



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF HALTON

Report To:	Chairman and Members of the Administration and Finance Committee
From:	J. E. MacCaskill, Commissioner of Corporate Services & Regional Treasurer
Date:	April 5, 2006
Re:	Provincial Funding Announcements & 2006 Budget Update
Report No.:	CS-35-06

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Regional Council approve an amendment to the 2006 Public Health budget as adopted in the 2006 Budget and Business Plan, to reflect the anticipated receipt of an additional \$753,000 in Provincial subsidy, by reducing net expenditures from \$8,833,031 to \$8,080,031, having no impact on gross expenditures.
2. THAT Regional Council approve an amendment to the 2006 Ambulance Services budget as adopted in the 2006 Budget and Business Plan to reflect the receipt of an additional \$2,195,639 in Provincial subsidy by:
 - a) increasing the transfer to Tax Capital General Reserve (505010) by \$1,687,000 which results in increased gross expenditures from \$18,827,301 to \$20,514,301, and
 - b) reducing the net expenditures by \$508,639, from \$13,410,399 to \$12,901,760.
3. THAT Regional Council approve an amendment to the 2006 Transportation budget as adopted in the 2006 Budget and Business Plan to reflect the receipt of an additional \$7,973,075 in Provincial subsidy by:
 - a) increasing the transfer to Tax Capital General Reserve (505010) by \$7,973,075 which results in increased gross expenditures from \$25,410,752 to \$33,383,827, having no impact on net expenditures, and
 - b) refinancing the project budget for the Dundas St. Widening between Neyagawa and Proudfoot Trail, including the 16 Mile Creek Structure (ID's 4746 and 5386) as set out in Attachment 'C' to Report CS-35-06.
4. THAT Regional Council approve an amendment to the 2006 Social and Community Services Department budget as adopted in the 2006 Budget and Business Plan, to reflect the receipt of an additional \$123,243 in Provincial subsidy, by increasing the gross expenditures from \$126,715,948 to \$126,839,191, having no impact on net expenditures.

REPORT

On December 14, 2005 Council approved the 2006 Budget and Business Plan (Report CS-92-05) with a tax increase of 2.6%. Recently, there has been a number of Provincial funding announcements and other information which provides an opportunity to adjust the 2006 budget prior to Council approving the Tax Policies set out in Report CS-24-06. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with additional information relating to these Provincial announcements and to recommend adjustments to the 2006 Budget and Business Plan as a result.

PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

In a letter dated March 2, 2006, (Appendix 'A') the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care indicated that the Ministry will be reviewing board of health grant requests within a provincial funding envelope that provides for up to 5% growth in 2006. In addition, the Minister confirmed the Province's intention to increase the provincial share of public health funding from 50% in 2004 to 75% by 2007.

Due to the costs and uncertainty in how and whether the cost-sharing would materialize at the time the 2006 Budget was being prepared, staff recommended a conservative approach to recognizing the increased Provincial funding responsibilities. Council will recall that the Province expressed their intention to increase their share of public health funding to 55% in 2005, 65% in 2006 and 75% in 2007.

As shown in the following table, the 2006 public health budget was prepared on the basis of maintaining the Region's 2005 funding level commitment to this program.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING AS SHOWN IN 2006 BUDGET WITH MARCH 2006 PROVINCIAL ANNOUNCEMENT				
	Province	Halton	Increase in Prov Subsidy Budget to Budget	Increase in Prov Subsidy from 55/45 to 65/35
2005 Budget	55%	45%		
2006 Requested Budget	58%	42%	16%	29%
2006 Provincial Funding Cap*	62%	38%	25%	24%

* Based on a 5% cap on gross expenditures as indicated in letter dated March 2, 2006.

