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August 3rd, 2023

Honourable John A. Lohr
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
P.O. Box 216
Halifax, NS B3J 2M4

Delivered via email

Dear Minister Lohr,

RE: Proposed amendment to the MGA for Ministerial authority in municipal land use planning

The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) received a briefing from staff at the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) regarding a proposed legislative change to the Municipal Government Act (MGA). Although no specific details or language was provided to the Board, the proposed changes included extending the authority of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to designate municipal land for the purposes of developing facilities funded by the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care.

NSFM appreciates the mandate of the current government for “*More Healthcare, Faster.*” We are also keenly aware that impactful change, change that is not overshadowed by unintended consequences, lasting change – takes time.

The NSFM Board of Directors does not endorse a rapid succession of Ministerial intervention in municipal land-use planning and by-law development. Municipal leaders would welcome the opportunity to work with the province on designing land-use planning strategies that accelerate housing, including housing for seniors. Ministerial authority is a blunt instrument for an issue that calls for a thoughtful integration of strategies that address housing shortages through the municipal planning process.

As always, we invite the provincial government to engage with municipalities on how to incorporate solutions into the fabric of municipal operations.

Sincerely,

Brenda Chisholm-B

Brenda Chisholm-Beaton, President
Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities