Dear Ms. Pat Vanini, Regional Planning Commissioners, and Municipal Clerks/CAOs:

RE: Integration of Planning and Environmental Requirements for Infrastructure Projects

Through Ontario’s Business Sector Strategy, under the Open for Business initiative, the Ontario Government has committed to work with the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), municipalities, practitioners and interested parties to implement a more effective process for infrastructure projects.

We have set out commitments to integrate planning and environmental requirements for infrastructure projects. By establishing an open and collaborative relationship between government and key business stakeholders, we will clarify, enhance, facilitate and promote the use of the integration provision in the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Class Environmental Assessment (EA) and provide education and outreach support.

My colleague, the Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and I support the use of the existing integration process for the planning of infrastructure projects as an effective tool for businesses and municipalities while maintaining a high level of environmental protection. Under the MEA Class EA, proponents carrying out a municipal project are able to take advantage of an integration provision that allows the relevant assessment work conducted during planning processes to be considered during an environmental assessment. By combining environmental assessment and land use planning requirements into a single process, proponents can streamline their efforts and more effectively meet the requirements of both the Planning Act and Environmental Assessment Act.

Further, the Ontario Government is enhancing this integration provision to update, clarify and provide a more effective tool for proponents to use when planning municipal projects. The enhanced, integrated process would recognize the inter-relationships among economic, environmental and social factors that are currently considered through existing planning processes. The Government of Ontario promotes the use of integrated land use planning and environmental assessment to develop strong communities, a clean healthy environment and a strong economy.

Sincerely,

John Gerrretsen
Minister