



**Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Office of the Minister**

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April 2, 2020

Mayor Pam Mood  
President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities  
Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 2K8

VIA email: [info@nsfm.ca](mailto:info@nsfm.ca)

Dear Mayor Mood:

Under the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing must provide to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) 12-months' notice of any provincial legislation, regulation, or administrative actions that could have the effect of decreasing revenues or increasing the required expenditures of municipalities.

At this time, I understand municipalities are focused on efforts, in collaboration with provincial and federal governments, to protect the health and safety of their residents to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). Although we are amid a rapidly evolving situation, we still want to ensure we meet our legislative obligations under Section 519 of the Municipal Government Act. The changes will not come into effect until 2021-2022. This letter is intended to provide notice of such changes for fiscal year 2021-2022 and beyond.

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) canvassed all other provincial departments to seek information on plans for legislative, regulatory, and policy changes in the coming fiscal year. The following is a summary of the results of that process.

## DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

### Code of Conduct

Consultations will be taking place in fiscal 2020-21 on strengthening codes of conduct for elected municipal officials. The process for addressing code of conduct issues will be developed with input from the municipalities and the NSFM. It is difficult at this time to determine the potential financial impact on municipalities as future costs to municipalities will be dependent on the model that is advanced as a result of consultations. Potential costs could include costs related to investigations for alleged breaches, training, etc.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Procurement

Every two years Global Affairs Canada updates its thresholds for covered procurements under the free trade agreements. Municipal procurements are covered under these obligations. The thresholds were most recently updated on January 1, 2020 and may have an impact on municipalities through minor changes to their procurement processes (the value where procurements must follow the public solicitation process).

	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) New Thresholds	Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) New Thresholds
Goods	\$366,200	\$105,700
Services	\$366,200	\$105,700
Construction	\$9.1M	\$264,200

In addition, with the signing of the Atlantic Trade and Procurement Partnership MOU the Atlantic Procurement Agreement thresholds will be removed.

The following is a link to a document summarizing current thresholds:

<https://procurement.novascotia.ca/media/54954/procurement%20in%20nova%20scotia%20and%20trade%20agreements%20-%20jan%202020%20with%20timeframes.pdf>

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is advising of the following changes to our policies in 2021-2022. TIR will be revising its policy on working within rights-of-way, so any municipality doing work within TIR right-of-way will require a deposit as part of the permit before work can begin. These deposits could range in value, between \$300 to \$100,000 as an estimate, depending on the size of the project a municipality is proposing.

This has been standard practice across the province, however, there have been some inconsistencies across the province and the new policy will provide better direction and clarity. We anticipate this to be applied as of April 1, 2021 and will forward the NSFM a copy of the policy once it has been finalized.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Biological Casework Analysis Agreement

The Biological Casework Analysis Agreement provides Nova Scotia's Municipalities with DNA analysis arising from criminal investigations. DNA is an important service that helps solve crime. The financial cost of this program is expected to remain at approximately \$1.8M for Nova Scotia.

The proration of the cost to municipalities will be reassessed annually upon the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing's release of the 'Total Uniform Assessment' for the current fiscal year.

If any of the above content is unclear or should you have any questions regarding the provided information, please do not hesitate to contact the department for clarification.

Mayor Mood, please know that we are all navigating uncharted waters and the next few weeks and months will reveal the extent to which our operations will be impacted. If we do not return to regular operations within that period, we will continue to work together regarding the notice contained herein, and on ensuring that Nova Scotians are safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Porter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C".

Chuck Porter  
Minister