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News release: EOWC Appoints Chair and Vice-Chair for 2020

Kingston, January 13, 2020 – The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC), at its annual inaugural meeting held last week in Kingston, appointed Mayor Andy Letham as the 2020 Chair and Warden Rick Phillips as the 2020 Vice-Chair.

Andy Letham is Mayor of the City of Kawartha Lakes and will be returning for his second consecutive term as the EOWC Chair. Rick Phillips is Warden of the County of Hastings and Mayor of the Township of Tyendinaga, and previously served as Chair in 2013. Both are longstanding members of the EOWC, and bring valuable experience to their positions.

The EOWC Chair and Vice-Chair serve as the main point of contact for the Caucus and play a leadership role in helping to ensure that key EOWC priorities move forward. Both positions are one-year terms, each filled by one of the 13 EOWC members. Appointments are based on a vote by the EOWC members or, in the case of a single candidate, an acclamation.

"I am honoured to return as the 2020 EOWC Chair in order to continue advocating on behalf of the 103 municipalities and the 750,000 property taxpayers across rural Eastern Ontario," stated Chair Letham. "Last year, the EOWC once again proved the efficiency and reliability of its research and its advocacy, as well as its ability to respond quickly to proposed policy changes that impact municipal services. I look forward to working closely with Vice-Chair Phillips and my fellow Caucus members to deliver these same results for eastern Ontario."

For the purposes of good continuity, the EOWC has decided to stay the course on its 2019 advocacy efforts for the first few months of the current year, beginning with next week's delegations at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference (ROMA).

Priority topics of discussion are the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) Cellular Network Improvement Project and Broadband Gap Strategy, the Provincial Health System overhaul, affordable housing, and funding for long-term care. The EOWC will undergo 2020 priority setting in the spring and at this time will decide the focus for the remainder of the year.

"The EOWC's greatest strength is its ability to speak with a unified voice and bring together the entire region of eastern Ontario at one table. As we work towards advancing EOWC priorities in 2020, we will continue to work closely with the provincial and federal governments as well as key partners in order to best serve eastern Ontario residents," stated Vice-Chair Phillips.

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