

Dear Municipal Leaders:

We are writing to you regarding the Provinces' announcement on January 13th, 2021, of the impending closure of the Gravenhurst campus of the Ontario Fire College.

It is our understanding that two of the three associations who were quoted in the Governments press release as being in support of the closure were not consulted before the announcement other than to be asked if they were in support of the "modernization and regionalization" of training for the fire service in Ontario. The Government did NOT inform these associations that this meant closing down the Gravenhurst campus of the Fire College!

The Provincial Government has publicly stated that this modernization and regionalization will be more cost-effective and accessible to municipalities. This is simply not true. The Government has not shared a plan to show how their proposed modernization and regionalization of the fire service training will be more cost-effective and accessible to all municipalities in Ontario.

The Province's regionalization model currently has Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with a mixed bag of twenty "Regional Training Centers" (RTC's) located in various areas around the Province. The municipalities' cost to send one firefighter to an RTC range between \$300 - \$1200 for the course alone. This cost does not include accommodations or meals.

The Gravenhurst campus of the Ontario Fire College has modern facilities with modern equipment where subject matter experts provide training in all fire service disciplines. Students intermingle with each other on campus, and most have made lifelong friends while staying at the College. This social interaction will not exist at any RTC. The cost is \$65.00 for a municipality to send one firefighter to the College. That cost includes accommodations and three meals a day. This cost has not changed in well over a decade.

The fact of the matter is that each municipality's cost to train their fire service personnel to a recognized standard, which could soon become mandatory if the Government revives O. Reg 379/18, could dramatically increase by closing the Gravenhurst campus.

The Fire Protection and Prevention Act 1997, as amended, requires the Fire Marshal to "develop training programs and evaluation systems for persons involved in the provision of fire protection services." It also stipulates the fire marshal must "provide programs to improve practices relating to fire protection services" and "maintain and operate a central fire college."

As municipal leaders, would you prefer an affordable, cost effective training model that keeps students in one location with up to date, technically accurate training facilities led by subject matter expert? Or a more expensive training model in facilities that cannot match what the Gravenhurst campus can offer?

If you prefer the former, please stand with us against this ill advised closure. Let's keep your firefighters and your community safe by keeping the ONLY provincial fire training facility in Ontario open!