September 25, 2009

His Worship
Mayor Fred Eisenberger
City of Hamilton
77 James Street North
Suite 230
Hamilton ON L8R 2K3

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Thank you for your letters of August 5 and 14, 2009, requesting me to consider declaring all areas of the City of Hamilton that were affected by the July 26, 2009 storm event as a disaster area for the purposes of the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP).

I am encouraged by the City’s program to offer residents a compassionate grant of $1,000 to assist with flood damages, including a separate grant of $5,000 to eligible residents that have been denied sewer-backup insurance. I also commend the City for its efforts to educate and encourage the public to take measures to protect their own property and Council’s active consideration of a backflow-preventer subsidy plan.

It is my understanding that much of the area has been subject to several floods since 2005, which appears to be a systemic problem that the City is trying to address through appropriate infrastructure remedies and public education. The City has received provincial grants to fund priority municipal projects and/or allow the City to divert other municipal resources to consider appropriate flood-mitigation measures.

It is important to consider the purposes of ODRAP. The program provides assistance when damages as a result of a natural disaster are so extensive that they exceed the financial resources of the affected individuals, the municipality and the community at large.

After careful consideration of the information provided in the Municipal Damage Report and supporting documentation, the circumstances surrounding the flooding of July 26, 2009 do not fit the eligibility criteria of the ODRAP program. The Ministry has determined that there is no evidence of uninsured claims of such a magnitude, as most claims resulting from the storm event are covered by property insurance.
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Therefore, I have decided that it would not be appropriate to declare the areas affected by the storm as a disaster area for the purposes of ODRAp.

The City's on-going efforts to correct the infrastructure deficit and recent supporting grant monies should help mitigate future impacts from flooding.

Thank you for your prompt response and assistance to Hamilton residents following this storm event. As always, my ministry will continue to be available to work with the City.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Watson, MPP
Minister

c: The Honourable Ted McMeekin, MPP, Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale
Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis, MPP, Hamilton Mountain