



The Honourable Bill Walker, Minister of Government and Consumer Services
Office of the Minister of Government and Consumer Services
Mowat Block 6th Floor, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

December 13, 2018

Re: Accelerating Sales of Surplus Public Property

Dear Minister Walker:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), I am writing to express how the nonprofit sector will be negatively affected by the recent changes to the Ontario Realty Directive to accelerate the sale of surplus public properties.

The sector's large economic and social impact means any negative impacts warrant careful consideration before implementation. The sector is a major player in Ontario's economy, generating over \$50 billion in economic impact. Over 58,000 nonprofits provide services that meet the needs of families and communities across the province. As part of the Ontario Realty Directive, government ministries and eligible nonprofits have access to surplus properties for public use. Nonprofits access those properties through the Nonprofit Lands Registry. We administer the registry, at no cost to the government under an MOU with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario.

We were surprised to learn that, as part of accelerating the sale of surplus public properties, the circulation period of properties would be reduced from 180 days to 30. The 180-day window was developed to provide organizations time to identify interest and undertake purchasing at a pace that was consistent with their capacity. The government had already streamlined the process by offering the land simultaneously to all designated groups at the same time for a 180-day window.

A 30-day timeline is very difficult and in some cases, impossible for nonprofits to meet. Nonprofits have Boards of Directors who need to be involved. Donors need to be involved. Other community groups may also be involved if it is to be a shared space. Financing is also more complicated to arrange for nonprofits since financial institutions are not always familiar with their business models. This is all in addition to evaluating and assessing the property. Even if much preparation work has been done, until the property is identified as for sale, these stakeholders cannot be lined up within a short window. For most nonprofit organizations, purchasing a property is a rare occurrence and a very big financial commitment.

We are keen to work together with you and our staff to restore the 180-day window. By offering the flexibility of a 180-day window, the Ontario Government can ensure that nonprofits can take advantage of the registry. Securing property is an important way nonprofits can increase financial sustainability – a goal we can all support. We ask that you give this request careful consideration.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how best to move forward together to ensure that eligible nonprofits can maintain this flexibility to support their communities and explore how we can work together to make sure the Ontario Realty Directive is implemented in a way that allows the Ontario Government to deliver on its business and social objectives for the people of Ontario.

We look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cathy" being more prominent than the last name "Taylor".

Cathy Taylor
Executive Director

cc:

The Honourable Monte McNaughton, Minister of Infrastructure

Mr. Ehren Cory, President and CEO of Infrastructure Ontario

Mr. Dominic Roszak, Director of Stakeholder Relations, Office of the Minister of Government and Consumer Services

Mr. Kevin French, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services