

# Staff Report

Presented By: Dawn Mittelholtz, Manager, Legislative Services/Clerk  
Meeting Date: August 11, 2025  
Subject: Bill 9, Municipal Accountability Act Resubmission of Comments  
Attachment(s): None

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## **Recommendation**

That Council endorse the comments in this report and forward them to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for inclusion in the consultation; and

That Council endorse the July 3, 2025, deputation of the AMCTO President and the July 18, 2025 written submission from the AMO President.

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## **Report Summary**

This report provides the Town of Saugeen Shores an additional opportunity to comment on Bill 9, Municipal Accountability Act, 2025 (Bill 9), by resubmitting the January 27, 2025, report to the commenting period and providing additional comments to the Province. Bill 9 proposes amendments to the Municipal Act, 2001, among other legislation, to include certain requirements for Codes of Conduct, training for Council and Local Board Members, and introduce an Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

## **Background/Analysis**

Earlier in 2025, the province opened up a commenting period for Bill 241, the Municipal Accountability Act, 2024 (Bill 241). This Bill was flowing through the usual legislative process when the provincial election was called for February 27, 2025, thus halting the progress of Bill 241.

Following the election on May 1, 2025, Bill 9 was given First Reading. Since then, Bill 9 was referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy and its current status is for Second Reading Consideration of the Bill with commenting opportunities provided. Other municipalities and municipal professional organizations, such as the Association of Municipal Manager, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario, are taking this opportunity to provide comments.

The comments endorsed by Council on [January 27, 2025](#), remain applicable to Bill 9. The recommendation is for those comments to be resubmitted along with this report to connect them with Bill 9 and convey support for the comments provided from the president of AMCTO, and the president of AMO offer some additional comments.

On July 3, Danielle Manton, AMCTO President, presented [a deputation](#) to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy. Key points from the AMCTO Advocacy Update on the deputation included:

- *The necessity of stronger ties between the code of conduct and existing legislative employment standards, other inter-related policies, and an independent mechanism to remedy inappropriate behaviours that ensure affected individuals have protection from making a complaint.*
- *Our continued call for the removal of strong mayor powers related to employment matters to foster a culture of accountability and transparency at the local level.*
- *The need for a progressive hierarchy of penalties and a wider range of sanctions to discourage poor behaviour that may not meet the threshold for removal.*
- *The lengthy two-step investigative process that requires witnesses and the complainant to be interviewed multiple times. In cases of harassment, this could be very challenging and perhaps traumatic for complainants and witnesses.*
- *The implementation challenges of removal provisions that can limit a complainant's ability to seek an appropriate remedy and continues the existing cycles of investigation.*
- *The benefit of more criteria and standards being included in foundational elements of codes to ensure a consistent framework across the province while allowing some flexibility for local cultures - recommendations we made previously in our 2021 submission.*

On July 17, Robin Jones, AMO President, submitted remarks and a written submission to the same Committee. AMO endorsed the Bill but in their [July 18, 2025 Policy Update](#) made two recommendations from their [written submission](#):

- ***AMO recommends that the removal from office vote be adjusted from unanimous to a supermajority (a vote by at least 2/3 of Council).*** *We recognize that a vote to remove an elected municipal official from office is fundamentally different than a regular council vote, but the current proposal sets too high of a threshold. Previously, AMO had advocated for the removal from office procedure to be in the hands of the judiciary. However, in recognizing that the government is interested in leaving this decision to elected municipal officials, we believe that a council supermajority vote is more appropriate.*
- ***AMO recommends that the legislation includes a progressive range of discipline options for integrity commissioners, aligned with what was established under the Education Act in 2023.*** *This would provide a standard list of penalties that could be applied apart from removal from office, including censure of a member, barring attendance at meetings, barring a member from sitting on committees, and barring a member from being chair or vice chair of committees.*

While Bill 9, the Municipal Accountability Act, 2025, has been welcomed as a step forward in codifying municipal ethics and conduct, municipalities and their representative organizations have called for refinements to ensure the legislation is practical, enforceable, and fair. It is recommended that Council resubmit the comments from the January 27, 2025, report along with this report and endorse the comments from the deputation of the AMCTO President, and the written submission from the AMO President.

### **Linkages**

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 3: Building Valued Relationships
- Business Plan Alignment: Corporate Services Business as Usual

### **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding**

No costs or revenue are associated with this report.

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