



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

COUNCIL WEEKLY CORRESPONDENCE DISTRIBUTION

INDEX

Friday, February 27, 2026

	Pages
1. <u>CWCD 2026-26</u>	1
Garbage Tag Price Change - Effective May 1, 2026	
2. <u>CWCD 2026-27</u>	3
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit Resolution, February 13, 2026 - Recommendations for the 2026 Ontario Budget Consultation - Strengthening Social Assistance Rates	
3. <u>CWCD 2026-28</u>	6
AMO Watchfile February 26, 2026	

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).

Memorandum

CWCD 2026-26

Subject: Garbage Tag Price Change - Effective May 1, 2026

Date: February 27, 2026

To: Regional Council

From: Lucy McGovern, Waste Diversion Program Manager

The purpose of this memo to remind Council that the price of garbage tags will change from \$2.85 to \$3.30 per tag, effective May 1, 2026.

The fee change was recommended through Report CSD 56-2025 and formally approved by Regional Council on January 29, 2026, with the approval of Bill 2026-07, a By-law to adopt the 2026 Waste Management Budget for the Regional Municipality of Niagara and to repeal By-law 2025-67.

This adjustment supports Niagara Region's move toward full cost recovery for additional garbage collection and disposal beyond the two-container bi-weekly limit and continues to encourage the use of weekly Green Bin and recycling programs.

Recent waste audits indicate that approximately two-thirds of materials currently disposed of as garbage could be diverted to the Green Bin or the recycling programs, both of which are collected weekly. Increasing diversion of organics and recyclable materials reduces methane emissions from landfill disposal and helps extend the operating life of Niagara Region landfills.

Transition and Distribution

Residents may continue to use previously purchased \$2.85 garbage tags after May 1, 2026, until their supply is exhausted.

Niagara Region distributes garbage tags through retail partners and direct sales to residents via the Region's website.

Retail Partner Coordination

Niagara Region will issue updated Letters of Understanding to retail partners outlining:

- The new retail price of \$3.30 per tag

- Participating retailers are paid a \$0.25 commission per tag, which remains unchanged since the last tag increase in 2023
- Confirmation that garbage tags are exempt from HST
- Transition measures to support consistent pricing

Communications & Outreach

To support a smooth implementation, Niagara Region is undertaking the following communications activities:

- Memo to Local Area Municipal Public Works Officials (PWOs)
- Direct outreach to Local Area Municipalities to ensure municipal websites reflect the updated price
- Updates to Niagara Region's website
- Updates to the Niagara Region Waste app
- Updates to applicable printed materials
- Niagara Region Public Notice
- Window and countertop signage for retail partners

These measures are intended to ensure residents are informed in advance of the May 1, 2026 implementation date and understand the continued availability of diversion programs.

Residents can find additional information, including partnering retailer locations and online purchasing options at www.niagararegion.ca/waste.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Lucy McGovern
Waste Diversion Program Manager



February 13, 2026

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Dear Honourable Ministers, Members of Provincial and Federal Parliament, and Stakeholders,

Re: Board of Health Resolution and Recommendations for the 2026 Ontario Budget Consultation – Strengthening Social Assistance Rates

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) is writing to share the recent motion passed and correspondence sent by our Board of Health to the Province of Ontario for the 2026 Ontario Budget Consultation. Based on the results of our 2025 food and housing affordability data, our key recommendations are to increase Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates, and to index OW rates to inflation.

Annually, public health agencies in Ontario monitor food affordability as a requirement of the Ontario Public Health Standards.¹ This involves estimating food costs using the Ontario Nutritious Food Basket (ONFB) survey and examining them in relation to local rent rates within a variety of household income scenarios. Year after year, the results show that households with social assistance through OW or ODSP as their main income do not have enough money for the costs of living, including food.²

The rent data typically utilized in food affordability reporting is sourced from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).³ These rates are often criticized as they reflect averages that include long-standing rental agreements that maintain affordability and therefore are not representative of rates faced by households entering the rental market. In 2025, the Health Unit undertook a pilot project examining market rent data in North Bay and Parry Sound to determine how current rental rates compare with CMHC data. Both data sets are valuable, providing insight into the financial circumstances of households in longer-standing rental situations, and the reality for households who moved to new rental housing in 2025. Together with ONFB data, these data sets show that social assistance rates fall short of what is needed to cover housing and food expenses, with the situation being very dire for households who were seeking new rental housing in 2025.²

The 2025 factsheets on food and housing affordability for North Bay and Parry Sound are now available on the [Health Unit website](#). They present the financial situation of a single adult, and a single adult with two school-aged children, as about 95% of households receiving OW in Nipissing and Parry Sound districts are single adults.^{4,5} Although these scenarios only present rent and food costs, the urgent need for higher OW rates is clear. Current amounts are significantly mismatched with the real costs of living.