As noted in the 2006 Budget, the Medical Officer of Health put forward requests for 14.8 full-time equivalent positions (FTE) as program changes that are required to deliver public health services in Halton. These requests, along with all other program change requests were considered by Management Committee and prioritized on a corporate basis. Of the 14.8 FTE requested, 6.0 FTE public health program changes were recommended for inclusion in the Region's 2006 Budget. The

overall funding cost share with the Province (base budget plus program changes) resulted in a 58/42 split as shown in the above table (2006 Requested Budget). As noted by staff during the budget process, in order to achieve this funding split the Province would need to increase the public health subsidy to Halton by 16%. Although the budget was prepared on a 58/42 funding cost share, the Region planned to submit the funding request to the Province on a 65/35 funding basis. If Halton received the funding request at the 65/35 level then the Province would need to increase the public health subsidy to Halton by 29%, which would have resulted in a favourable year-end variance of \$1.2 million.

Based on the recent funding announcement by the Minister, the Province will fund public health board requests on a 65/35 cost sharing split but will cap the growth in those requests at 5%. The Provincial announcement provides a larger increase in subsidy (25% compared to 16% as shown in the table) than anticipated in the 2006 Budget (based on 58/42 funding split). However, given that Halton's 2006 requested budget approved by Council is increasing by more than 9%, a 29% increase in subsidy is needed to get to the 65/35 funding split as identified during the budget process. Instead, with a provincial 5% growth cap, the increase in subsidy is only 24%. To fund the 2006 Budget therefore the Region must fund \$692,000 more than 35%, resulting in a 62/38 funding split. As the 62/38 split requires less Regional funding than the 58/42 split in the budget a \$753,000 favourable variance is generated. Accordingly, in order to move closer to the provincial 65/35 funding split target for 2006 the following adjustments to the 2006 Budget are recommended:

- Although further details on the program-based grant process need to be received from the Province in 2006, it appears from the information in the Minister's letter that the Region's funding for Public Health in 2006 could be reduced by \$753,000; and
- To implement the requested Regional public health budget as approved by Council, Halton will fund its share of the cost above the 35% target in 2006 (by approximately \$692,000).

These adjustments would result in a funding split of 62/38 and would maintain total public health spending at the approved level of \$18,304,090 (base plus program changes including 6.0 FTE) as approved by Council during the 2006 budget process.

As indicated in the Region's 2006 Budget and Business Plan, it is important to note that the additional 8.8 FTEs will be included in the budget submission to the Province. The Region's budget also noted that none of these positions will proceed until confirmation of 65/35 cost-sharing is received. When the Region receives notification of the subsidy approval, staff will report back on proceeding with the approved additional positions. If the Province does not provide funding for these positions in 2006, staff will include the additional public health requirements for consideration during the 2007 Budget process.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

The Region's 2006 Budget and Business Plan included \$5,409,952 in provincial funding for land ambulance. This was an increase of \$90,625 over the 2005 budget based a letter received in September from the Ministry of Long-Term Care which set out Halton's 2005/06 grant for land ambulance.

In a letter dated March 28, 2006 (Appendix 'B'), the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced that the Province is committed to working co-operatively with delivery agents to "close the gap" between current government funding and 50% of the cost of delivering land ambulance services by 2008. To this end, the Minister has reviewed the funding for land ambulance services for 2006 in an effort to begin narrowing this gap by providing Halton with a grant funding adjustment of \$2,195,639.

Council will recall that the Region assumed responsibility for ambulance services from the Province in August 2000 and at that time the funding for ambulance was shared 50/50 with the Province. As noted in the 2006 Budget, since assuming responsibility for land ambulance, the Region has made many enhancements to the level of service in response to provincial guidelines and community needs and growth. In addition, Council approved a 10 year Emergency Medical Services Master Plan (MO-06-05) to address a number of challenges and pressures that will impact upon future budgets including increased call demand related to rapid residential and industrial growth throughout the Region, an aging population, hospital restructuring and changing patient needs. The Province, however, has not kept pace with the funding of required program enhancements nor the negotiated salary and wage increases. This has resulted in a Provincial cost-sharing decline from 50% in 2000 to 29% in the Region's 2006 Budget. The most recent grant funding adjustment announced by the Province would reduce the Region's contribution by \$2.2 million and increase the provincial grant in the 2006 Budget to 40% of operating costs, while maintaining the gross expenditure of the ambulance budget at \$18.8 million as approved by Council.

