

 <p>WESTERN ONTARIO WOWC WARDENS CAUCUS</p>	<p>Meeting with Hon. Rob Flack Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing</p> <p>Monday, August 18, 2025 3:00 PM – 3:15 PM</p>
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Chair Amy Martin:

Minister Flack, thank you for making time for this conversation. It is always a pleasure to meet with you and we appreciate your support as both Minister and an MPP in our region.

As you know, Western Ontario is one of the fastest-growing regions across the province, and your government has supported this by bringing some major economic investments to the area over the last few years – upwards of \$40 billion and requiring 30,000+ new jobs.

This has brought about additional challenges on infrastructure, housing, workforce, and mental health – the four core priorities in the WOWC’s 2025-2027 Priorities, which we shared with you at Queen’s Park recently.

Our region’s population and housing starts are now surpassing Toronto, Hamilton, and the provincial average. This growth is positive, but it also requires new solutions, especially in rural Ontario.

And while Bill 17 has helped urban municipalities, rural municipalities face a different reality. While large municipalities can collect \$100,000+ per unit in development charges (DCs), many of our members collect little or none.

In 2022, 76 of our 117 municipalities collected DCs; this dropped to 64 municipalities in 2023, accounting for just over half. Furthermore, the average DC collected in 2023 for a single-detached home was \$9,979 – significantly less than the amounts collected in nearby urban areas.

Without DC reserves, rural municipalities struggle to fund essential infrastructure like water and roads, which limits our ability to support housing growth and attract workers.

Our request today is simple, practical, and would strengthen municipal sustainability without costing the Province a dollar.

We’re asking the Province to authorize municipalities to withhold occupancy permits until development charges are paid in full. Right now, developers can

reach occupancy before paying, leaving municipalities on the hook for services like water, fire, and roads without the funds to cover the costs.

By requiring DC payment prior to occupancy, we ensure a straightforward principle: Growth pays for growth – before the keys are handed over. This wouldn't introduce new charges, just ensure compliance with existing rules.

Vice-Chair Kevin Marriott:

For many of our members, this would be the single most impactful legislative fix to help them stay financially sustainable while supporting housing growth.

We see this as low complexity, no cost, and high return – a true win-win.

Minister, we're here not just with challenges, but with solutions. We're not asking for more regulation; we're asking for smarter tools. We can better protect our investments, support infrastructure, and contribute meaningfully to your housing targets.

Minister, would the government support requiring DCs be paid prior to an occupancy permit being issued?

(pause for discussion)

Chair Amy Martin:

Although this is our core request, we'd like to offer a few other suggestions to further help rural Ontario:

- **Rural Infrastructure Support Fund**
A dedicated fund to help small municipalities bridge the infrastructure gap, particularly when DCs are limited.
- **Rural DC Advisory Committee**
A mechanism within MMAH to ensure rural voices are part of housing policy development.

We look forward to working with your team to move these ideas forward, and we appreciate your leadership in helping us unlock growth in rural Ontario.