Introduction

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) works to represent municipal interest so that municipalities, people and families can live, thrive and prosper in the communities they call home. To that end, AMO supports strong and effective municipal government in Ontario. It promotes the value of the municipal level of government as a vital and essential component of Ontario and Canada's political system.

AMO will focus remarks on the Navigation Protection Act and the Impact Assessment Act. While municipal governments in Ontario welcome environmental protections, the measures must be reasonable. In other words, where landscapes have already been subject to infrastructure projects or where the risks are low, protection measures should reflect this situation.

The proposed Bill C-69 touches on matters that may negatively impact municipal effectiveness and add administrative burden, if not amended, to address small scale, lower impact municipal work. These impacts have real costs in terms of lengthening repair or development timelines, creating additional work requirements with very little environmental benefit.

Navigation Protection Act

The Government of Canada should amend the Canadian *Navigable Waters Act* to explicitly state that the prohibition in section 3 and the obligations in sections 5 and 10 do not apply if there would be no interference with navigation.

The legislation would benefit from the addition of definitions to clarify what constitutes major and what constitutes minor works. Further, clarity around what constitutes the interference is also needed. Providing consultation on these definitions would assist the Federal Government in creating a workable system.

The Government of Canada should amendment the Act to limit federal review of small-scale projects and if this is not possible, sufficient staffing resources need to be available to provide approvals in a timely way to avoid any delays. As well, timelines for approvals should be added such that the process is transparent and predictable.

The proposed requirements for identifying which bodies of water and projects require approvals is complex. This may either lead to asking for approvals where none are needed or raises the potential for violations. Again, greater clarity is required to avoid an increase of administrative burden, engineering costs or pre-planning delays. Deeper consultation with municipal governments would help bring about a shared understanding and accurate application of the Act.

Finally, the list of criteria in section 10.4 of the Canadian *Navigable Waters Act* should be broadened to include social disruption or a breakdown in the flow of essential goods, services, or resources in order to adequately acknowledge the hardship and complexity created by damaged infrastructure in an emergency.
Impact Assessment Act

AMO supports the “one-project, one review” objective embedded in Bill C-69. Municipal governments have the most comprehensive understanding of local conditions and the impact of large-scale projects on the local environment, economy, and health of citizens. We welcome the broadening of scope assessment to include economic, social and health impacts, both positive and negative, on local communities. Furthermore, citizens in Ontario expect that there will be an open and transparent process where municipal governments are consulted on large-scale projects that fall under the Impact Assessment Act. To that end, the Act should identify municipal governments as a ‘jurisdiction’ and require comments from the local municipalities impacted by the project as part of the decision panels review materials.

Timeliness is also important in this process. The Impact Assessment Act and processes must be balanced to ensure worthy projects proceed in a timely manner so municipal projects, investments, grant funds are successfully deployed. It would be beneficial to better define ‘designated project’ to add transparency and predictability to the implementing the Act.

Summary

Municipal governments need to be better integrated into these pieces of legislation. As governments we are both a key source of local, factual information and undertake infrastructure projects. To not involve municipal governments meaningfully will invite delay, confusion, extra costs and public concerns. We trust our recommended refinements will result in a stronger system overall which effectively provides for projects to proceed in an environmentally responsible manner.