



20 March 2026

Paul LaFleche
Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs
8th Fl. N., Maritime Centre
1505 Barrington St.
Halifax, NS B3J 2K5

(Delivered via email)

RE: Grant Request for Addressing Harassment of Elected Officials and Optimizing Code of Conduct

Deputy Minister LaFleche,

Please accept this letter regarding NSFM's request to the Department of Municipal Affairs for work to support improvements to the Code of Conduct (CoC) process and address harassment of local elected officials.

Nova Scotia municipal elected officials are experiencing escalating harassment and threats, including instances of death threats linked to decision-making in the public interest. The CoC complaint process, which was designed for accountable governance, has been improperly used for policy disputes. Municipalities have received a significant amount of frivolous or vexatious complaints, which has resulted in rising costs for municipalities.

The Province amended certain aspects of the CoC in October 2025 to:

- Pause the ability of the public to use the CoC complaint process;
- Clarify that elected officials may only file a complaint against another council member in the same municipality;
- Allow for the consolidation of similar complaints into one investigation; and,
- Disallow complaints on behalf of third parties.

These interim measures have:

- Temporarily limited complainant standing to council-originated complaints; and,
- Set expectations for investigator triage/efficiency (e.g., dismiss obviously vexatious complaints; combine duplicative files).

The Province has committed to conducting a full review of the CoC framework in 2027. In preparation of this review, NSFM has been heavily involved in the development of the CoC framework, and we continue to offer a variety of services to advance this work, including:

- Conducting research and analysis on the CoC Framework;
- Engaging in consultation sessions and disseminating surveys to our membership to gather feedback and insights on CoC matters; and,
- Partnering with the Nova Scotia Community College to deliver a mandatory CoC online training module for elected officials.

In addition, NSFM has secured a proposal with 21FSP Advisory inc. to deliver a multi-pronged strategy to modernize the CoC framework and address the harassment of officials through the identification of quick wins and staged implementation under the current authority, targeted legislative options for the Fall 2026 sitting of the legislature and leveraging this work to inform the 2027 review.

To support progress on this very important municipal issue, NSFM is requesting a grant of **\$100,000** from Municipal Affairs for the 2026/27 fiscal year. The breakdown of our request is as follows:

Item	Total
21FSP Proposal	\$89,600
Professional Fees	\$4,000
NSFM Staff Support	\$6,400
	\$100,000

We would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with Department of Municipal Affairs staff after the project is completed to review the findings of this work and determine the next steps on this issue.

We hope this grant request meets with your approval. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information or would like to discuss this request in more detail.

Kind Regards,



David Mitchell,
President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities



Juanita Spencer,
CEO, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

Enclosure: 21FSP Proposal: Strengthening Democratic Integrity – Addressing Harassment of Elected Officials and Optimizing Code of Conduct Processes in Nova Scotia Municipalities.