

NOTICE OF MOTION

SUBMITTED BY: Mayor Frank Campion

SUBMISSION DATE: November 1, 2024

Whereas, Welland along with other Ontario cities are left to manage issues of encampments, homelessness, mental health and addiction without adequate resources and support, despite mental health care, addiction treatment, and housing being provincial responsibilities.

Whereas, all levels of government must collaborate and take immediate action to address the homelessness and mental health crisis affecting our communities.

Whereas, effective programs exist, but require the cooperation of all levels of government, municipalities, and community partners.

Whereas the City of Welland recognizes the province's leadership in considering all tools available to assist municipalities in managing this crisis. However, existing legal parameters often hinder Welland's ability to effectively enforce the standards and safety protocols necessary to address unauthorized encampments

Whereas, residents and businesses are impacted, and there is a need for people to feel safe in downtowns and public spaces.

Whereas by invoking the notwithstanding clause, the City of Welland would be better equipped to manage these challenges; and

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND formally requests the Province of Ontario to invoke the notwithstanding clause in Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to empower Welland to enact temporary bylaws that prioritize the health and safety of all residents while ensuring responsible and dignified support for those experiencing homelessness; and

THAT City of Welland is also working with the Region of Niagara to expand the shelter system, including a new shelter in Welland by the end of this year. While housing of all types remains a priority, the issue of encampments, including mental health and addiction in public spaces, has become significant; and

THAT the City of Welland is committed to collaborating with the provincial government to address the root causes of homelessness, balancing compassion with the need for public safety and city integrity; and

THAT I, Frank Campion, Mayor for the City of Welland, request Council to support the request to the Province of Ontario to invoke the notwithstanding clause in Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.