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For Immediate Release

Eastern Ontario concerns find audience on Parliament Hill

Ottawa: Members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) traveled to Ottawa yesterday to discuss key concerns with Government M.P.s from across the region.

"We were invited to Parliament Hill by Daryl Kramp, Chair of the Government's Eastern Ontario caucus to have a frank and open exchange of ideas related to the issues and challenges facing our property taxpayers," said Doug Struthers, Chair of the Warden's Caucus and Warden of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

"My colleagues and I always welcome the input of our municipal partners," said Kramp. "Today's session was very informative and we assured the Wardens' that we will take their concerns and ideas to cabinet so that we can get real results for Eastern Ontario," added Kramp.

"During our meeting we highlighted four (4) key priorities that the EOWC believes needs the Federal Government's attention," stated Struthers.

- Financial investment in the building of a high-speed internet system for individuals and businesses located throughout Eastern Ontario;
- A commitment by the Government to extend the current sharing of federal gas tax revenues with municipalities beyond the 2010 fiscal year;
- Providing permanent, annual funding for economic development initiatives through the Eastern Ontario Development Program;
- Removing the Fiscal Imbalance with the Province to ensure Ontario deals with the unsustainable pressures on property taxpayers.

"We were impressed with the level of detail provided by the Wardens' in each of their priority areas. It was clear that they have done their homework on these matters," said Kramp.

Kramp pointed to the \$10 million Eastern Ontario Development Program (EODP) as proof of the success he and his colleagues have had in delivering results for the region. "At the urging of the Wardens' and others I and the members of Parliament who represent the East region undertook a vigorous campaign to secure this funding, despite the fact that the money had not been allocated in the last Budget. We knew how important these funds were to our municipal partners and were pleased to see it flow throughout the region during this past year," said Kramp.

"Anytime that we are able to secure an opportunity like this to talk directly to an important group of M.P.s like the Eastern Ontario Government Caucus it is essential that we make the best use of their time and I think we made some important progress yesterday," noted Warden Struthers

"We appreciated the efforts of Mr. Kramp to arrange our meeting and look forward to opportunities in the future to bring our concerns and our ideas back to Ottawa," concluded Struthers.

The EOWC represents the one million property taxpayers in the 13 counties and single tier municipalities stretching from the City of Kawartha Lakes in the west to the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry in the east.

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For More Information Contact:

Doug Struthers, Chair EOWC
(613) 342-3840

Or

Daryl Kramp, M.P. Prince Edward-Hastings
(613) 992-5321