This information provides important local context about food and housing affordability. Adequate income is a foundational social determinant of health that significantly influences housing and food security. Recent homelessness data from the Nipissing District revealed that over 80% of people identifying as homeless had OW or ODSP as their main income. Respondents also cited low income and rent as the top barriers to finding housing.⁶ Homelessness and food insecurity continue to escalate in our district, with significant health consequences.⁶⁻¹⁰ Strengthening social assistance is a critical component of increasing income security for many of the lowest income households in Ontario. Sharing this information with

To: Honourable Ministers, Members of Provincial and Federal Parliament, and Stakeholders

Page: 2/3

Date: February 13, 2026

decision makers ensures they are aware of the local situation and that evidence from our district is available to inform policy decisions. The Health Unit's recent work to share local context to decision-makers related to affordability also includes our [submission for the 2025-2030 Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy consultation](#).

At its meeting on January 28, 2026, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #BOH/2026/01/12.

***Whereas**, the Ontario Public Health Standards require public health agencies to monitor food affordability, and assess and report on the health of local populations, describing the existence and impact of health inequities including housing and food insecurity; and*

***Whereas**, income is an important social determinant of health that greatly impacts a household's ability to pay for the basic costs of living, including housing and food; and*

***Whereas**, food insecurity and housing insecurity have detrimental impacts on physical and mental health; and*

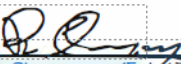
***Whereas**, the 2025 North Bay Parry Sound food affordability results show that households with social assistance as their main income do not have enough money for the costs of living; and*

***Therefore Be It Resolved**, that the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit continues to support in principle the efforts of staff to monitor, raise awareness about, and work to reduce health inequities including poverty, homelessness, and household food insecurity; and*

***Furthermore Be It Resolved**, that the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit calls on the Province of Ontario to strengthen social assistance by increasing OW and ODSP rates to reflect the costs of living, and index Ontario Works rates to inflation as part of the 2026 Ontario budget; and*

***Furthermore Be It Resolved**, that the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit provide correspondence of these resolutions to district municipalities, Ontario Boards of Health, Victor Fedeli, MPP (Nipissing), Graydon Smith, MPP (Parry Sound-Muskoka), John Vanthof, MPP (Timiskaming-Cochrane), the Honourable Doug Ford (Premier), the Honourable Michael Parsa (Minister of Children, Community and Social Services), the Honourable Sylvia Jones (Minister of Health), the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHA), Pauline Rochefort, MP (Nipissing-Timiskaming), Scott Aitchison, MP (Parry Sound-Muskoka), District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB), District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB), Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), and Council of Medical Officers of Health (COMOH).*

Sincerely,


Rick Champagne (Feb 17, 2026 15:49:48 EST)

Rick Champagne
Chairperson, Board of Health

Carol Zimbalatti

Dr. Carol Zimbalatti, M.D., CCFP, MPH
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer

References

1. Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Population health assessment and surveillance protocol, 2018. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario. 2018. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-population-health-assessment-surveillance-protocol-2018-en.pdf>
2. North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit. Household food insecurity. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/food-insecurity.aspx>
3. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Rental market report. October 2025. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart/Table?TableId=2.1.31.2&GeographyId=35&GeographyTypeId=2&DisplayAs=Table&GeographyName=Ontario#Apartment>
4. District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board. Ontario Works data portal. 2024. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://www.dnssab.ca/en/data-portal/ow-data-portal/>
5. District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board. Personal communication with J. Degagne, December 17, 2025.
6. District of Nipissing Social Service Administration Board. Nipissing counts. 2024. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://www.dnssab.ca/media/2kwlugre/2024-nipissing-pit-count-infographic.pdf>
7. Donaldson J, Wang D, Escamilla C, Turner A. Municipalities under pressure: The human and financial cost of Ontario's homelessness crisis. HelpSeeker. 2025. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://www.helpseeker.org/reports/municipalities-under-pressure-the-human-and-financial-cost-of-ontarioshomelessnesscrisis>
8. Homelessness hub. Homelessness 101: health. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://homelesshub.ca/collection/homelessness-101/health/>
9. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Household food insecurity snapshot. 2025. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Data-and-Analysis/Health-Equity/Household-Food-Insecurity>
10. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Food insecurity & food affordability in Ontario. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario. April 2025. Accessed January 5, 2026.
11. Government of Ontario. Budget consultations. December 23, 2025. Accessed January 5, 2026. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/budget-consultations>



February 26, 2026

In This Issue:

- Opportunity: AMO Board of Directors Election 2026-2028.
- Unlock AMO's New Workforce Development Campaign Assets.
- Recently launched: AMO's Leading with Respect Handguides.
- Geologic Carbon Storage Framework.
- Market Diversification and Trade Resiliency Initiative.
- AMO 2026: Conference Registration Open!
- Supporting your Run for Municipal Office in 2026: Resources and Workshops.
- Indigenous Candidates Thinking of Running for Office.
- Workshop: Lead through crisis with confidence.
- Let's Turn Up Voter Turnout.
- OSUM Conference: Register Today!
- Navigating Conflict Relationships for Municipally Elected Officials.
- Freedom of Information and Privacy Impact Assessments.
- Help Property Owners Avoid Expense Service Line Repair Costs.
- Healthcare Procurement Made Easy.
- 2026 IPAC Leadership Summit & One-Year Membership.
- Free Intersectoral Action Training Series.
- Webinar on lead service line replacements.
- Careers.

