



Hamilton



September 4, 2018

Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos  
Minister of Families, Children & Social Development  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
[Jean-Yves.Duclos@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Jean-Yves.Duclos@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Duclos,

As you are aware, on July 31, 2018 the Government of Ontario announced that it was ending the Basic Income Pilot Program just three months after it was fully subscribed. Neither local participants nor our municipal governments were consulted prior to this decision.

When the program was initially announced by the previous provincial government in April, 2017, we were gratified that our communities were chosen as the pilot test sites. Ontario's pilot is very much at the centre of a growing international interest in the concept of basic income. Jurisdictions from around the world were observing the Ontario pilot with great interest: Our communities received delegations from the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea and the United States interested in learning from our experience.

The Ontario government's cancellation of the pilot is distressing to participants and discouraging to all seeking a better way to assist vulnerable citizens. The Minister of Community Social Services indicated that the pilot was a disincentive to work, and yet ignored the reality that two-thirds of pilot participants are currently working (some perhaps at part-time jobs) but seemingly very interested in contributing to the community and enhancing their skills.

While the pilot was well into its first of three years, surveys had not been completed to determine its level of success. However, the pilot participants had themselves identified important changes in their lives as a result of the Basic Income Pilot Project. Many used their participation in the project to stabilize their housing, improve their diets and look for opportunities to improve skills and go back to school.

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Many participants reported feeling better and regained self-esteem, dignity, and confidence. Their stress levels reduced because they were able to afford their rent; their health improved because they have been able to afford healthy food and they have become active members of our communities because they could afford to participate in modest civic activities and volunteer. We believe the results of the Ontario Basic Income Pilot would have provided crucial information that could enable not just the Ontario Government, but other jurisdictions around the country to determine the efficacy of such a program on a larger scale.

The sudden provincial decision to cancel the pilot is distressing for local pilot participants, many of whom are some of the most vulnerable residents of our communities. Many pilot participants had planned ahead for the three-year time period to which the provincial government had committed. Many had moved to safer, more accessible rental accommodations and are now locked into tenancy agreements they cannot afford; other participants pre-paid to upgrade skills or go back to school and now have no means to cover these additional costs. The provincial government's decision has very much resulted in a financial crisis for our 4,000 residents who in good faith agreed to participate in the pilot. We fear that as a result of this ill-conceived provincial decision, many of the pilot participants will inevitably fall into situations of homelessness and significant financial distress through no fault of their own. Others who had had challenges with mental health will need additional supports as a result of the decision to cancel the program.

It is for these reasons that we, the Mayors of Brantford, Hamilton, Kawartha Lakes and Thunder Bay, would request consideration that the Federal Government assume oversight of the Ontario Basic Income Pilot project in our communities for years two and three of the planned project.

There are several reasons why we believe our request is practical and beneficial:

- The pilot's infrastructure and many of the up-front costs are already in place with participants chosen, an evaluation team working and timelines and project staff in place
- The Federal Government would benefit greatly from the information that would be generated by this pilot – the largest such test in the world currently underway and the first in Canada since MINCOME in the 1970s – a partnership of the Government of Manitoba under Edward Schreyer and the Government of Canada under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau

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- The provincial cost of the project was slated at \$150 million over three years, at least one third of that allocation has already been invested in the pilot and will otherwise be lost.

Minister, when the program was launched, you said that you would be watching it closely and looked forward to seeing the results - as did we. Federal oversight of the Ontario Basic Income Pilot project would be the best option to revive the critical information that will be generated, protect pilot participants from crisis who entered into the program in good faith and ensure the funds that have already been spent on this program are not wasted.

We look forward to discussing this exciting possibility with you. The previous provincial government in Ontario showed great leadership in initiating the project and we are hopeful that your government will consider seeing through the Basic Income Pilot.

Sincerely,



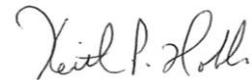
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