



# Media Release

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*For Immediate Release*

*Wednesday, November 12*

## ***Provincial-municipal uploading agreement reached***

Timmins - On October 31, it was announced that over the course of the next 10 years, the Province of Ontario plans to upload social assistance benefits and court security costs from municipalities. The Timmins Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have been advocating easing the burden on the municipal tax base for some time; this agreement shows positive movement towards easing the financial burden on our cities.

The agreement to upload these costs was reached by the Government of Ontario, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the City of Toronto, and is intended to allow certain services to be better-delivered and more affordably funded. So, over the next 10 years, the province will gradually take over the funding of programs including Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Drug Benefits, public health, land ambulance, court security and offender transportation costs. The uploading of these services is anticipated to save Ontario municipalities an estimated \$1.5billion per year by 2018.

According to Timmins Mayor Tom Laughren, “Any agreement that eases the burden on our city and frees up municipal tax dollars is good news. So it is a step in the right direction; however, it’s important that the uploading translates to real gains for the north.” Stated Laughren, “For municipalities to truly benefit from this agreement, the costs that were originally downloaded must be uploaded by the province in full. It is vital that the money that is freed up over the next 10 years remains with each municipality, so that we have the ability to use it elsewhere and improve our competitive edge.”

Rob Galloway, President of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce, also believes that the agreement is good news for Ontario municipalities and businesses. “This is something that cities have needed for some time now. The provincial downloading that occurred placed a huge burden on the municipal tax base – which is primarily funded by property taxes paid by residents and businesses. Relieving municipalities of these funding responsibilities will most certainly reduce some stress on the municipal tax base in providing services to communities and our businesses.”

For more information about the municipal-provincial agreement, see the government website: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page181.aspx>

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***About the Timmins Chamber of Commerce***

*With over 750 members, the Timmins Chamber of Commerce is the largest accredited chamber of commerce with distinction in northeastern Ontario. As the “Voice of Business in Timmins” since 1949, our advocacy and policy initiatives focus on ensuring a positive business climate in the City of Timmins.*