It is important to note that the Province treats the funding for ambulance services as an allocation by grant, rather than a subsidy related to expenditure levels. Although the Province has indicated that their intent is to close the 50% funding share gap, the fact that the Provincial funding share remains a grant, with no direct tie to expenditure levels means that Halton would have to wait until the next announcement to confirm whether the additional \$2.2 million becomes part of the base funding grant, whether there are further enhancements to the grant, and whether there are conditions associated with the grant. It is also important to note that no funding is provided for the capital cost of land ambulance services.

When the ambulance services program was downloaded from the Province in 2000, the ambulance station capital projects were budgeted with the expectation of 50% subsidy funding. As a result \$3.4 million in subsidy was budgeted between the years 2000 to 2003 to support the construction and rehabilitation of the Region's ambulance station infrastructure.

However, due to the uncertainty related to the receipt of capital-related subsidy, the 2004 Budget and Business Plan revised this financing plan to temporarily finance the capital subsidy from the Tax Capital General Reserve (505010) with the intention of repaying the reserve from an annual operating provision or as subsidy is received. As identified in the 2006 Budget and shown in the following table, the total amount that may be required from reserve to fund the capital subsidy shortfall is \$6.5 million by 2015.

**Halton Region
2000-2015 Ambulance Financing Plan (in Millions)**

	Total Budgeted Expenditures	Financing Budget 2000-2015						Total Budgeted Financing
		Subsidy	Interim Financing from Reserve	Total Subsidy Shortfall	Reserves - Region Share	DC Reserves	Debt	
2000 - 2003	7.8	3.6	-	3.6	1.4	-	2.7	7.8
2004 - 2006	3.3	-	1.7	1.7	0.4	0.1	1.1	3.3
2007 - 2015	2.7	-	1.2	1.2	0.6	0.9	-	2.7
Total	13.7	3.6	2.9	6.5	2.4	1.0	3.8	13.7

* Schedule may not add due to rounding

Of this amount \$3.6 million was budgeted as subsidy (2000-2003) which did not materialize. As a result, \$1.3 million has been transferred from reserve to close completed projects through the semi-annual Capital Project Closure Report. Of the remaining \$2.3 million, a large portion (\$1.7 million) will be required in 2006 to finance scheduled project closures with an additional \$0.6 million is anticipated for 2007/2008.

Therefore, it is recommended that of the \$2.2 million received in subsidy, \$1.7 million be transferred to the Tax Capital General Reserve (505010) to fund the scheduled project closures in 2006. These budget adjustments will reduce the ambulance operating contribution incorporated in the forecast to repay the interim subsidy financing by an annualized amount of \$200,000. With the balance of the subsidy, it is recommended that the Regional cost share of the ambulance services budget be reduced by \$508,639. This results in a revised funding split of 60/40, as compared to the 71/29 cost-sharing included in the 2006 Budget.

ONTARIO'S TRANSPORTATION ANNOUNCEMENT

As part of the 2006 Provincial Budget, a new program called "Move Ontario" was announced which provides a \$1.2 billion investment in transit, roads and bridges. Under Move Ontario, the government is providing one-time funding to assist with municipal road and bridge maintenance and construction projects. This announcement is timely since, as indicated in the 2006 Budget the 10-year Road Program increased by \$41.5 million compared to the 2005 Budget, in order to address deficiencies and required capacity improvements in the region's road network as identified in the 2004 Transportation Master Plan.

As indicated to Council in a memo from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Treasurer, additional funding of \$7.9 million was received by Halton from the Province under this program. The Local Municipalities received a total of \$8 million. Staff recommend that the \$7.9

million be utilized in 2006 to reduce the Region's reliance on debenture financing for transportation capital projects. This will provide needed flexibility to address the forecasted requirements of this program.

