



July 30, 2021

NSFM

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

VIA EMAIL: DCoffey@nsfm

I am pleased to respond to our questionnaire as follows:

### **Municipal Funding**

**As costs continue to increase for municipalities, having reliable revenue sources for emerging projects remains foremost on the priority list for many communities. For those regions that receive funding through the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant, the need for continued provincial support cannot be understated.**

**Question for the candidate: Are you willing to increase the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant, frozen at 2015 levels, by \$20 million over the next three years?**

For several years, the PC Caucus called on the Liberal government to ask the Auditor General to prepare a report on this fund when they were still referred to as equalization payments. They did not respond. Our MLAs continued their efforts and wrote directly to the Auditor General and requested that a report be commissioned on the subject of this fund. The answer was no, that the request for the report has to come from the Premier and/or the Minister. The PC Party feels that the MFCG should be reviewed and modernized. We will not know what form it will take until it has been properly assessed by the Auditor General. As a PC government, we intend to double the MFCG for the first year, until a new Memorandum of Understanding with the municipalities can be reached.

**Increasing accessibility is a goal shared by municipalities across the province. Our members are concerned that the requirements laid out in the provincial Accessibility Act are accompanied by funding support.**

**Question for the candidate: Will you cost-share 50/50 in all municipal projects required to comply with the Accessibility Act, if those projects do not receive other funding?**

A PC government is committed to ensuring the Accessibility Act treats all Nova Scotians equitably. Discussions around cost-sharing will need to take place upon forming the government.

**Finally, municipalities need more than project-based funding. We require new revenue streams to continue to support communities on the ground. As the provincial government continues to see increased revenues from cannabis sales, Nova Scotia municipalities want to know if the government will commit to the spirit of the initial federal/provincial agreement and share those revenues.**

**Question for the candidate: Will you commit to providing municipalities with a substantial share of the revenues being generated by the sale of cannabis?**

The PC Party has committed to renegotiating the Memorandum of Understanding with the province. As with any negotiation, we would expect all parties to come to the table with their asks.

### **Housing**

**The government recently received various recommendations from the Affordable Housing Commission related to increasing the supply of affordable rental housing in Nova Scotia. NSFM, as the voice of municipalities, was not given a seat at the table. There are concerns the Commission will continue to act in an advisory capacity without proper municipal representation.**

**Question for the candidate: Given that many of the Commission's suggestions will have a significant impact on local government, how will you engage municipalities in a review of recommendations prior to their potential implementation?**

A PC government is committed to meeting with stakeholders across all jurisdictions and sectors to make the best-informed decisions and recommendations.

This is evident in our Long-Term Care plan. We used the best available evidence and listened to the people with lived experience before we announced our needs to increase staffing hours per resident, and committed to doing so. The previous Liberal government did not give you a seat at the table, and a PC government believes you should not need an inside track to be engaged with the government.

### **Environment (EPR)**

**The environment is an issue of concern for residents across the province. Part of the solution will be requiring producers of plastics and other waste to be responsible for their end-of-life management. NSFM has provided issue and stakeholder research to the government to help Nova Scotians join the 80% of Canadians who live in areas with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).**

**Question for the candidate: What plans do you have to expedite the introduction of EPR legislation, given the extent of research and stakeholder engagement that has already been completed?**

We asked for an update on the floor of the legislature in 2019. We are aware and eager to be engaged in this project. Upon forming a government, the research and stakeholder engagement will need to be reviewed thoroughly.

### **Climate Change**

**Lastly, our members have clearly identified adapting to the impacts of climate change as a significant issue. Independent research completed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) showed municipal costs associated with climate change to be higher in the Maritimes than anywhere else in Canada.**



-3-

**Question for the candidate: How will you work with municipalities to update their Municipal Climate Change Action Plans (completed in 2013) and what funding and support will you provide to ensure local governments are prepared to mitigate and adapt to projected changes in our climate?**

As we stated previously, a PC government believes that you shouldn't need an inside track in order to have a seat at the table. We have ideas that we are excited to share on the environment, and we look forward to expanding upon them with the input previous governments have ignored.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C MacKeen', written in a cursive style.

Cameron MacKeen  
Campaign Co-Chair  
PC Party of Nova Scotia