



Township of North Kawartha
280 Burleigh Street, PO Box 550, Apsley, ON K0L 1A0
Tel: 705-656-4445 | 1-800-755-6931 | Fax: 705-656-4446
www.northkawartha.ca

Report to Council

To: Mayor and Council Members
From: Jason Post, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Date: March 19, 2026
Subject: Protection for Municipal Public Works Workers and Contractors

Recommendation:

That Council passes this Notice of Motion provided by the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS).

Notice of Motion Protection for Municipal Public Works Workers and Contractors

Whereas municipal public works employees and contracted service providers are responsible for maintaining critical infrastructure including roads, sidewalks, bridges, drainage systems, and winter maintenance operations that are essential to public safety and emergency response; and

Whereas during significant weather events and emergencies, these workers act as frontline responders, ensuring routes remain open for ambulances, fire services, police, school transportation, and the travelling public; and

Whereas municipalities across Ontario are reporting an increase in harassment, threats, intimidation, and dangerous interference from members of the public directed at municipal workers and subcontractors while they perform their duties; and

Whereas these behaviours have included verbal abuse, threats of violence, obstruction of equipment, and actions that delay or disrupt winter maintenance and emergency response operations, placing workers and the broader public at risk; and

Whereas interference with municipal operations during storms and emergencies jeopardizes service levels, delays critical response times, and creates significant occupational health and safety risks; and

Whereas the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS) has formally called on the Province of Ontario to strengthen legislative protections, enforcement support, and



consequences for those who threaten or obstruct municipal public works staff and contractors;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Council of the Township of North Kawartha supports the calls to action advanced by the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors to improve protections for municipal public works workers and subcontractors; and

Be it further resolved that the Province of Ontario be requested to introduce legislative and enforcement measures that:

- Recognize municipal public works workers and contractors as essential service providers during declared significant weather events and emergencies;
- Deter and penalize interference, threats, harassment, or obstruction of municipal operations; and
- Provide clear direction and support to police services to proactively respond to these incidents;

And be it further resolved that a letter conveying Council's support for these measures be sent to:

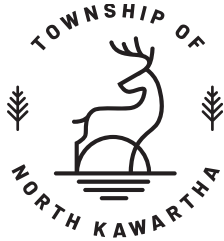
- The Honourable David Piccini, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
- The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

And that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors and neighbouring municipalities for their consideration.

Background:

Municipal public works staff, along with contracted service providers, are responsible for maintaining and operating essential municipal services. These include, but are not limited to:

- Road and sidewalk maintenance
- Snow plowing, sanding, and salting operations
- Storm drainage and flood response



- Bridge maintenance
- Emergency response support during severe weather events

During declared significant weather events and emergencies, these workers serve as frontline responders, ensuring that transportation routes remain open and safe for emergency services, transit operators, school transportation providers, and the general public.

In recent years, municipalities across Ontario have reported a growing number of incidents involving harassment, intimidation, threats, and dangerous interference directed at public works staff and subcontractors while performing their duties. These incidents have been reported most frequently during winter maintenance operations and high-impact weather events.

The Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS), representing municipal public works professionals across the province, has formally called on the Province of Ontario to strengthen legislative frameworks, enforcement tools, and police response protocols to better protect municipal workers and contractors from these risks.

Analysis:

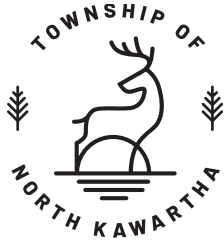
Public and Worker Safety

Interference with municipal operations creates direct and measurable risks to both worker safety and public safety. Obstructing snowplows, threatening operators, or delaying emergency repairs can:

- Increase response times for ambulances, fire services, and police
- Lead to dangerous driving conditions and preventable collisions
- Expose workers to unsafe confrontations and potential violence
- Compromise the municipality's ability to meet legislated service standards

Municipal public works staff are trained professionals carrying out essential services under challenging conditions. Unlike other emergency responders, however, they do not currently benefit from specific legislative recognition or enhanced protections when faced with obstruction or harassment from members of the public.

Legislative Gaps



Township of North Kawartha
280 Burleigh Street, PO Box 550, Apsley, ON K0L 1A0
Tel: 705-656-4445 | 1-800-755-6931 | Fax: 705-656-4446
www.northkawartha.ca

While existing laws address general workplace safety and criminal behavior, municipalities and professional associations have identified gaps related to:

- The absence of “essential service” recognition for public works staff during emergencies
- Limited deterrents or penalties specific to interference with municipal operations
- Inconsistent enforcement and response protocols when incidents occur

Clear legislative direction would provide municipalities, police services, and courts with stronger tools to prevent unsafe behavior and respond effectively when incidents arise.

Recognizing and protecting frontline municipal workers reinforces the importance of infrastructure services that the public relies on daily, particularly under extreme and evolving weather conditions.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications associated with supporting the proposed Notice of Motion and forwarding correspondence to provincial officials and neighbouring municipalities.

Strategic and/or Other Plans:

Governance:

Maintain a strong, accountable municipal government:

1. Maintain policies and processes that enable effective governance.
2. Provide quality community programs and services.
3. Provide effective, clear and transparent Township communication.

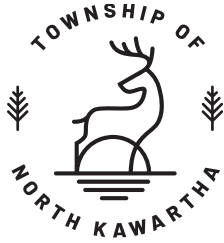
Environment:

Protect and enhance the Environment:

2. Protect the human environment.

In Consultation With:

Alana Soloman, Chief Administrative Officer



Township of North Kawartha

280 Burleigh Street, PO Box 550, Apsley, ON K0L 1A0
Tel: 705-656-4445 | 1-800-755-6931 | Fax: 705-656-4446
www.northkawartha.ca

Attachment:

None