A total of \$10.1 million in debt financing was included as part of the 2006 Budget and Business Plan to support the widening of Dundas Street between Neyagawa and Proudfoot Trail, including the 16 Mile Creek Structure (IDs 4746 and 5386). As a result of the Move Ontario funding, it is recommended that a total of \$14.3 million for these projects will now be funded from the Tax Capital General Reserve. This represents an increase of \$7.9 million from this reserve as compared to the 2006 Capital Budget, and results in a reduction to the total debt required. Details relating to the revised financing of both the Dundas Street widening and related structure are provided in Appendix 'C' to this report.

It should be noted that a portion of the debt reduction (\$5.2 million) relates to debt issued on behalf of the non-residential development share of the project. The funding of the recoverable portion of this cost is ultimately the responsibility of non-residential development. As such, the Tax Capital General Reserve will be replenished with future non-residential road development charges collected, in an amount equal to the recoverable non-residential share of the project, plus carrying costs.

The 2006 Capital Budget anticipated that the debt related to the Dundas Street works would be issued evenly in the years 2007 and 2008. Accordingly, although the impact on the operating budget resulting from the refinancing is anticipated to initially materialize in 2007, full annual savings will not be achieved until at least 2009. The projected reduction to debt charges during 2007 equal \$276,238, while the full annual debt charge reduction is expected to equal \$1.1 million per year beginning in 2009. Over the 12-year period beginning in 2007, the total projected debt charge reduction equals an estimated \$11.0 million.

These saving will provide required flexibility to address requirements in the transportation program. In early 2007, staff will report back on the updated Transportation Master Plan and financing implications on the 2008 Budget and required updates to the road development charges.

PROVINCIAL RENT BANK PROGRAM

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced that Halton will receive an additional \$123,243 in funding under the Provincial Rent Bank Program through a letter dated March 30, 2006 (Appendix 'D'). This program is 100% funded by the Province and is intended to assist low-income tenants in paying short-term rent arrears so that they can remain in their homes. The objective of the Rent Bank funding is to prevent the eviction of low-income residents who, due to unforeseen crisis, miss a rent payment(s). These funds are solely for rent arrears and the maximum amount that can be issued to an individual is two months of rent arrears. As this amount is 100% funded by the Province, the Social Services gross expenditure budget for 2006 will be increased by \$123,243 with no impact to the tax levy.

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

The confirmation from the Province of the 65/35 split in public health financing, combined with the expected 5% cap results in an opportunity to reduce the 2006 tax levy requirement by \$753,000. This does not impact the program or the gross expenditures in the 2006 budget. It should be noted, however, that the approved increase in Halton’s public health budget is in excess of 5% and therefore it is not expected that Halton will receive the full 65/35 cost-shared funding. The Region will contribute an additional \$692,000 in excess of the 35% share.

The additional \$2,195,639 in ambulance funding will be used to repay the Region for capital-related subsidy of almost \$1.7 million, and will reduce the tax levy impact by \$508,639.

The \$7.9 million received as part of the Move Ontario program will be applied to the 2006 Transportation Capital Program. The financing of the capital program will address the significant demands in this program will be used to reduce the debt financing requirements for this program.

While the Provincial Rent Bank program has no taxation implications for Halton, this additional \$123,000 will allow Halton to reduce the risk of homelessness for many families.

The net tax impact of the above items results in the following amended property tax impact:

REVISED SUMMARY OF TAX CHANGES (WITH 3.5% WEIGHTED ASSESSMENT GROWTH)		
	2006 APPROVED BUDGET	2006 AMENDED BUDGET
GENERAL	2.5%	1.7%
WASTE MANAGEMENT	3.4%	3.4%
SUB-TOTAL REGIONAL SERVICES	2.6%	1.9%
POLICE SERVICES	6.0%	6.0%
TOTAL	3.6%	3.1%

RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic financial management is a key strength of Halton Region. The Halton Region Strategic Plan sets out to preserve and enhance Halton's fiscal foundation, while maintaining affordable municipal tax rates as an important goal of Council. Continued diligence in managing debt levels and rebuilding reserves will be required to sustain Halton's strong fiscal position and AAA credit rating.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Scinocca
Director, Financial Planning and Budgets



J. E. MacCaskill
Commissioner of Corporate Services &
Regional Treasurer

Approved by



A. Brent Marshall
Chief Administrative Officer

If you have any questions on the content of this report, please contact: Mark Scinocca

Tel. #7043

Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée

Office of the Minister

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MAR 02 2006

Ms. Joyce Savoline, Chair
Halton Regional Board of Health
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville ON L6M 3L1

Dear Ms. Savoline:

I would like to commend you on your continuing efforts towards the renewal of public health in Ontario and share with you our directions for public health funding in 2006.

