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News Release: The EOWC Strengthens Ties with Federal Leaders During Parliament Hill Advocacy Day



Left-to-right: Martin Lang, Warden, United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry; Yves Laviolette, Warden, United Counties of Prescott and Russell; Eric Duncan, Member of Parliament, Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry; Bob Mullin, Warden, County of Hastings; Chris Malette, Member of Parliament, Bay of Quinte; Steve Ferguson, Vice-Chair, EOWC (Mayor of Prince Edward County); Bonnie Clark, Chair, EOWC (Warden of Peterborough County); Toby Randell, Warden, County of Lanark; Corinna Smith-Gatcke, Warden, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville; Scott Reid, Member of Parliament, Lanark – Frontenac; Nathan Townend, Warden, County of Lennox and Addington; Peter Emon, Warden, County of Renfrew; Brian Ostrander, Warden, Northumberland County.

Ottawa, ON – On October 21, the [Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#) (EOWC) met in Ottawa for its Parliament Hill Advocacy Day, meeting with federal officials and Members of Parliament to discuss urgent priorities impacting our 103 small urban and rural eastern Ontario communities.

Representing 1.1 million residents, or 1 in 40 Canadians, the EOWC used the opportunity to build relationships with Prime Minister Carney's new government, regional Members of Parliament, and the official opposition, to progress priorities, including that the Federal Government:

- [Unlock trade and housing-enabling infrastructure](#) to build Canada's economic resilience
- [Invest in eastern Ontario ports to expand national and global trade](#)
- Ensure the new [Build Canada Homes program includes rural and small urban municipalities at the forefront](#)
- Modernize federal coordination and remove barriers to support [the advancement of paramedic services](#)

"Eastern Ontario is facing real challenges, but also tremendous opportunities," stated **Bonnie Clark, Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus** and Warden of Peterborough County. "Our meetings on Parliament Hill were about making sure the government knows that the EOWC and our municipalities are partners they can count on to deliver on national goals in our local communities. Our communities are *ready to work, ready to grow, and ready to partner* with the federal government to deliver results for the people we serve."

The advocacy day started with a breakfast reception featuring remarks from **Chris Malette, Member of Parliament for the Bay of Quinte**, and **Eric Duncan, Member of Parliament for Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry** (and former Chair of the EOWC). Their insights highlighted the importance of continued federal support for rural priorities.

Building on that message, EOWC leaders participated in 15 meetings, presenting data and recommendations to strengthen eastern Ontario's economy, enhance service delivery, and support Canada's efforts to remain competitive on the global stage.

The EOWC was honoured to meet with Zachary Nixon from the Ontario Desk in the Prime Minister's Office, as well as the following federal representatives:

- Pauline Rochefort, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Rural Development)
- Jennifer McKelvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure

- Mike Kelloway, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade
- Chris Malette, Member of Parliament for Bay of Quinte
- Staff from the offices of Buckley Belanger, Secretary of State (Rural Development), and Karina Gould, Chair of the Standing Committee of Finance.

The EOWC also engaged with members of the official opposition, including staff from Pierre Poilievre's office, and:

- Richard Bragdon, Shadow Minister for Rural Development
- Larry Brock, Shadow Minister for Justice and Attorney General of Canada
- Scott Aitchison, Shadow Minister for Housing and Infrastructure
- Jamie Schmale, Member of Parliament for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes
- Shelby Kramp-Neuman, Member of Parliament for Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga

The EOWC remains committed to working collaboratively with all levels of government to ensure the long-term prosperity, sustainability, and well-being of eastern Ontario's small urban and rural communities.



Left-to-right: Connor Corey, CAO, County of Hastings; Bonnie Clark, Chair, EOWC (Warden of Peterborough County); Meredith Staveley-Watson, Director of Government Relations and Policy, EOWC; Zachary Nixon, Ontario Desk, Prime Minister's Office; Sheridan Graham, Secretary-Treasurer, EOWC; Steve Ferguson, Vice-Chair,



Left-to-right: Toby Randell, Warden, County of Lanark; Corinna Smith-Gatcke, Warden, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville; Pauline Rochefort, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State, Rural Development; Yves Laviolette, Warden, United Counties of Prescott and Russell; Nathan Townend, Warden, County of Lennox and Addington.

EOWC (Mayor of County of Prince Edward).



Left-to-right: Stephane Parisien, CAO, United Counties of Prescott and Russell; Yves Lavoie, Warden, United Counties of Prescott and Russell; Larry Brock, Shadow Minister, Justice and Attorney General; Jessica Uitvlugt, Administration and Communications Coordinator, EOWC.



Left-to-right: Connor Dorey, CAO, County of Hastings; Bob Mullin, Warden, County of Hastings; Jennifer McKelvie, Parliamentary Secretary, Housing and Infrastructure; Bonnie Clark, Chair, EOWC (Warden of Peterborough County); Sheridan Graham, Secretary-Treasurer, EOWC.



Left-to-right: Bonnie Clark, Chair, EOWC; Scott Aitchison, Shadow Minister, Housing; Toby



Left-to-right: Bob Mullin, Warden, County of Hastings; Shelby Kramp-Neuman, Member of Parliament, Hastings—Lennox and Addington—

Randell, Warden, County of Lanark.

Tyendinaga; Nathan Townend, Warden, County of Lennox and Addington; Meredith Staveley-Watson, Director of Government Relations and Policy; Connor Dorey, CAO, County of Hastings.

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About the EOWC

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC Inc.) is a non-profit organization representing 103 small-urban and rural municipalities across Eastern Ontario. Spanning 50,000 square kilometres and serving over 1.1 million residents, the EOWC has been a united regional voice for more than 20 years.

It advocates for municipal priorities and collaborates with all orders of government, businesses, non-profits, Indigenous leaders, the media, and the public to drive positive change for Eastern Ontario.

Visit the EOWC's website at eowc.org.

Connect with the EOWC

2025 Chair, Warden of Peterborough County, Bonnie Clark

2025 Vice-Chair, Mayor of Prince Edward County, Steve Ferguson

Director of Government Relations and Policy, Meredith Staveley-Watson

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