



**NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES**

August 23, 2019

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Councillor Waye Mason
Halifax Regional Municipality

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Town of Yarmouth

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County of Colchester

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Cape Breton Regional Municipality

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Warden Timothy Habinski
County of Annapolis

TOWN CAUCUS CHAIR:

Mayor Jeff Cantwell
Town of Wolfville

The Honourable Stephen McNeil
Premier, Province of Nova Scotia
P.O. Box 726, Halifax, NS B3J 1X5

Dear Premier McNeil:

RE: CBRM VIABILITY

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors for the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) in support of Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM).

We support CBRM in their call for immediate action from the Province on the recently released Grant Thornton viability study. The sustainability of Nova Scotia's second largest municipality is under serious threat and NSFM is calling on the government to take urgent action.

The Grant Thornton study offers a series of well-reasoned recommendations to help CBRM survive. These recommendations overlap with NSFM's own resolutions, established by consensus and approved by our members in November 2018, which call for action on five municipal priorities.

Given the programs and services that CBRM—and all our members—provide their communities, they need and expect the support of all MLAs, inside and outside of government, to see their resolutions acted on fully and promptly.

NSFM's 2018/19 priorities are:

- Removing the CAP on property assessment
- Implementing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for printed paper and packaging
- Addressing inadequacies in funding levels and the formula for Municipal Funding

- Acting to bring legislation to enable Municipal Modernization including new governance and collaboration models
- Funding for Roads, including equitable funding for towns and former towns for shared arterial and collector roads, and increased funding for J-Class roads

These resolutions are the result of months of robust consultation and engagement with our membership and stakeholders and were voted on at our AGM. Each one aligns with the recommendations of the CBRM viability study.

Elimination of the capped assessment program is revenue-neutral for the province but would have a significant impact on our members. And implementation of EPR would greatly reduce waste management costs for CBRM, as well as other municipalities.

Municipal funding, modernization and roads are driven by Provincial priorities affecting municipalities.

In particular, the issue of increased capacity grants and a formula for the new funding that better supports CBRM and other municipalities with similar issues is not new. The issue has been studied again and again by successive governments, new formulas and funding levels proposed, but to date no government has made new funding available.

In fact, it has been over a decade since Nova Scotia's municipalities have received new funding from the Province to assist operating costs, costs that are often increasing due to new provincial and federal regulatory pressures. At the same time, municipalities have been paying more and more to the province every year for housing, corrections and education.

Our proposal is modest, simple, and effective – increase the Municipal

Capacity Grant by \$6.6 million a year for three years, and target the new funding at CBRM, towns, and rural municipalities that operate town infrastructure, for a total of \$20 million.

In the face of the challenges, municipalities have one tool: Raising property taxes. And as the viability study shows, continued increases drive people away. Without action from the Province, other municipalities will also reach a state where they are no longer viable.

Now is not the time for partisan politics. Our members and the citizens we all represent require swift, decisive, and non-partisan action. NSFM calls on the Province, and all political parties, to support immediate action to address our resolutions in the House in the fall and in the next budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Mason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Councillor Wayne Mason
President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

CC: The Honourable Randy Delorey, M.L.A., Minister of Health and Wellness
The Honourable Kelly Regan, M.L.A., Minister of Community Services
Ms. Tammy Martin, M.L.A., Cape Breton Centre
Ms. Alana Paon, M.L.A., Cape Breton-Richmond
Mr. Hugh MacKay, M.L.A., Chester-St. Margaret's
The Honourable Gordon Wilson, M.L.A., Minister of Environment
Ms. Rafah DiCostanzo, M.L.A., Clayton Park West
Mr. Larry Harrison, M.L.A., Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley
The Honourable Karen Lynn Casey, M.L.A., Minister of Finance and Treasury Board
Ms. Barbara Adams, M.L.A., Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage
The Honourable Tony Ince, M.L.A., Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs
Ms. Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, M.L.A., Cumberland North
Mr. Tory Rushton, M.L.A., Cumberland South
Mr. Tim Halman, M.L.A., Dartmouth East
Ms. Susan Leblanc, M.L.A., Dartmouth North

The Honourable Keith Colwell, M.L.A., Minister of Agriculture
Ms. Claudia Chender, M.L.A., Dartmouth South
The Honourable Lloyd Hines, M.L.A., Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Renewal
Mr. Kevin Murphy, M.L.A., Eastern Shore
The Honourable Patricia Arab, M.L.A., Minister of Communications Nova Scotia
The Honourable Geoff MacLellan, M.L.A., Minister of Business
The Honourable Lena Metlege, M.L.A., Minister of Immigration
Mr. Brendan Maguire, M.L.A., Halifax Atlantic
Mr. Gary Burrill, M.L.A., Halifax Chebucto
The Honourable Labi Kousoulis, M.L.A., Minister of Labour and Advanced Education
Ms. Lisa Roberts, M.L.A., Halifax Needham
Mr. Ben Jessome, M.L.A., Hammonds Plains-Lucasville
Ms. Margaret Miller, M.L.A., Hants East
The Honourable Chuck Porter, M.L.A., Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Mr. Allan MacMaster, M.L.A., Inverness
Mr. John Lohr, M.L.A., Kings North
Mr. Keith Irving, M.L.A., Kings South
The Honourable Leo A. Glavine, M.L.A., Minister of Communities, Culture, and Heritage
Ms. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, M.L.A., Lunenburg
The Honourable Mark Furey, M.L.A., Attorney General and Minister of Justice
Mr. Pat Dunn, M.L.A., Pictou Centre
Mr. Tim Houston, Leader of the Opposition, Pictou East
Ms. Karla MacFarlane, M.L.A., Pictou West
Ms. Kim Masland, M.L.A., Queens-Shelburne
Mr. Brad Johns, M.L.A., Sackville-Beaver Bank
Mr. Steve Craig, M.L.A., Sackville-Cobequid
The Honourable Derek Mombourquette, M.L.A., Minister of Energy and Mines
The Honourable Iain Rankin, M.L.A., Minister of Lands and Forestry
Ms. Lenore Zann, M.L.A., Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River
Mr. Keith Bain, M.L.A., Victoria-The Lakes
Mr. Bill Horne, M.L.A., Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank
The Honourable Zach Churchill, M.L.A., Minister of Education and Early Childhood
Development