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Letter re Warden

SIMCOE COUNTY to APPOINT NEW WARDEN – INFO & DRAFT EMAILS
APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 13, 2026 11:59pm

Background Information

Current warden is Ramara Mayor Basil Clarke

* The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is responsible for selecting the individual to fill the role. The Minister is **Rob Flack**.
* The new position is the **Regional Head of Council** (which replaces the previous "Warden/County Chair" role under the newly passed *Better Regional Governance Act, 2026*).
* The requirements set by the province are intentionally broad. Legally, an applicant only needs to meet standard eligibility under the *Municipal Act, 2001*, which primarily means being eligible to vote in a lower-tier municipality within Simcoe County. The province's **Public Appointments Secretariat** handles the application review process, Application submission opened June 30, 2026 and the deadline for submissions is July 13, 2026 at 11:30pm. The notice and job description can be seen at: https://simcoe.ca/featured-news/province-provides-criteria-and-opens-application-process-for-full-time-appointed-county-of-simcoe-head-of-council
* Our understanding is this a relatively short period of time for a job of such importance.

Community Concerns

* It is believed Mayor Clake will apply for the position. Given he currently holds the position, that may give him a distinct advantage over other applicants.
* There have been serious concerns expressed by many in Ramara with the operations of the Township under Mayor Clarke's leadership. Most recently is the legal case over shore walls where the courts found the Township acted in "Bad Faith" and also found to be in "Contempt of Court" when it did not act on the original court ruling.
* Canadians overall are expressing a need for accountability in government.

What You Can Do If You Have Concerns

* Write to the Minister and copy your MPP and the Public Appointments Secretariat. Two draft emails are on the next 2 pages to assist you or write your own. The 1st letter calls for all applicants to be law abiding. Letter 2 is focused on preventing Mayor Clarke from being selected for the position.
* If you are unsure of email addresses, the chart on page 5.
* Share this post with other residents in Simcoe County.

* Contact the local media and ask them to report on the concerns. See page 5.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE BUT ACT QUICKLY

ACT TODAY!

DRAFT Letter #1

SUBJECT: Demanding Accountability, Transparent Timeline, and Strict Vetting for the Simcoe County Regional
Head of Council Appointment

The Honourable Rob Flack
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing College Park,
17th Floor 777 Bay Street Toronto,
ON M7A 2J3

Sent via email: minister.mah@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Flack,

I am writing to you today as a resident of Simcoe County regarding the upcoming provincial appointment for the full-time position of Regional Head of Council (Warden), under the Better Regional Governance Act, 2026.
The public is deeply fatigued by the lack of transparency and accountability across various levels of government. We are looking to our leaders to actively demonstrate a shift in behavior and a clear change in the way public business is conducted. This selection process is your ministry's opportunity to show that the provincial government takes public integrity seriously.

To that end, I must first register my serious concern regarding the exceptionally narrow application window, which closes on July 13, 2026. Giving the public only a few days' notice for a newly created, high-level, taxpayer-funded regional role severely undermines the credibility of this search. A closed, rushed process leaves the impression that the outcome is already predetermined.

To ensure this appointment is genuinely competitive and transparent, the Public Appointments Secretariat must include a comprehensive review of all applicants' judicial litigation history. We expect our governments to be more accountable, and this vetting must establish a firm baseline: any individual who played an active role as an elected, appointed, or employed

management official in a municipality during a period where it faced severe judicial sanctions for “bad faith” or “contempt of court” must be deemed permanently unsuitable for this elevated regional role.

We have seen clear examples within our own county where local governance failed to meet the standards rightfully expected by our communities. The ongoing judicial rebukes against the local administration are well-documented in the public record:

- The Bad Faith Ruling: Bertrand v. Township of Ramara, 2024 ONSC 7291 https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2024/2024onsc7291/2024onsc7291.html
- The Contempt of Court Ruling: Bertrand et al v. Township of Ramara et al, 2026 ONSC 1662 https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2026/2026onsc1662/2026onsc1662.html

The deep financial and administrative damages sustained by our communities due to these actions have been heavily documented across multiple public and investigative news reports: When a court of law determines that a municipal body has operated in bad faith and subsequently ignored court orders, it represents a profound breach of public trust. Anyone who presided over or directed local councils during these judicial rebukes has demonstrated a track record of governance that runs entirely counter to the fair, transparent administration Ontarians deserve. I would question the judgment of any such official should they have the audacity to apply for this expanded regional position.

[OPTIONAL PARAGRAPH TO EXPLICITLY NAME BASIL CLARKE - DELETE IF YOU PREFER THE NEUTRAL VERSION]: As a resident of Simcoe County, I want to state explicitly that current Ramara Mayor and Simcoe County Warden Basil Clarke should be deemed entirely ineligible for this role. Under his specific leadership, the Township of Ramara was found by the Superior Court to have acted in bad faith and subsequently held in contempt of court. Elevating an individual with this specific judicial track record to a newly created, provincially appointed chair would completely invalidate your ministry's stated goals of strong, accountable regional governance.

