



**April 24, 2024**

**The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria**

**Minister of Transportation Ontario**

777 Bay Street, 5th Floor

Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8

**Subject: Urgent Need for Transparency and Action on the Closure of Bridge on Durham Region Road 15**

**Dear Minister Sarkaria,**

We are writing to you today on behalf of the Durham Business Alliance, representing the eight distinct business communities within the chambers of commerce and boards of trade in Durham Region, to urgently address the ongoing closure of the bridge on Durham Regional Road 15 (Simcoe Street) in Beaverton, Township of Brock.

As you may recall, the Province of Ontario assumed responsibility and subsequently ordered the closure of this bridge last November 2023, with no subsequent updates on plans for its repair or replacement. This bridge, critical for local traffic including emergency services, has significantly impacted the community of Beaverton and the surrounding areas.

Historically maintained by the Region of Durham, the bridge had previously closed for repairs in late 2020 and was reopened in early 2021. Plans were in place for further repairs or replacement by the Region in 2025. However, after the Province took over and re-evaluated the structure, it has remained closed, exacerbating issues for local residents and businesses.

**IMPACT TO BUSINESS**

The sudden and prolonged closure of this bridge has severely disrupted the main access route to Beaverton, leading to a notable decline in local store traffic and altering consumer shopping behaviors — impacts that are likely to become permanent without timely intervention. This is particularly

concerning as we approach the tourist season, starting with Victoria Day Weekend, which traditionally sees a surge in visitors and revenue for local businesses.

### **IMPACT TO PUBLIC SAFETY**

More recently and perhaps even more urgently, the closure has impeded the ability of emergency services to respond promptly to incidents along Highway 12 and surrounding areas, thereby increasing the risk to public safety and property. This situation is made even more critical by ongoing repairs on nearby Highway 12, which already experiences high volumes of traffic and emergency calls during the summer months.

In light of these challenges, we respectfully request an immediate public statement detailing the planned course of action and associated timelines for reopening or replacing the bridge. It is also vital to confirm that funding has been allocated for this essential infrastructure to support the residents and businesses of Beaverton and the Township of Brock.

We appreciate your attention to this critical matter and look forward to your prompt response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JK' with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back up to the right.

**Jason King**

**Chair, Durham Business Alliance**

**CEO, Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce**

**CC:**

Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

Laurie Scott, MPP, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock

Todd McCarthy, Minister of Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery of Ontario, MPP, Durham

John Henry, CEO/Regional Chair, Region of Durham

Mayor Walter Schummer and Council, Township of Brock

Andrea Carmona, Senior Manager of Public Affairs, Ontario Chamber of Commerce

Durham Business Alliance