NEWS RELEASE

WHITBY, ON - January 19, 2007 - In a unanimous vote at the GTA Mayors and Regional Chairs Meeting held on January 19, hosted by the Regional Municipality of Durham, a resolution was endorsed requesting the Attorney General take urgent action to resolve the chronic and increasing shortage of Justices of the Peace.

The Mayors and Regional Chairs also unanimously agreed to forward the issue to a lengthy list of contacts, including: the Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Community Safety, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Municipal Section of the Ontario Bar Association, Chief Justice Lennox, and Justice Ebbs, Ontario Court of Justice, Municipal Court Managers' Association, Prosecutors' Association of Ontario, and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

"Fair access to justice is a very serious issue," said Chairman of Durham Region and GTA Mayors Co-Chair, Roger Anderson. "The province must fulfill its commitment, as a partner, in the delivery of court services. Municipalities have done their part in providing the facilities and administration, but for the justice system to function effectively, it is critical that the province immediately appoint the necessary number of JPs."
Following detailed discussions, the group also agreed to develop a strategy directed at the provincial and federal governments, with regard to major funding imbalances affecting municipalities.

"Ultimately, we need provincial and federal action to ensure that municipal governments have the revenue to carry out the responsibilities assigned to us," continued Anderson. "Before the next election, municipal property taxpayers need to be aware of the effect that the fiscal imbalance has on their property taxes."

- 30 -

For further information contact:

Chairman of Durham Region and GTAH Co-Chair, Roger Anderson
416-464-0643
Resolution for Endorsement by the GTAH Mayors and Chairs Group

Whereas all the GTA Provincial Offences Courts are suffering chronic and increasing backlogs of cases due to the shortage of Justices of the Peace and the consequent cancellation of scheduled court days;

Whereas municipally funded court facilities are sitting empty due to the shortage of Justices of the Peace and therefore not generating revenue from fines

Whereas thousands of POA cases are being withdrawn and thousands of others in jeopardy due to unseemly delays in prosecution

Whereas Bill 14 has been passed allowing the Province to immediately appoint additional Justices of the Peace (JPs),

Whereas the delivery of POA justice services is partnership between the municipalities and the Province and the Province is currently not living up to its obligations as a partner,

And whereas only the Province can resolve this shortage and restore public confidence in the justice system by appointing a significant number of new JPs,

Therefore be it resolved that the GTAH Mayors and Chairs request that:

1) the Attorney General immediately appoint sufficient Justices of the Peace to resolve the shortage
2) The Attorney General work with Ontario's Minister of Finance to identify new resources to address the Justice of the Peace shortage in the upcoming 2007/08 Provincial Budget
3) the Province begin appointing and assigning new per diem JP's in all GTA regions immediately to serve until full-time justices can be appointed and assigned
4) The Attorney General develop a replacement strategy for future JP retirements so that further shortages do not occur; and
5) The Province immediately establish a Review Committee for purposes of dispute resolution in accordance with the MOU governing the POA court function;

And that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, the Attorney General, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Community Safety, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Municipal Section of the Ontario Bar Association, Chief Justice Lennox, and Justice Ebbs, Ontario Court of Justice, Municipal Court Managers' Association, Prosecutors' Association of Ontario, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police