



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

Briefing/Speaking Note

Improving the EODF

ROMA/OGRA 2009

Issue

The four year \$80 million dollar Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF) is recognized by the EOWC is a key program and an important statement of the Province's support for Eastern Ontario. This kind of direct, targeted investment has been one of our priorities for many years and we applaud you for it.

The EODF is making a valuable contribution to the growth of our regional economy as illustrated by the recent announcements of the successful applicants.

However members of the EOWC have been receiving two concerns about the Fund. The first relates to the minimum requirement for the creation of 10 net new jobs before a business is eligible to apply for assistance. Secondly, municipal governments who are responsible for economic development in many cases and are employers in their own right, are excluded from any access to the Fund. Both of these matters represent real barriers that we believe need to be removed.

In the case of the 10 job minimum, it may seem a small number if you live in an urban community, but for many of our municipalities the possibility of creating 3, 4, or 5 new jobs would be significant boost to our local situations. We believe that setting a lower limit will do as much for us as 10 new jobs does for an urban community.

Action Requested

The EOWC respectfully asks Minister Bryant to review the eligibility requirements for the 10 and lower jobs created to a more appropriate benchmark. Alternatively, the Minister could consider setting aside a certain portion of the Fund for businesses that create fewer than the net 10 new jobs.

In the case of municipal eligibility we would ask that the Minister consider the establishment of a staff to staff team to examine options for development project criteria related to community capacity building initiatives.