



STATEMENT FROM THE CAO

Emergency Declaration Decision

For Immediate Release

August 6, 2026

Recent media coverage and online commentary have misrepresented both the purpose and the effect of a municipal emergency declaration. The public deserves accurate information, and these claims must be corrected.

The suggestion that declaring a state of emergency would automatically unlock provincial or federal funding is false. Ontario's guidance expressly states that emergency declarations do not provide access to funding, legal protections or expedited access to resources. Municipalities can also request many forms of provincial assistance without declaring an emergency.

An emergency declaration is a specific legal and operational tool. It is not a measure of the seriousness of the losses experienced by residents. The damage to homes, farms and businesses is significant and deeply consequential, regardless of whether a declaration is made. The absence of a declaration does not diminish that hardship, nor does it mean the Town is failing to act.

The decision must be based on whether extraordinary measures are required to protect the community or support the municipal response. Niagara-on-the-Lake continues to assess its circumstances against the established criteria in [Appendix G of the Town's Emergency Response Plan](#).

My assessment is informed by more than 25 years in public safety and municipal leadership, experience as a Community Emergency Management Coordinator in Ontario, and formal training through Emergency Management Ontario, UNC-Chapel Hill and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Institute.

A neighbouring municipality's declaration reflects its own conditions, risks and operational requirements. It does not establish that the same action is necessary or appropriate in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Declaring an emergency simply because another municipality has done so would be irresponsible and contrary to the evidence-based process expected of municipal leaders.



Municipal staff continue to respond, assess damage, document costs, investigate infrastructure concerns and pursue available assistance. These actions do not depend on an emergency declaration.

Public scrutiny is appropriate, but repeating inaccurate claims about emergency declarations is not. Media coverage and online commentary must clearly explain what this tool does and what it does not do. Continuing to suggest that a declaration automatically provides funding misleads residents at a time when they need reliable information.

Niagara-on-the-Lake will continue to monitor conditions and apply the established criteria. If a declaration becomes necessary to protect the community or strengthen the municipal response, the Town will act without hesitation.

Nick Ruller

Chief Administrative Officer

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