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Ontario NDP Caucus • Groupe parlementaire du NPD de l'Ontario

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

June 11, 2020

Premier Ford,

We are writing to you today to share our collective concern about the financial sustainability of the City of Toronto. Like many municipalities across Ontario, the City of Toronto is struggling to respond to the COVID-19 emergency within their current budget.

The City of Toronto is the 7th largest government in Canada, with a larger annual budget than most provinces. However, unlike most provinces, the City of Toronto does not have the power to raise new revenues in the same ways a province can, nor the ability to run a deficit budget.

With lost revenues from streams including decreased transit use, and increased costs as the City does its best to respond to the pandemic, the City of Toronto is facing an estimated \$1.5 Billion shortfall this year. To avoid massive job loss and cuts to services, this extraordinary shortfall would require raising property taxes in the city by 47%.

Municipalities are at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic, with growing pressure on services such as public health, ambulance and bylaw enforcement. Municipalities like Toronto simply cannot shoulder this financial burden alone for much longer. Without immediate financial assistance from the province, it will be mere weeks before the city will have to make drastic cuts to the services that all of our constituents rely on.

Mayor John Tory has recently stated that these cuts could include:

- a \$575-million reduction to TTC service
 - cutting service in half on lines 1 and 2
 - shutting down the Scarborough RT and Sheppard line
 - diminishing streetcar service
 - cutting service on some bus routes including Jane, Dufferin, Steeles and Finch in half
 - reducing Wheel-Trans service by more than four million rides
- a \$23-million cut to Toronto Fire
- the elimination of 40,625 child-care subsidies
- \$100 million cut from shelter services, leading to a 50% cut in shelter spaces -- in the middle of a homelessness crisis when shelters, respites, and drop-in centres are already crammed

Ontario NDP Caucus Services

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- the closure of 61 community centres, as well as the closure of some library branches

These cuts could lead to as many as 19,184 job losses at the City.

The Federal Government's recent announcement of support is welcome but sadly, comes up short; fast-tracking already promised infrastructure funding does not help Toronto with the issues we have outlined above.

Premier, we are calling on you to immediately provide financial operating assistance to the City of Toronto to help shoulder the financial burden of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Suze Morrison, MPP Toronto Centre

Peter Tabuns, MPP Toronto—Danforth

Marit Stiles, MPP Davenport

Jessica Bell, MPP University—Rosedale

Bhutila Karpoche, MPP Parkdale—High Park

Jill Andrew, MPP Toronto—St. Paul's

Rima Berns-McGown, MPP Beaches—East York

Chris Glover, MPP Spadina—Fort York

Doly Begum, MPP Scarborough Southwest

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Rakocevic".

Tom Rakocevic, MPP Humber River—Black
Creek

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Faisal Hassan".

Faisal Hassan, MPP York South—Weston

CC: Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
Jeff Burch, NDP Critic – Municipal Affairs
John Tory, Mayor – City of Toronto