Together, we have clearly demonstrated our commitment to public health. We have worked hard to revitalize the system through dedication and support, including the provinces uploading for funding Mandatory Health Programs and Services. Provincial funding will grow from \$273 million in 2004-05 to an estimated \$469 million by 2007-08.

Furthermore, we have made significant investments related to province-wide public health programming and services, including 100% provincial funding in the following areas:

- \$156M over 3 years for three new childhood vaccines
- \$41.7M to support Operation Health Protection, including:
 - 180 infectious disease positions in public health
 - Regional Infection Control Networks
 - Implementation of an integrated Public Health Information System in all 36 health units
- \$13.5M over 3 years to build preparedness for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies.

The McGuinty government is committed to ensuring Ontario is prepared for emergencies, and that is why we established the Emergency Management Unit in December 2003, released the second edition of the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic in June 2005, and released the Ministry Emergency Response Plan in July 2005.

In recognition of this government's commitment to keeping the people of Ontario healthy, we have created Ontario's first-ever Ministry of Health Promotion with the appointment of my colleague, the Honourable Jim Watson, as Minister. Under Minister Watson's leadership, our government is strengthening its focus on healthy, active living and illness prevention across the province. This includes investing \$50 million in 2005-06 for the implementation of a comprehensive Smoke-free Ontario strategy. Together our ministries are working in partnership on public health funding to strengthen our collective efforts to prevent disease and promote health.

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The excellent work of two committees also deserves to be highlighted. The Agency Implementation Task Force is close to submitting its final report on the design of Ontario's first Public Health Agency. In addition, I await the final report of the Capacity Review Committee regarding strengthening governance and accountability in public health, including a multi-year funding framework.

These collective investments represent a historic milestone in public health renewal.

However, the growth rate for provincial funding of public health units was 8.8% in 2005, and has averaged 9.4% since 2001. This rate of growth, on top of the upload, must be more modest if our public health system is to be sustained. I look to you, as leaders in public health, for your cooperation in ensuring the best possible use of our health care resources to support the important work of public health. This work should be guided by the health needs of Ontarians and will be supported by strengthened accountability practices.

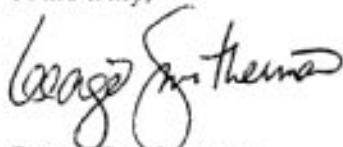
With this context in mind, we will be reviewing board of health grant requests within a provincial envelope that provides for up to 5% growth in 2006.

As part of the government's commitment to increase the provincial share of public health funding from 50% in 2004 to 75% by 2007, \$127 million in eligible public health costs will be uploaded. Staff will continue to work closely with you to ensure that key public health priorities are funded with appropriate consideration of local and provincial priorities.

You will receive further correspondence shortly from Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health Division that will include further information regarding the 2006 Program-Based Grant process and funding requirements.

In closing, I extend to you and your staff my gratitude for your contributions to the renewal of public health in Ontario.

Yours truly,



George Smitherman
Minister

c: Hon. Jim Watson, Minister of Health Promotion
Hon. John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Cameron Jackson, MPP (Burlington)
Ted Chudleigh, MPP (Halton)
Kevin Flynn, MPP (Oakville)
Ted McMeekin, MPP (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot)
Dr. Robert Nosal, Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region Health Department
Dr. Liana Nolan, President, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Dr. Garry Aslanyan, President, Ontario Public Health Association
Roger Anderson, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Appendix 'B'
to Report CS-35-06Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care

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MAR 28 2006

Chair Joyce Savoline
The Regional Municipality of Halton
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville ON L6M 3L1

Dear Chair Savoline,

The McGuinty government recognizes that the common goal of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and of delivery agents responsible for providing land ambulance services is improving the timely delivery of excellent, affordable pre-hospital health care services.

