

September 20, 2023

Honourable John Lohr, Minister
Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
PO Box 216, Halifax NS B3J 2M4
Email: dmanim@novascotia.ca

Dear Minister Lohr:

RE: Consolidation of the Town and County of Antigonish

On September 13, 2023, two years have passed since our councils unanimously endorsed the exploration of consolidation. Over the next thirteen months our municipalities undertook an extensive assessment and community engagement process to determine if our residents, businesses, and communities would be better off if Antigonish were one municipal unit. We continue to appreciate the support provided by your Department during that time.

On October 20, 2023, one year will have passed since the County and Town Councils passed resolutions requesting the Province of Nova Scotia consolidate our municipalities into one through special legislation. The Nova Scotia House of Assembly will commence its fall 2023 sitting on October 12, 2023. While our requested legislation did not get on the agenda of the spring sitting, we expect that it will in the fall sitting.

In a recent CBC article, both you and Premier Houston spoke about the challenges of population growth and made specific references to the necessity of partnerships with municipalities. In that article Premier Houston said his government was prepared to do what's necessary to help municipalities, further stating, "They [municipalities] have a willing partner in the province and if there's a way to get something done, we'll definitely get it done."

This is a recent example of your government's consistent theme since taking office. Nova Scotia is growing. Your government accepts the challenges of growth. We do too. But to most effectively remove the barriers that stand in our way of meeting those challenges consolidation is necessary. We stand ready to be your partner.

As we await a decision of Justice Gabriel in the action taken against the County by three residents who have challenged the Council's legal right to request legislation, we encourage your government to make any necessary preparations for a successful result and introduction of special legislation in the fall sitting. We and our staff are prepared and available to assist as appropriate.

Respectfully,



Owen McCarron
Warden
Municipality of the County of Antigonish



Laurie Boucher,
Mayor
Town of Antigonish

Cc: Honourable Michelle Thompson, MLA for Antigonish
Honourable Greg Morrow, MLA for Guysborough-Tracadie
Byron Rafuse, Deputy Minister, Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Valerie Pottie Bunge, Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Municipal Affairs
and Housing
Andrew Atherton, Executive Director, Department of Municipal Affairs and
Housing
Nick Barr, Director, Governance & Advisory Services
Brenda Chisholm-Beaton, President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities
Juanita Spencer, CEO, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities
Jeff Lawrence, CAO, Town of Antigonish
Glenn Horne, CAO, Municipality of the County of Antigonish