A position with expanded regional oversight requires a leader with an unblemished commitment to accountability and the rule of law. I respectfully request that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing extend the application deadline to allow for a proper public search, and ensure that past judicial findings of bad faith and contempt serve as an absolute barrier to this appointment.

Thank you for your consideration of these facts.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

CC: Public Appointments Secretariat (PASInfo.mgs@ontario.ca)
CC: [Name of your local Simcoe County MPP and their Email]

References – Court Cases

* The Bad Faith Ruling: Bertrand v. Township of Ramara, 2024 ONSC 7291 https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2024/2024onsc7291/2024onsc7291.html
* The Contempt of Court Ruling: Bertrand et al v. Township of Ramara et al, 2026 ONSC 1662 https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2026/2026onsc1662/2026onsc1662.html

References – Media Reports – a small sample

* https://www.orilliamatters.com/local-news/its-not-over-ramara-township-found-in-contempt-of-court-orders-12033476
* https://www.barrietoday.com/court/its-not-over-ramara-found-in-contempt-of-court-orders-12043466
* https://www.thetrillium.ca/municipalities-newsletter/ramara-council-meets-behind-closed-doors-about-contempt-charge-12092674

DRAFT Letter #2

SUBJECT: Demanding Accountability, Transparent Timeline, and Strict Vetting for the Simcoe County Regional Head of Council Appointment
The Honourable Rob Flack
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing College Park,
17th Floor 777 Bay Street Toronto,
ON M7A 2J3

Sent via email: minister.mah@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Flack,

I am writing as a Simcoe County resident to express my strong opposition to any possible appointment of Basil Clarke to the new full-time position of Simcoe County Regional Head of Council/Warden under the Better Regional Governance Act, 2026. This provincially appointed, taxpayer-funded role requires a leader with unquestioned integrity, sound judgment, transparency, and respect for the rule of law. In my view, Mr. Clarke does not meet that standard.

The Township of Ramara has been the subject of serious Ontario Superior Court findings, including findings of bad faith in Bertrand v. Township of Ramara, 2024 ONSC 7291, and contempt of court in Bertrand et al v. Township of Ramara et al, 2026 ONSC 1662. These are not minor political disagreements or routine municipal disputes. They are serious judicial findings that speak directly to governance, accountability, and respect for court orders. Any elected official or senior municipal leader who presided over, supported, or failed to correct conduct resulting in findings of bad faith or contempt should not be elevated to a broader regional leadership role.

I respectfully urge the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to ensure that judicial findings of bad faith, contempt of court, or similar misconduct are treated as disqualifying factors in this appointment process. Simcoe County residents deserve a Regional Head of Council who can restore trust, not someone associated with governance failures that have already caused significant financial, legal, and public confidence concerns for local taxpayers.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
CC: Public Appointments Secretariat (PASInfo.mgs@ontario.ca)
CC: [Name of your local Simcoe County MPP and their Email]

References – Court Cases

* The Bad Faith Ruling: Bertrand v. Township of Ramara, 2024 ONSC 7291 https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2024/2024onsc7291/2024onsc7291.html
* The Contempt of Court Ruling: Bertrand et al v. Township of Ramara et al, 2026 ONSC1662 https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2026/2026onsc1662/2026onsc1662.html

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* https://www.barrietoday.com/court/its-not-over-ramara-found-in-contempt-of-courtorders-12043466
* https://www.thetrillium.ca/municipalities-newsletter/ramara-council-meets-behind-closed-doors-about-contempt-charge-12092674

The following information will help you determine the correct email to use for your letter.

CHART 1 — MPPs REPRESENTING SIMCOE COUNTY AREAS

MPP and area represented	Email

Hon. Doug Downey Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	doug.downey@pc.ola.org
Hon. Andrea Khanj Barrie - Innisfil	andrea.khanjin@pc.ola.org
Hon. Jill Dunlop Simcoe North	jill.dunlop@pc.ola.org
Brian Saunderson Simcoe—Grey	brian.saunderson@pc.ola.org
York—Simcoe — **MPP seat vacant following Caroline Mulroney's resignation June 5, 2026**	No current MPP email

Media Outlet / Area	**Contact / Email**
BarrieToday Barrie and Simcoe Region	Raymond Bowe, Editor raymond@barrietoday.com
OrilliaMatters Orillia and surrounding area	Dave Dawson, Editor dave@orilliamatters.com
CollingwoodToday Collingwood and South Georgian Bay	Editorial Team news@collingwoodtoday.ca
MidlandToday Midland, Penetanguishene, Tiny and Tay	Andrew Philips, Editor andrew@midlandtoday.ca
BradfordToday Bradford West Gwillimbury	Chris Simon, Editor chris@bradfordtoday.ca
InnisfilToday Innisfil	News Desk news@innisfiltoday.ca
CTV News Barrie Barrie and Central Ontario	Newsroom barrieinbox@ctv.ca
Barrie 360 Barrie and Simcoe County	Newsroom Online news submission
Simcoe.com / Metroland Simcoe County communities	Editorial/News Tips Metroland news-tip submission

Note: Charts produced by AI application ChatGPT