procurement spending within Ontario Public Service and broader public sector agencies.

Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP), or public-private partnerships, are a highly viable option for risk sharing on major infrastructure projects and should remain a priority across Ontario. However, concerns expressed about the impacts to local small- and medium-sized businesses as a result of a centralized purchasing model are of significant concern to Northern communities.

We are advocating against a centralized Greater Toronto Area (GTA) model as we believe that regionalized procurement efforts can deliver similar cost savings, while retaining, and controlling public spending within a region. We strongly believe that a GTA based buying model puts Northern businesses at a disadvantage and impedes the ability to build capacity throughout the province. To provide a regional example, the Lakehead Purchasing Consortium in Thunder Bay has a local award track-record in the 90 percent range, successfully demonstrating support for regional businesses while attaining cost savings through spend consolidation.

Recently, as part of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's Advocacy Day at Queen's Park, we raised these concerns regarding a centralized procurement model with the Deputy Minister for Energy, Northern Development and Mines, Bill Thornton.

As Northern Ontario is an integral part of the provincial economy, we trust you will consider mutual policy goals in a way that best serves all Ontarians. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you, either individually or collectively, at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,



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