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NEWS RELEASE

EOWC meets Eastern Ontario Federal MPs, discusses cell gap, budget

Kingston, April 18, 2019 – Members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) and the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) held a constructive meeting with their federal counterparts today, as part of ongoing advocacy efforts to advance priority projects for Eastern Ontario and dialogue with the federal government on issues of interest.

Co-hosted by both EOWC Chair Andy Letham and Glengarry-Prescott-Russell MP Francis Drouin, this meeting is an annual gathering of Federal MPs and the heads of Council from across the region. Members of the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus, representing the region's large cities, were also present to advocate alongside the EOWC and EORN.

"On behalf of the EOWC and its partners, I would like to thank our Federal MPs for their presence and interest in our region's growth and development," stated Chair Letham. "Most of all, we recognize their ongoing commitment to the EOWC's number-one priority, being the improvement and expansion of the cellular and mobile broadband networks in Eastern Ontario, and we look forward to achieving this goal together in the coming year."

The EOWC also used the opportunity to welcome the federal government's financial commitment to local government in Canada's 2019 Budget, released last month. The budget consisted of a much-needed increase in funding for rural municipal priorities that align with the EOWC, including affordable housing, rural broadband, energy efficiency and infrastructure investment. Among them:

- A one-time \$2.2 billion top-up to the Federal Gas Tax Fund that doubles funding to municipal governments this year;
- A \$2.7-billion investment for rural and northern broadband expansion, with the objective of connecting all Canadians to high-speed internet by 2030;
- An additional \$1 billion to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to help municipalities invest in energy efficiency, including \$350 million for grants and loans for large public buildings, and \$300 million to improve energy efficiency within sustainable affordable housing.
- Funding initiatives to help increase housing affordability, including the expansion of the Rental Housing Construction Finance Incentive to provide low interest loans for affordable rental construction projects.

For more information, please visit www.eowc.org.

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