

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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234-2025-4982

November 25, 2025

Dear Head of Council:

Through the *Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025* ([Bill 17](#)), which received Royal Assent on June 5, 2025, changes were made to the *Planning Act* that will help streamline and standardize municipal development processes.

This includes changes that enable the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, by regulation, to permit variation from a zoning by-law “as of right” if a proposal is within a prescribed percentage of the required setback (the minimum distance a building or structure must be from a property line) on specified lands. This new authority was intended to reduce planning applications for minor variances.

Today, our government announced further action to streamline planning approvals by exercising my authority established under Bill 17 to amend Ontario Regulation 545/06 ([Zoning By-laws, Holding By-laws and Interim Control By-laws](#)) to allow variations to be permitted “as-of-right” if a proposal is within 10% of setback requirements applicable to specified lands. Specified lands include any parcel of urban residential lands outside of the Greenbelt Area, and exclude areas such as hazardous lands, and lands near shorelines and railways. These changes in [Ontario Regulation 257/25](#) were filed on November 21, 2025 and took effect upon filing.

Any variances sought beyond the prescribed percentage of the setback requirement would be subject to the usual minor variance or rezoning approval process and other zoning standards (e.g., height limits, etc.) would continue to apply, helping to mitigate potential land use compatibility issues.

This “as-of-right” permission is intended to remove the need for certain variances that are the most minor in nature, resulting in fewer applications submitted and fewer hearings for minor variances before a municipal committee of adjustment for these proposals.

The proposed regulation works with the [Additional Residential Units regulation](#) (Ontario Regulation 299/19) to help create additional residential units, such as basement suites, by eliminating additional barriers related to setbacks.

We look forward to continued collaboration with our municipal partners as we work together to achieve our goal of building the homes that Ontarians need.

Sincerely,



Hon. Robert J. Flack
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- c. Robert Dodd, Chief of Staff, Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, MMAH
David McLean, Assistant Deputy Minister, Housing Planning and Policy Division,
MMAH
Municipal Chief Administrative Officer