



**Councillor Paul Ainslie**  
Toronto City Council  
Scarborough East - Ward 43  
  
Chair, Government Management Committee

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Date: May 30, 2016

To: Mayor John Tory and Executive Committee Members

Re: E-Petitions for City of Toronto

**Recommendation:**

**That the City Clerk report to the Executive Committee on December 1, 2016 on the merits of adopting an e-petition system similar to those implemented by the House of Commons, UK government and other jurisdictions, such report to include:**

- a. the resources required to implement such a program;**
- b. the procedural by-law amendments necessary to incorporate petitions into the City's decision making process.**

In an effort to encourage community engagement it would be prudent for the City of Toronto to begin the process of making available e-petitions on the City website. Petitions have represented an important method for citizens to make their opinion known to their elected officials. The current system of hand signed submissions still have value introducing e-petitions will reach a broader number of citizens who want to be engaged but not able to physically sign a petition due to a number of restrictions.

The House of Commons launched an e-petition system in December 2015. The system is easy to use, properly vetted and follows strict protocols. In order to have a petition placed on the government's website one must first submit it to the Procedural Clerk to ensure the integrity of the petition is proper, submit citizen support and seek a Member of Parliament to sponsor the petition. With this accomplished the work to post the e-petition begins.

As our society moves to become more accessible through technology it is a natural step for the City of Toronto to begin the work in offering e-petitions. The Province of Ontario's Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly report on e-petitions made recommendations to this effect at their February 18, 2016 meeting. The report stated:

*"Ottawa's e-petitions website could serve as a useful template. It currently lists 30 petitions that people can "sign," ranging from a call to make Remembrance Day a national holiday to banning the sale of dog and cat pelts. Petitioners are required to give their name and address, attest to Canadian citizenship and enter a security code. .... There's no reason this system couldn't readily be adopted at Queen's Park without yet more study, discussion*

*and delay. Unfortunately, launching an official petition to make that happen still requires collecting signatures the old-fashioned way – on paper."*

I encourage you to view the House of Commons e-petition website cited below. It is a clear indication of how the City can further engage it's citizens by providing e-petitions to collect data City issues.

Sincerely,

Councillor Paul Ainslie  
City of Toronto  
Scarborough East Ward 43



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**Province of Ontario**

[http://www.ontla.on.ca/committee-proceedings/committee-reports/files\\_pdf/SCLA%20E-petitions%20Report%20-%20Final%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.ontla.on.ca/committee-proceedings/committee-reports/files_pdf/SCLA%20E-petitions%20Report%20-%20Final%20(English).pdf)

**Federal Government E-Petition Website**

<https://petitions.parl.gc.ca/en/Home/Index>

**In the Media**

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2016/02/18/queens-park-shouldnt-waste-more-time-pondering-e-petitions-editorial.html>