

FRENCH LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER ASKS FRANCO-ONTARIAN COMMUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RENEWAL OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

TORONTO, May 31, 2011 – Ontario’s French Language Services Commissioner, François Boileau, is asking the Franco-Ontarian community to play an active role in the plans to renew the delivery of government services announced in the last provincial budget. This appeal to Franco-Ontarians represents the first recommendation contained in the Commissioner’s annual report entitled *Annual report 2010-2011: A shared engagement*.

“Franco-Ontarian communities across the province should take a serious look at the best ways of obtaining quality services and offer to provide them on the government’s behalf,” said French Language Services Commissioner, François Boileau.

“But this also means that the government must be prepared to listen and break down the silos between ministries to allow for the genuine development of Francophone communities.”

In his annual report, the Commissioner also appeals to municipalities that already provide French-language services. Commissioner Boileau urges them to have the political courage to adopt bylaws to protect these services.

“Such measures not only contribute to the survival and development of the Franco-Ontarian community, but they also ensure that the delivery of French-language services doesn’t hinge on the political goodwill of the current municipal council,” said the Commissioner.

“The time to act is now,” stressed Commissioner Boileau.

As well as providing an assessment of results obtained by the Commissioner’s Office in partnership with numerous complainants, the FLSC’s annual report includes:

- a recommendation to amend the *Electricity Act* to ensure that the Ontario Power Authority, Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation and all future entities be subject to the *French Language Services Act* insofar as programs, services and communications targeting the general public are concerned;
- a recommendation to ensure that Franco-Ontarians have at their disposal, in French, all required information to fully participate in the province’s waste reduction, reuse and recycling programs; and
- a recommendation to guarantee the availability of day treatment education programs for Francophone teens with behavioural disorders.

QUICK FACTS

- In March 2011, the Government of Ontario announced its intention to reform the way it delivers public services and the creation of the Commission on Broader Public Sector Reform.
- There are already several existing partnerships with Francophone organizations that offer excellent services on behalf of the government.
- More than half of municipalities that are members of the *Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario* (AFMO) do not have a bylaw or a policy on French-language services despite the fact that over 80% of AFMO members offer services in French.
- Once a municipality adopts a French-language services bylaw, its citizens may turn to the Commissioner's Office for help if they receive inadequate services.
- The Commissioner's Office conducted an investigation regarding Ontario Power Authority's *saveONenergy* campaign following the province-wide distribution of 5,000,000 money-saving coupon booklets in English only.
- The *French Language Services Act* applies to government agencies that had the majority of its members or directors appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council — which is not the case for agencies under the *Electricity Act*.
- Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) is an organization mandated by the Government of Ontario to develop and administer reduction, reuse and recycling programs.
- Because of WDO's English-only services, Francophones do not have access to information that would allow them to fully participate in waste diversion programs.
- While Francophone students between the ages of 6 and 12 who live in the Toronto area have access to day treatment education programs in French, this not the case for youth aged 13 to 18.

The Office of the French Language Services Commissioner is an agency of the Ontario Government that is responsible for ensuring compliance with the *French Language Services Act*. This *Act* was adopted unanimously by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in November 1986. The Commissioner's Office and the position of Commissioner were created in September of 2007.

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