Accordingly, the additional grant funding announced recently reinforces the government's commitment to work co-operatively with delivery agents to close the gap between current government funding and 50% of the cost of delivering land ambulance services by 2008. To this end, the ministry has reviewed the funding for land ambulance services for the year 2006 in an effort to begin narrowing the gap.

Your organization's share of the recently announced 2006 funding is as follows:

- Grant funding adjustment: \$2,195,639

Your funding will be processed shortly.

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Chair Ioyce Savoline

This additional funding will strengthen and improve land ambulance service delivery across the province.

I would like to take this opportunity to again convey my sincere appreciation for the considerable contributions all members of your organization make in the provision of health services in your community.

Yours truly,



George Smitherman
Minister

- c: Kevin Daniel Flynn, MPP Oakville
- Cameron Jackson, MPP Burlington
- Ted Chudleigh, MPP Halton
- Juanita Gledhill, Chair, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN

Attachment C to CS-35-06

Revisions to the Financing of the 2006 Transportation Program

ID	Description	2006 Budget						Revised as CS-35-06						Difference*					
		Financing			Non-Risk Debt			Financing			Non-Risk Debt			Financing			Non-Risk Debt		
		Total Cost	Subsidy	Res DC	Gen Rsvs	Regional Debt	Non-Risk Debt	Total Cost	Subsidy	Res DC	Gen Rsvs	Regional Debt	Non-Risk Debt	Total Cost	Subsidy	Res DC	Gen Rsvs	Regional Debt	Non-Risk Debt
0246	Dundas Street - 4 to 6 lane widening (including new 10-Mile Creek Structures) from Niagara Blvd to Proudfoot Trail (CBM) (Regional Bd. 2)	10,135	-	5,312	1,860	871	3,652	10,061	-	5,312	4,749	-	(74)	-	-	-	-	-	(3,012)
0306	Dundas Street - New 10-Mile Creek Structures between Niagara Blvd and Proudfoot Trail (CBM) (Regional Board 2)	17,805	1,130	5,164	2,240	2,759	3,912	17,719	1,130	5,164	3,504	-	(90)	-	-	-	4,264	(2,700)	(1,591)
TOTAL		\$ 27,940	\$ 1,130	\$ 10,476	\$ 4,280	\$ 2,830	\$ 7,564	\$ 27,780	\$ 1,130	\$ 10,476	\$ 14,253	\$ -	\$ (186)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,973	\$ (2,900)	\$ (1,283)

*The decrease in the total cost is the result of the cost of leaving debt savings related to financing \$7,077 million from the Tax Capital General Reserve as opposed to Alternative

Appendix 'C'
to Report CS-35-06

**Minister of Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

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Appendix 'D'
to Report CS-35-06



06-1737

March 30, 2006



Ms. Joyce Savoline
Chair
Regional Municipality of Halton
Halton Regional Centre
1151 Bronte Rd.
Oakville ON L6M 3L1

Dear Chair Savoline:

I am writing to let you know that our government will be allocating \$4 million of additional funding to municipal service managers participating in the Provincial Rent Bank Program across the province. The Regional Municipality of Halton will receive \$123,243.00.

As you know, in 2004 our government provided service managers with \$10 million in Rent Bank funding to assist tenants to avoid eviction when they face temporary financial setbacks resulting from an illness, a job loss, or a family emergency.

The program has played an important role in preventing homelessness by keeping people in their homes for the past two years. I am excited about continuing to work with our municipal partners to make a difference in people's lives.

I look forward to your continued support in delivering this very important program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Gerretsen".

John Gerretsen
Minister

c: Mr. Brent Marshall, CAO, Regional Municipality of Halton
Mr. Kevin D. Flynn, MPP, Oakville