



Wardens congratulate Province for paying its 2003-2004 debts but are concerned about the new funding model

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For immediate release

PEMBROKE, Ont., - Robert Sweet, Warden of Renfrew County and Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) responded in a media release today to the Province's municipal funding announcement made yesterday.

"The 13 members of the EOWC congratulate the Provincial Government for its decision to pay its outstanding bills that they owed municipalities for 2003 and 2004. We have demanded this exact action over these past few months," said Sweet.

"We are concerned however, about important omissions in the proposed new funding model. In our early review undertaken over the past 24 hours, we note that there is no recognition of the spiraling costs of land ambulance, or the funding pressures beyond the 2002 costs that Counties face for their thousands of social housing units nor any support for our decaying roads and bridges in the new arrangement," stated Sweet.

"For 2005 yesterday's announcement is good news but in the longer term it appears that most property taxpayers in Ontario will experience a continuing transfer of provincial program costs to them, particularly since Counties don't qualify for many parts of the new grant program," added Sweet.

"The EOWC will be meeting on April 22, 2005 and we will receive a detailed assessment of the new grant program from our senior officials and I expect that if improvements are needed to it we will once again engage the Province, as in the past, to make the changes," said Sweet.

"Ensuring that the Province paid the outstanding bills was both a matter of principle and of course an important financial issue for us," added Warden Sweet. "I want to also acknowledge the hard work that Minister Gerretsen and our local MPP(s) have done, and we will no doubt call for their assistance again as we look to make improvements to this new grant program."

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus consists of 13 upper and single tier municipalities from the City of Kawartha Lakes and Northumberland County in the west to Renfrew and Prescott and Russell County in the east.

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