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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Chief Administrative Officer
Report: #2026-INFO-043
Date: May 29, 2026

Subject:

Bill 100 Community Engagement Results

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Regional Council with a summary of public feedback collected through a short community survey on *Bill 100, Better Regional Governance Act, 2026*. The survey was initiated following [a motion](#) passed at the April 29, 2026, Regional Council meeting, which directed staff to seek input from Durham Region residents.
- 1.2 The engagement aimed to gather residents' perspectives on the proposed legislation, including whether the Regional Chair should continue to be elected by residents. The feedback collected was intended to inform Council's understanding of community views and support the Region's response to the Province.

2. Background

- 2.1 Durham Region has had a directly elected Regional Chair since 2014, supported by a 2010 referendum in which residents voted in favour of this model.
- 2.2 Bill 100 was released April 2, 2026. It proposed changes to municipal governance structures, including provisions that would give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the ability to appoint the Regional Chair in Durham and five other Regional Municipalities.
- 2.3 As part of a motion to oppose the change, Regional Council directed staff to conduct targeted public engagement to capture current community sentiment on the election of the Regional Chair.

- 2.4 Bill 100 received Royal Assent on May 7, 2026, which was during the engagement period. The survey remained open until the stated date of closure.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 No previous reports or decisions.

4. Engagement

- 4.1 To support the community engagement process as directed by Council, a public survey was launched on the Your Durham platform, accessible through a dedicated Bill 100 web page at durham.ca/Bill100. The web page provided background information on the [Better Regional Governance Act, 2026 \(Bill 100\)](#), including an overview of the proposed legislative changes, the purpose of the survey, and links to the [motion regarding Bill 100 passed by council](#) and [a recording the council meeting](#) to help residents make informed submissions.
- 4.2 The survey was open from May 4 to 18, 2026, and was designed to gather input from Durham Region residents on key aspects of the proposed changes, most notably whether the Regional Chair should continue to be elected. Participants were first asked to confirm they are a Durham resident and identify their municipality, followed by a question on their preference regarding the election of the Regional Chair (yes, no, or unsure), with an opportunity to provide additional comments through an open-ended response.
- 4.3 To encourage broad participation, the campaign was supported by a co-ordinated, multi-channel promotion strategy, including the Your Durham webpage, a public service announcement, social media content and paid advertising, regional newsletters such as *This Week in Durham* and corporate e-news, as well as a digital communications toolkit shared with Regional Council to support local amplification.

5. Survey Results

5.1 Quantitative results

- a. The survey received participation from 1,311 Durham Region residents ("contributors").
- 92.4 per cent of respondents selected "Yes" to wanting the Regional Chair to be elected.
 - 7.6 per cent of respondents either opposed an elected Regional Chair or indicated they needed more information to decide.
- b. All survey contributors identified as Durham Region residents. Feedback was received from residents across all eight local municipalities, with the highest engagement from residents in Oshawa (25.1 per cent), Whitby (25.0 per cent), Clarington (15.0 per cent) and Ajax (12.8 per cent), followed

by Pickering (10.3 per cent), Uxbridge (5.4 per cent), Scugog (4.0 per cent) and Brock (2.3 per cent).

5.2 Qualitative results

- a. A review of qualitative responses found that 168 comments focused on democracy and accountability themes, including concerns about elected versus appointed leadership, transparency and the public's right to vote.
- b. There were 40 comments that reflected concerns about a loss of local control, with respondents describing the proposed changes as shifting decision-making authority.
- c. A total of 26 comments raised concerns related to trust and legitimacy, with respondents noting that an appointed Chair may reduce transparency in local decision-making.
- d. Respondents pointed to Durham's previous referendum and past public votes on this issue; 15 comments explicitly referenced that earlier public direction in support of an elected Regional Chair
- e. Four responses cited potential benefits of the proposed changes (e.g., improving efficiency, reducing costs, or streamlining government).

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- a. Strong Relationships
 - S1. Enhance inclusive opportunities for community engagement and meaningful collaboration.
 - S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.
 - S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.
 - S5. Ensure accountable and transparent decision-making to serve community needs, while responsibly managing available resources.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Survey results demonstrate that many of the Durham residents who participated want to retain the ability to elect the Regional Chair. They highlight the importance on democratic accountability and the opportunity to vote for local leadership. There was also a recurring sentiment that previous public input, including past referenda, should be considered in any future decisions.
- 7.2 At the same time, respondents emphasized the value of ensuring that local governance continues to reflect community priorities and perspectives, with some expressing concern that a shift to an appointed model could affect transparency and accountability to residents.

- 7.3 A letter summarizing the data has been prepared for the Province and will be submitted on behalf of Regional Council and a link to this report will be added to the Bill 100 web page (Attachment #1).

8. Attachments

Attachment #1: Letter to the Province

Prepared by: Amanda Chambers, Manager, Government Relations and Alison Burgess, Executive Director, Communications and Engagement.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment #1: Letter to the Province

Sent by Email



May 29, 2026

The Honourable Rob Flack
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
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Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A1
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**The Regional
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John Henry
Regional Chair and
CEO

Re: Durham Region Community Feedback on Bill 100

Dear Minister Flack:

On behalf of Regional Council, I am writing to share the results of a recent community engagement initiative regarding *Bill 100, Better Regional Governance Act, 2026*.

At Council's direction, Durham Region conducted a public survey between May 4 and May 18, 2026, to gather residents' perspectives on the proposed legislation, including the governance model for the Regional Chair. The survey was promoted through a range of channels to support broad awareness and participation across the region.

A strong majority—over 92 per cent of respondents—indicated support for maintaining the election of the Regional Chair. Many participants emphasized the importance they place on democratic accountability and the opportunity to directly elect regional leadership.

At the same time, the input also reflects thoughtful consideration of broader governance issues. Residents frequently noted the importance of respecting previous public input, including past referenda, and underscored the value of ensuring that local governance continues to reflect community priorities and perspectives. Some respondents expressed concern that a shift to an appointed model could impact transparency and accountability, while a smaller number noted considerations related to efficiency and cost.

Overall, the results suggest a strong and consistent preference for maintaining an elected model, alongside a desire to ensure that any changes to regional governance continue to support effective, accountable, and locally responsive decision-making.



We respectfully share this feedback for your consideration as the Province continues to review and advance Bill 100. Durham Region remains committed to working collaboratively with the Province to support governance models that reflect both local priorities and broader provincial objectives.

**The Regional
Municipality of
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John Henry
Regional Chair and
CEO

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the results further at your convenience.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

John Henry
Regional Chair and CEO