AMO Matters

We encourage all Council members and senior municipal employers to consider a leadership role on AMO's Board of Directors for the 2026-2028 term. Please find preliminary information on this opportunity [on the AMO website](#). Further information will be released in spring 2026 when nominations open.

Don't miss your chance to register for a [free webinar](#) on March 3, 2026, and learn how to make the most of AMO's new public affairs and advertising campaign, '[Make Your Municipal Move](#)'. This session will walk you through how to leverage brand-new campaign assets and ready-made templates to drive local engagement through your own channels. For more information email: WGardiner@amo.on.ca.

AMO has launched its Leading with Respect Handguides to provide practical, accessible tools for councils and staff to navigate conflict, foster good governance, and

build vibrant, inclusive communities. Access [AMO's Leading with Respect Handguides here](#).

Provincial Matters

Regulations under the *Geologic Carbon Storage Act* came into effect of February 1 and The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has published a [Fact Sheet for Municipalities](#) about this [new framework](#).

The governments of Canada and Ontario are accepting applications from February 17 to March 17 for [new funding](#) to help local businesses grow international and domestic sales under the Market Diversification and Trade Resiliency Initiative.

Education Opportunities

Registration is open for the AMO 2026 conference. [Register today](#).

AMO is offering programs designed to support aspiring candidates and returning elected officials. Whether you are considering your first run for office, seeking re-election, represent an underrepresented community, or a youth, we have a program tailored for you. Resources range from helping you make the decision to run or run again, to building your team, crafting your message, and getting out the vote, and includes the *Lead Where You Live* guide for key steps in the process. Register for workshops and access resources [here](#).

AMO has expanded their **Healthy Democracy Leadership Series**. AMO is offering a series of workshops for urban Indigenous peoples' thinking about running for municipal office in the October 2026 elections. These sessions will provide insights and strategies to build your understanding and confidence around how to become a candidate and running a campaign. [Register here](#).

Municipal leaders need to know what to say and do during a crisis. Join us March 11th & 12th for a two half-day course that will give you the tools frameworks, and confidence to lead your community through an emergency. [Secure Your Spot](#).

AMO's resource, [Turn Up the Turnout](#), complements other Healthy Democracy Project resources and research and is designed to equip elected officials, policymakers, civil society leaders, and citizens with evidence-based strategies and examples of efforts to increase voter turnout. If you want to drive up turnout in your municipality, take a look and find a strategy that fits your community.

Join your Ontario Small Urban colleagues for at the OSUM 2026, April 29 – May 1 in Parry Sound. [Click here](#) for registration and hotel details.

Gain skills in building collaborative relationships and negotiating difficult ones. This 2 part, interactive workshop will explore the constructs, traps and pitfalls of conflict

relationships, and how to approach, plan and execute relationships successfully. [Register here to save your spot.](#)

LAS

Managing privacy risk has become increasingly important for Ontario municipalities, particularly with the growing use of AI-enabled technologies. [Reach out](#) to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Impact Assessments services partner, Vayle, [for more information](#).

The LAS endorsed [Sewer & Water Line Warranty service](#), offered through SLWC, helps residential property owners avoid expensive repair costs for clogs, leaks, and breaks to the water and sewer lines running from their home to the municipal connection. Learn how your municipality can offer this optional service to your residents.

Help your healthcare professional save time and money with the LAS HealthPRO Canada procurement service. Under this partnership municipalities can access high-quality, safe health-care related products and services. [Learn more here](#).

Municipal Wire*

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada is offering new professionals in the first seven years of their public sector career complimentary registration to the 2026 IPAC Leadership Summit and a one year IPAC membership at no cost. Learn from senior leaders, strengthen your leadership perspective, and connect with peers from across the public service. [Claim your free registration here](#).

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Tamarack Institute are offering public health units, governments, and others a [virtual learning series](#) on strengthening collaboration to enhance well-being in Ontario.

On February 27, the Ontario Municipal Water Association is hosting a webinar on how municipalities can facilitate full lead service line replacements. [Register here](#).

Careers

[Director, Public Works - City of Kawartha](#). Closing Date: March 8, 2026.

[Construction Projects Supervisor, Facility Maintenance and Development - County of Simcoe](#). Closing Date: March 13, 2026.

About AMO

AMO is a non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments. AMO supports strong and effective municipal government in Ontario and promotes the value of municipal government as a vital and essential component of Ontario's and Canada's political system. Follow [@AMOPolicy](#) on Twitter!

AMO Contacts

[AMO Watchfile](#) Tel: 416.971.9856

[Conferences/Events](#)

[Policy and Funding Programs](#)

[LAS Local Authority Services](#)

[MEPCO Municipal Employer Pension Centre of Ontario](#)

[ONE Investment](#)

[Media Inquiries](#)

[Municipal Wire, Career/Employment and Council Resolution Distributions](#)
