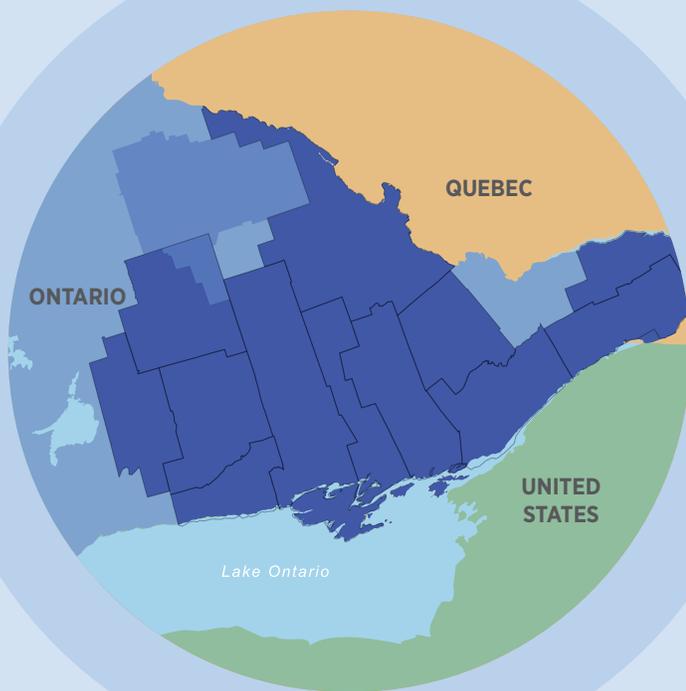




Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

Building a Stronger Future for Rural Eastern Ontario



The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus is focused on growing the economy and creating quality jobs for rural Eastern Ontarians.

Eastern Ontario connects key markets in Ontario, the United States and Canada.

Our success is Ontario's success.

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) represents **750,000 people** in **103 rural municipalities**. The Caucus works together on solutions that will make life better for people in all our communities.

We need to create the right conditions to attract investment and drive growth by:

- 1** Improving connectivity by filling gaps in cellular services
- 2** Enabling companies to expand natural gas distribution to rural areas
- 3** Investing in strong road networks
- 4** Creating housing rural families can afford

1 Improving connectivity by filling gaps in cellular services

Businesses need reliable cell service and broadband access. The Eastern Ontario Regional Network is proposing a public-private partnership to tackle gaps in cell service that cut across about one-quarter of Eastern Ontario. It would also build more cell capacity to meet growing demand.



The Ontario Government has committed **\$71 million** over the **next four years**, for its share of the **\$213 million** project.

Once completed, the project will:



Create **3,000** full-time equivalent jobs over 10 years.



Spur **\$420 million** in new business revenue.



Prepare for **5G** driven technologies.

2 Enabling expanded natural gas distribution to rural areas

Eastern Ontario needs affordable and reliable energy. Natural gas costs about one-fourth the cost of electricity.¹ Recent OEB rulings have stood in the way of expansion to rural areas.

The Ontario Government can provide gas companies with the financial and regulatory tools to expand natural gas distribution in rural areas.

- Rural families would save hundreds of dollars a month in heating costs.
- Farms and other businesses would have lower energy costs and be more competitive.
- Competitive energy rates would attract new business investment and drive economic growth.



¹<https://publicsectordigest.com/article/investing-in-rural-ontario-need-natural-gas>

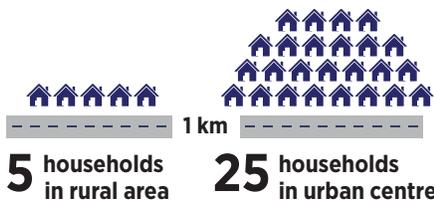
3 Building and maintaining strong road networks

Our economy depends on a quality road network connecting our communities, and Ontario, to key markets in the U.S. and Quebec. Rural municipalities punch above their weight when it comes to the roads they own and maintain. To catch up and keep up, municipal governments need provincial help to reduce their costs and improve reliable sources of revenue.



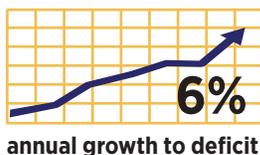
69,000 km

EOWC municipalities own two-thirds of the region's roads: 69,000 lane kilometres of road, enough to wrap 1.5 times around the earth.



Rural households can't bear this load alone.

In rural areas, five households must share the cost of one kilometre of road compared to 25 homes in urban centres.



The local infrastructure deficit is \$4.6 billion and growing.

Municipalities invest more every year, but the infrastructure gap continues to grow about 6% annually.

4 Creating housing rural families can afford

Affordable housing isn't only an urban issue. Rural families can have fewer housing options. Family incomes in Eastern Ontario are about **13% lower than the provincial average**.

Ontario is the only province where social housing is a municipal responsibility. The EOWC looks forward to working with the Ontario Government to improve the quantity and quality of our housing stock.

Snapshot of Eastern Ontario:

- **14,000** social housing units, including **9,000** municipal units
- Wait list of **7,500 to 9,000** people
- **\$71 million** annual shortfall in municipal spending on capital needs



EOWC: Proven Success

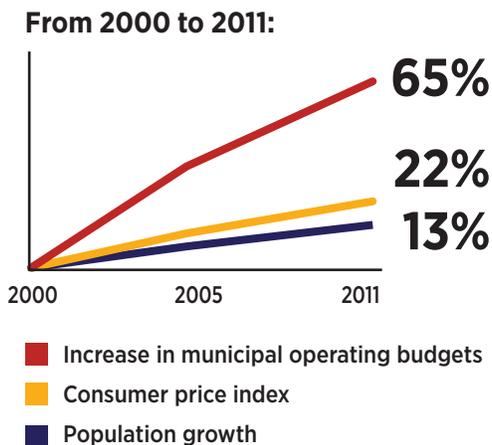
For 16 years, the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus has taken strong and effective action on rural challenges to drive economic growth and a better quality of life across the region.

■ Cutting costs

The EOWC has reduced local government expenses through cost-sharing and other regional programs.

Still, municipal costs in Eastern Ontario are growing faster than inflation or its population. Rising costs for emergency services, waste diversion and transportation are key factors.

The Ontario Government can help by reducing provincial red tape and regulations that increase our costs without improving services to people.

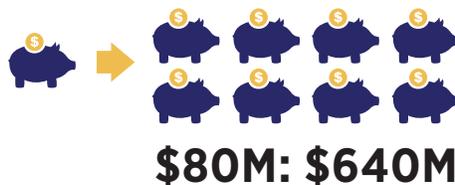


■ Spending public dollars wisely

The EOWC has a track record of providing high return on public investment.

The Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund, for example, generated an **eight-times return** in new private sector investment.

Eastern Ontario Development Fund



The EOWC created the Eastern Ontario Regional Network to expand broadband access. The **\$175 million** public private partnership is now worth **\$260 million** in added private sector investments. It also spurred more than \$100 million in new expansions by telecoms without any new public dollars. This project paves the way for further opportunities to expand high-speed internet services. The EOWC is undertaking a detailed study of how best to move internet connectivity towards the CRTC target of 50/10 or greater.

■ Creating jobs through a coordinated economic development strategy

The EOWC has driven a coordinated, regional economic development strategy. We're finding solutions to attract jobs and businesses to rural communities, focused on three key priorities: a skilled workforce, technology innovation, and intelligent transportation systems.

