



**NOVA SCOTIA
FEDERATION OF
MUNICIPALITIES**

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Town of Port Hawkesbury

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RURAL CAUCUS CHAIR:

Warden Bruce Morrison
Victoria County

TOWN CAUCUS CHAIR:

Mayor Lennie White
Town of Westville

March 28, 2023

Office of the Premier of Nova Scotia
One Government Place
1713 Barrington Street
Halifax NS B3J 2A4
Attention: Honourable Tim Houston

Delivered via email

Dear Premier Houston,

Re: Municipal Consolidation

The Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) is aware there may be a decision by your government to delay or change the approach to the special legislation to consolidate the Town of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish. The Board is both disappointed and surprised by this news. We hope your government will reconsider this matter and continue to work with both municipalities and introduce the legislation in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

NSFM is an advocate for municipal autonomy and provincial assistance in matters regarding municipal collaboration, regionalization, and mutually agreed upon consolidation. Our organization operates with a strong, long-standing, mandate from our members to advocate for municipal modernization and this is a priority and core value we share with the province.

The objective of consolidation is to create stronger local government to improve economic opportunities, quality of life, and resiliency. Reducing redundancies and inefficiencies in local government will influence innovation, modernization, and service delivery to citizens. Members recognize that the significant challenges facing our province, such as accessibility, climate change, housing, and infrastructure planning can only be addressed when we work together. We support our members as they plan for tomorrow and we believe these are values you also share.

Elected officials at the municipal level are keenly immersed in their local communities. In this case, both municipal councils completed a lengthy process of public consultation and community engagement. As duly elected officials, after careful consideration of input from their residents and acting in the best interests of their respective communities, a well-informed decision was made to move forward with consolidation. Furthermore, the authority to proceed in this manner is granted in the Municipal Government Act, Sections 2A & 2B.

Nova Scotia is facing serious challenges. Healthcare, housing, and a shortage of skilled labour are just a few of the many issues that your government is focused on; we support your efforts to improve the quality of life of our citizens. NSFM has deliberately taken steps to strengthen our relationships and build trust with the province. Solutions for our province can only be realized when we work together, but there is no time to waste.

We feel that strategic use of our limited resources will enable municipalities to address the concerns you have noted and achieve a level of modernization that will position our communities for growth and development. We ask you to support us in this endeavour and collaborate on the specific areas where your assistance and expertise can help.

On behalf of our forty-nine member municipalities, many of whom are considering similar steps in securing a strong future for their communities, it is NSFM's expectation that the province will respect the authority granted within the Act and allow this legislation to move forward. In conclusion, on behalf of the Board, we respectfully ask that the decision not to proceed with the special legislation on consolidation be reconsidered at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Chisholm-B

Brenda Chisholm-Beaton

President

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

cc: Honourable John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

cc: Honourable Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness

cc: Honourable Greg Morrow, Minister of Agriculture