

**From:** ROMA Communications <roma@roma.on.ca>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 20, 2025 2:39 PM  
**To:** Annette Gilchrist  
**Subject:** February ROMA Board Update: Conference wrap-up, pre-election work, and more



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## ROMA Board Update February 2025

### **2025 ROMA Conference wrap-up**

At their first meeting since the January ROMA Conference held in Toronto, the Board heard that ROMA 2025 broke attendance records and received high marks in post-conference evaluations. Final numbers indicate that 2,000 attendees from across Ontario traveled for the event. All conference feedback is reviewed by staff and considered for next year's event.

The Government of Ontario held a total of 574 delegation meetings in response to 763 requests. These meetings help communities engage on local matters with provincial leaders. They help municipal leaders introduce their priorities, opening the door to further local advocacy.

The ROMA Board sat face to face with provincial leaders, including the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Paul Calandra, Minister of Rural Affairs Lisa Thompson, Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Infrastructure, to discuss shared concerns of rural municipal governments, including:

- Responding to the unique and growing challenges of homelessness in rural communities
- Making sure smaller municipalities can access the infrastructure funding needed to build more homes in their communities
- Improving access to both primary and hospital care for rural Ontarians in their communities

ROMA seeks to foster relationships with the provincial government through participation of ministers, who periodically attend ROMA Board meetings.

### **Trade and Tariffs - Pre-Election Strategy**

The conference coincided with the inauguration of US President Trump and the threat of tariffs loomed large. In the week following the Conference, Ontario Premier Doug Ford called a provincial election amid trade and tariff talk.

Despite this overlap, municipal leaders remain focused on local issues with awareness that municipal challenges need to be addressed with even greater urgency in the face of geopolitical and economic uncertainty.

The board continues to support AMO's sector-wide, non-partisan provincial election campaign aimed at putting municipal issues at the forefront of the election, recognizing that crises in homelessness and housing are the result of decades of decisions by political parties of all stripes. Learn more about the [campaign](#) and follow AMO's pre-election tracking of [party platform commitments](#) on the AMO website.

### **Supporting municipal sector peers**

ROMA is committed to fostering a strong, unified municipal sector. The Board agreed to continue their sponsorship of upcoming municipal sister associations conferences.

### **LAS Continues Work on Solutions for Small Rural Water and Wastewater Systems**

LAS, AMO's Business Services arm, has published a feasibility study on creating municipal services corporations for water and wastewater systems. A panel of municipal experts explored whether MSCs could be a new way to finance infrastructure and other cost pressures on smaller municipal water/wastewater systems.

The Board supported LAS' next step of developing a business case with interested municipalities to determine the viability of the proposed model and next steps.

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## **Get to know your ROMA Board**

- **Zone 1** – Jamie McGrail, Councillor, Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- **Zone 2** – Steve McCabe, Councillor, Township of Wellington North
- **Zone 3** – Dave Beres, Deputy Mayor, Town of Tillsonburg
- **Zone 4** – Christina Early, Councillor, Town of Caledon
- **Zone 5** – Pam Sayne, Councillor, Township of Minden Hills
- **Zone 6** – Jennifer Murphy, Councillor, County of Renfrew
- **Zone 7** – Carma Williams, Deputy Mayor, Township of North Glengarry
- **Zone 8** – Christa Lowry, Mayor, Municipality of Mississippi Mills\* ROMA Chair
- **Zone 9** – Mark Wilson, Councillor, City of Temiskaming Shores
- **Zone 10** – Janet Hager, Councillor, Municipality of Red Lake

### **AMO Rural Caucus Members**

- Nicole Martin, CAO, Township of Amaranth
- Dane Nielsen, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Grey Highlands
- Natasha Salonen, Mayor, Township of Wilmot
- Nathan Townend, Deputy Warden, County of Lennox & Addington
- Tanya Vrebosch, Councillor, City of North Bay

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