



CAMA's Positioning on Strong Mayor Legislation & the Role of the Chief Administrative Officer

Fredericton, NB (March 23, 2023) - In July 2022, Ontario Premier Doug Ford announced the intention to provide heads of Council in Toronto and Ottawa with "Strong Mayor" powers such as the ability to veto Council decisions, prepare the budget, enact legislation with less than majority of Council support, and appoint and remove high-ranking staff members including the CAO. This legislation provides new authorities to the Mayors of Toronto and Ottawa, and the Premier indicated it could be extended to other Cities. While the CAO position may be maintained under Strong Mayor Legislation, the staff organization now effectively reports to the Mayor, rather than to the CAO and Council.

Recognizing the importance of the role and significance of the Chief Administrative Officer position in Canadian Municipal Government, CAMA prepared a **"White Paper" on Ontario's Strong Mayor Legislation and the Pivotal Role of the CAO in Providing Good Governance.**

"This document highlights how the role of the CAO will be impacted by this legislation, and as a national, non-profit Association that offers a professional network for all CAOs and their direct reports, CAMA believes protecting a strong CAO role can ensure good governance principles are upheld in municipal government." said Bev Hendry, CAMA President and CAO for the Township of West Lincoln, ON. "We believe the rules surrounding municipal decision making and senior managerial appointments should give the public confidence in the professional administration of government services."

This resource reinforces the benefits of an apolitical public service led by an effective CAO and communicates a major impact of Strong Mayor Power. If the Strong Mayor Legislation is applied to other municipalities across Canada, it erodes one of the tenets of municipal good governance: an objective, professional, non-political public service led by a Chief Administrative Officer or City Manager.

CAMA will continue to advocate for municipal good governance and for the position of CAO as a "key pillar" in that construct. CAOs should encourage municipal Councils and Mayors to appoint CAOs with the requisite credentials and clear understanding of the proper role. Efforts should be made to craft and codify foundational principles that reinforce the three 'legs' of the CAO-Council-Mayor relationship, in every municipality.

Above all, CAOs should take pride in a position that enables them to use their professional experience and qualifications to better their communities as part of hard-won and celebrated tradition of municipal good governance and local democracy.

This paper has also been shared with the Provincial/Territorial Administrator Associations, the Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers of the Local Governance and Municipal Affairs Departments across Canada, relevant Think Tanks, and other interested parties. It is to be used as a reference point for researchers and writers who are addressing Strong Mayor Legislation in policies, journals, and opinion papers on municipal reform.

You can access the full paper [here](#). CAMA hopes that this paper will become a valuable resource to support our members, their staff, and their Councils.

About CAMA:

The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) is a national, non-profit association open to all Chief Administrative Officers / City Managers and any person employed in a senior management position that reports directly to a CAO. With a membership of almost 700 senior municipal employees, from all parts of Canada, CAMA collectively represents more than 85% of the nation's population. www.camacam.ca

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