

Mr. Joseph P. Pennachetti
City Manager
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mr. Pennachetti:

Thank you for your letter of August 6th to Deputy Minister William Forward regarding the July 8th storm event in the City of Toronto.

I understand that on August 14, 2013, staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Infrastructure met with staff from the City of Toronto and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority to further understand the impact the rainstorm had on both the City's residents and public infrastructure. At that time, City staff requested additional information about the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP), which I am pleased to provide.

The Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP) is designed to provide disaster assistance in response to unforeseen natural disasters where the damage to private property or municipal infrastructure is so extensive that the cost of recovery exceeds the financial capacity of the affected individuals, municipality and community.

ODRAP contains two components. The first is a public component which provides financial assistance to municipalities for extraordinary response and recovery costs when a disaster is beyond their financial capacity to manage. The second is a private component which provides assistance to meet the essential needs of individuals, homeowners, farmers, small business enterprises and non-profit organizations affected by a natural disaster.

In order to access ODRAP funding, municipalities must submit a council approved resolution to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting the declaration of a disaster area. The request must be submitted within 14 working days of the disaster and should include information on preliminary estimates of damage. Following the receipt of the resolution and municipal disaster information report, the Minister may declare a disaster area for the purposes of ODRAP.

Consideration will be given to whether the damage was a result of an unforeseeable natural disaster or other factors that could have been planned for or mitigated.

To be considered for the public component of ODRAP, it must be demonstrated that the disaster is beyond the financial capacity of the municipality to manage the damage. The following examples demonstrate recent decisions on ODRAP:

- In 2011, a tornado hit the Town of Goderich, resulting in about \$2.5 million in emergency response costs and damage to municipal property. Goderich's own-purpose taxation revenue was \$6.52 million, so the cost of the tornado represented 38% of Goderich's annual taxation revenue. The Minister determined that ODRAP funding was necessary because the impact of the tornado was beyond Goderich's financial capacity to manage without provincial assistance.
- In 2009, the City of Hamilton experienced a rainstorm that resulted in damage to public and private property. The damaged municipal infrastructure included roads, bridges, water, waste water and sewer infrastructure, culverts and the Red Hill Parkway with a cost of repair estimated at \$12.4 million. Hamilton's own-purpose taxation revenue was approximately \$504 million, so the cost of the storm represented less than 2.5% of Hamilton's annual taxation revenue. In this circumstance, the Minister declined to declare a disaster for the purposes of ODRAP as it was considered that the municipality had the capacity to manage the impact of the storm.

If a municipality is approved for the private component of ODRAP, there is a requirement for local fund-raising and ongoing municipal involvement. Council must appoint a volunteer Disaster Relief Committee (DRC) which is responsible for both fundraising and claims decisions. Locally raised funds are then matched by a provincial contribution of up to 2:1 to meet 90% of eligible claims. Depending on the severity of the disaster, the disaster relief committee may operate for a period of several months or a year or more, in order to receive and settle all claims.

Aside from information on ODRAP, your letter also asked for assistance from our Ministry regarding other relevant program areas that could address damage to public and private property as a result of the July 8th storm.

We have investigated your request further. In addition to existing programs such as the Water Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) program administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario government continues to pursue discussions with the federal government on a long term infrastructure program that will assist municipalities including Toronto in addressing infrastructure needs.

As well, I have recently been apprised of a possible National Disaster Mitigation Program being developed by the federal government. Ontario will participate in consultations on the proposed program in fall 2013. In light of the serious impacts of storms such as the one that affected Toronto on July 8th, Ontario has identified storm water management as a key interest to bring forward in this consultation. When details of the consultation are released, Ministry staff will engage further with City staff to represent our shared interest.

I commend everyone for the cooperation and assistance shown in the aftermath of this event. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact David Sit, Director in the Central Region Municipal Services Office, by telephone at 416-585-6583 or by email at david.sit@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Laurie LeBlanc". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Laurie LeBlanc
Deputy Minister