

Ministry of Finance

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March 25, 2020

Dear Municipal Treasurer / Clerk-Treasurer:

I am writing to follow up on the Minister of Finance's letter that was sent to your Head of Council today by providing you with further details on a number of property tax initiatives that were announced in *Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19 (March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update)*.

Deferral of Education Property Tax Remittance

The Province recognizes that many residents and businesses are facing challenges in making their scheduled property tax payments. We have been working closely with municipalities as they introduce measures to provide property tax relief, for example, by allowing taxpayers to defer property tax payments. In particular, we have been having discussions with members of the Property Assessment and Taxation Review Municipal Advisory Committee regarding potential measures.

In order to support and encourage municipal tax relief measures, the government announced that it is deferring the property tax payments that municipalities make to school boards by 90 days. This is consistent with requests that we have received from a number of municipalities and municipal organizations.

The Minister of Finance has announced the deferral of the upcoming quarterly (June 30) municipal remittance of education property taxes to school boards, as well as the deferral of the September 30 quarterly municipal remittance to school boards. Deferring these payments by 90 days each will provide municipalities the flexibility to, in turn, provide property tax deferrals to local residents and businesses.

To ensure this deferral does not have a financial impact on school boards, the Province will adjust payments to school boards to offset the deferral.

2021 Reassessment

The government will also be postponing the planned property tax reassessment for 2021, reflecting input that has been received from a number of municipal leaders. This will ensure that municipal governments are able to focus their attention on critical public health initiatives and other efforts to manage the local response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Postponing the reassessment will also provide stability for Ontario's property taxpayers and municipalities.

Postponing the reassessment means that property assessments for the 2021 taxation year will continue to be based on the same valuation date that was in effect for the 2020 taxation year. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) will continue to maintain the assessment roll and ensure that it is updated to reflect changes such as new construction.

As part of our ongoing consultations with municipalities and taxpayers through the Property Assessment and Taxation Review, we will be discussing potential approaches for the next reassessment. The focus will be on maintaining stability for property owners and municipalities.

Appeal Deadlines

In addition, I want to make you aware that the government has issued a regulation under the *Emergency Measures and Civil Protection Act* which suspends the application of limitation periods and related deadlines under provincial legislation for the duration of the current emergency period. As a result, the deadlines for submitting Requests for Reconsideration (RfRs) to MPAC and appeals to the Assessment Review Board (ARB) will be extended until after the emergency declaration is lifted.

Information on the deadline extension for RfRs is posted on MPAC's website. Property owners who have questions regarding how the deadline extension may apply to the circumstances of their specific RfR or appeal should contact MPAC or the ARB.

Additional Support for Municipalities

As noted in the Minister of Finance's letter to your Head of Council, as we work with our municipal partners to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the government is providing nearly \$250 million of direct support that will assist municipalities in their efforts.

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve, we will continue to work closely in partnership with municipalities to ensure stability for Ontario's property tax system.

If you have any questions related to the property tax decisions noted above, please contact Chris Broughton, Director of the Property Tax Policy Branch at Chris.Broughton@ontario.ca or 416-455-6307.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan Doheny', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Allan Doheny
Assistant Deputy Minister

c: Greg Orencsak, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Finance
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing