



**Ontario  
Association  
of  
Fire Chiefs**

**2012-2013**

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October 19, 2012

Via email: [info@elliottlakeinquiry.ca](mailto:info@elliottlakeinquiry.ca)

Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry  
1400 Blair Place  
Ottawa, ON K1J 9B8  
The Honourable Paul R. Belanger, Commissioner

Dear Honourable Mr. Justice Belanger:

Re: Application for Standing at the Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs to hereby apply for standing at the Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs has appeared at other provincial inquiries. Our standing has been beneficial to the Commissioner and the public in providing insight and information related to the operation of first responders. In addition the knowledge gained from our participation has helped us to improve our training and support so that all fire chiefs can better manage future emergency situations.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs represents the chief fire officers of the 458 municipal fire departments in Ontario. These 458 fire departments are divided into 31 career fire departments, 176 composite fire departments and 251 volunteer fire departments. There are 30,498 firefighters in Ontario including 19,246 volunteer firefighters, 11,031 career firefighters, and 221 part time firefighters. The role of all these Ontario fire departments and our firefighters is to protect Ontarians and their property.

The Vision of the OAFIC is: Inspiring and influencing a safer Ontario.

The OAFIC Mission Statement is: Leading innovation and excellence in public and life safety.

Fire departments are the first responders to almost every public emergency or disaster. They "answer the call" to motor vehicle collisions, life-threatening medical calls, floods, building collapses, uncontrolled releases of contaminants into the environment (chemical spills), ice and water rescue, trench rescue, high angle rescue, ice storms, tornados, and various other emergencies in addition to fire responses.

On June 23, 2012 the local Elliot Lake Fire Service initially responded to the report of a structural collapse at the Algo Centre Mall. The Elliot Lake Fire Service was further supported by a Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR) Team including staff of the Toronto Fire Service.

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A situation of similar magnitude and impact could occur in most any community across Ontario and thrust the local municipality's fire department and emergency management team into the direct involvement of managing the situation. In the majority of Ontario communities the fire chief plays a dual role of not only fire chief and directing the fire department operations but also that of Community Emergency Management Coordinator.

The OAFCA, on behalf of its membership, would assist the inquiry in fulfilling the Inquiry's mandate, in particular items:

- 2(a) *Inquire into and report on events surrounding the collapse of the Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake, Ontario, the deaths of Lucie Aylwin and Doloris Perizzolo and the injuries to other individuals in attendance at the mall and the emergency management and response by responsible bodies and individuals subsequent to the collapse; and*
- 2(c) *Review relevant legislation, regulations and bylaws and relevant policies, processes and procedures of provincial and municipal governments and other parties with respect to the emergency management and response to the collapse of the Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake, Ontario.*

Should the Commission deem it appropriate and/or necessary for the OAFCA to make oral submissions in support of this request for standing we would be pleased to attend.

Should you require any additional information please contact the undersigned. Thank you for considering our request and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. R. Foster', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fire Chief Kevin Foster,  
President