

EI Benefits

Whereas a healthy unemployment insurance system is the most powerful of all economic stabilizers. In the recessions of the early '80s and '90s, UI prevented deeper, longer downturns and reduced the shock of job and GDP losses;

Whereas we have entered this new economic crisis with a much weaker EI system. It provides only half the coverage it did in the last recession. Now only one third of the unemployed receive EI at any given time- because fewer workers qualify and benefit weeks are reduced;

Whereas the federal Government stopped contributing to EI and diverted EI premiums to other spending (54 Billion between 1994-2007 instead of restoring EI benefits);

Whereas even the US government has shown leadership through major improvements in the duration of UI benefits and a universal benefit top-up as part of a stimulus package to deal with the crisis;

Whereas there will be a negative fiscal impact on all municipalities if residents are unable to access EI benefits or otherwise maintain incomes during this economic downturn, due to the increased reliance on locally provided social programs,

Therefore be it resolved that the **Town of Ingersoll** call upon the Government of Canada to introduce the following changes to the Employment Insurance system

- 1. 360 hours to qualify for EI benefits in all regions of Canada**
- 2. Increase benefits duration to at least 50 weeks in all regions, and**
 - Provide an additional year of "Special Extension" benefits if national unemployment exceeds 6.5%- paid from federal general revenues.**
 - Extend EI benefits while a worker is in approved training**
- 3. Increase benefits to at least 60% of normal earnings, using workers' 12 best weeks, and raise the maximum. Suspend the**

allocation of severance pay, and eliminate the 2 week waiting period.

Circulate to

County Council, Prime Minister of Canada, Minister of Finance, Minister of Labour Oxford MP, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the NDP, Leader of the Block, Premier of Ontario.