



## NEWS RELEASE

# Niagara Region Council Votes to Launch Made-in-Niagara Governance Review, Putting Taxpayers First

For Immediate Release

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*Niagara Mayors unite with Regional Councillors to initiate service delivery and governance review in the region.*

NIAGARA, ON — Niagara Regional Council has voted 23-2 to initiate a service delivery and governance review of the region.

"Our residents deserve a government that is efficient, accountable, and close to home," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. "This review is how we get there. Carefully, responsibly, and on our own terms."

The motion reflects a clear consensus across Niagara's municipal leadership: reform is needed, but it must be done right and come from Niagara itself. Any proposed changes will be required to demonstrate, at a minimum, clear value to taxpayers, respect for local voices, while maintaining excellent public services, before moving forward. Public consultation should also be grounded in the facts of the business case, giving residents the information they need to weigh in meaningfully.

The vote reinforces what Premier Ford said publicly on February 25 that any governance changes in Niagara must come from Niagara, by Niagara, with the support of the majority of mayors and elected officials.

"This is exactly what made-in-Niagara reform looks like," said Cheryl Ganann, Mayor of West Lincoln. "Not top-down directives, not rushed decisions without evidence. A serious, locally led review that puts taxpayers first and follows the facts, while respecting local autonomy."

This regional vote builds on growing momentum across Niagara's local municipalities. Four local councils have already passed formal resolutions this month to voluntarily reduce the size of their own councils and some councils are already at the minimum



size, demonstrating that Niagara's communities are ready to lead reform without waiting for direction from above.

The municipalities that have voluntarily cut the size of their councils have called on the Province to introduce the legislative authority needed to make those reductions take effect at the 2026 municipal election, with a deadline of May 2026.

### **Background**

- Niagara Regional Council passed the governance review motion 21-9 on February 26, 2026, and forwarded it to Premier Ford and Minister Flack.
- Any proposed changes must be supported by a rigorous, peer-reviewable business case including financial analysis, value to taxpayers and the maintenance of excellent public services.
- So far, many local municipalities, including Grimsby, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thorold and Port Colborne, have passed voluntary council reduction resolutions in the past year.
- The Province must act by May 2026 for those reductions to take effect at the October 2026 municipal election.

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