



TOM MRAKAS
MAYOR

July 7, 2025

Members of Council,

As Mayor of Aurora and a member of the AMO Board, I want to offer some perspective on Bills 5 and 17.

These are substantial and complex pieces of legislation. While there are certainly elements within each bill that raise legitimate concerns—particularly regarding municipal autonomy and long-term fiscal sustainability—there are also parts that, if implemented collaboratively and thoughtfully, could offer real benefits for Ontario's communities.

Importantly, both bills have now received Royal Assent, which means they have passed into law. Additionally, all public commenting periods are now closed. The next phase—the one that truly determines how these laws will function—is the development and release of the regulations, which are still to come.

To bring forward two motions to oppose these bills in their entirety now—after the legislation has passed and the consultation period has ended—is both pointless and moot. It serves no constructive purpose and does nothing to influence the process that's already underway.

That's why almost all municipalities have taken a measured approach, rather than opposing the bills outright. There's good reason for this. AMO has clearly stated that while some aspects of the legislation require clarification and adjustment, other proposals—like Development Charge modernization in Bill 17 and Special Economic Zones in Bill 5—could help drive local economic growth if municipalities are full partners in the process.

The reality is, these are framework bills, not finished products. The regulations that will define their real-world impacts have not yet been released. Even our municipal staff do not fully know what the implications will be. Unlike more straightforward bills—such as the reversal of tribunal rules—Bills 5 and 17 are layered, far-reaching, and depend heavily on how the regulations are written. Anyone claiming to know exactly how these will play out is not being truthful—because even the Province has acknowledged those details are still in development.

As a member of the AMO Board—representing 444 municipalities across Ontario—I believe it is premature and irresponsible to oppose these bills in their entirety before understanding the full regulatory framework. AMO's position is clear: if the Province works with municipalities, many of the potential risks can be mitigated. Acting in opposition now, before those opportunities to collaborate have been exhausted, risks losing influence over how the final regulations are shaped.

I remain hopeful that through open, ongoing dialogue with the Province—and by continuing to advocate for practical, transparent, and community-focused regulations—we can help shape outcomes that work for everyone and ensure Aurora has a meaningful voice in the decisions ahead.

In the meantime, I will not support the motions calling for opposition to both Bills 5 and 17 in their entirety, which are being brought forward at the July Council meeting requested by the four members of Council. I believe the more responsible and constructive course of action is for our Town to stand with AMO and support their detailed, thoughtful submissions.

I will continue to monitor developments closely, work collaboratively with our municipal partners and AMO, and respond in a way that is informed, balanced, and focused on real outcomes. I will always stand for Aurora and our best interests. We have led on many issues before—and this will be no different.

That is what leadership requires—and what our residents deserve.

Mayor Tom Mrakas

AURORA TOWN HALL