



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

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Dear CAO,

It has been more than 25 years since any government has even offered a substantive review and renegotiation of the MOU between the Province and the municipalities. As you know, the Province worked with the NSFM negotiating team for more than a year to get it right.

As a result of these discussions and 29.5 hours of consultation with municipalities, we introduced Bill 340.

I don't know if you've been following what's been happening in the Legislature with this Bill. But, it would be a shame for this opportunity for municipalities to receive more to be missed at this stage in the process.

I am hopeful we can get this Bill across the line and deliver on the more than \$50 million this Bill will provide to municipalities across the Province.

The voices opposing the Bill coming out of both Opposition parties and the CBRM have been loud and persistent. The Opposition are filibustering the Bill and have held it up, grounding the Legislature to a halt for the past three days. They tell us this will continue. As a result, no business is moving forward.

Since CBRM has consistently asked for its own Charter, we believed that was something they wanted. We wrote to them on September 15 advising them of the option to (a) be a part of the same agreement that 47 other municipalities support; or (b) exempt themselves from this arrangement, in which case the Province would work collaboratively with them to start the process of finally negotiating a CBRM Charter.

Our only ask of them was that whatever decision they make - option (a) or (b) - be supported by a vote of Council. We felt this was a reasonable ask - to ensure the decision represented the will of the majority of the Council - particularly given CBRM's recent history of division.

We didn't actually receive a response. Their silence is hard to reconcile in the face of being offered exactly what they had asked for.

With a looming deadline of the Legislature fast approaching, we wrote to them again on September 21. Still, they did not communicate any decision, nor did they put the options to Council for a vote.

As a government, we can't in good conscience allow the residents of CBRM to be disadvantaged simply because their own council wouldn't make a decision. As such, CBRM will be a part of the MOU. An arrangement that will see more than \$4 million dollars flowing to and staying in CBRM.

The current Bill representing additional money that CBRM will have for their residents is a good thing. Not only does it give them the control over how they spend this extra money, it gives them more funding to fix roads, provide important services like transit, water and garbage and recycling and, most importantly, support their residents.

This negotiation process was tough but fair. It means more money for municipalities. It's something that municipalities have been calling for and we are proud to have had the courage to work with you to get it done.

However, given the amount of opposition to this Bill and the assertions of the Liberal Party that it is more than CBRM that is discontent with this agreement, we are listening carefully. If it appears that this Bill is in fact not the will of the municipalities, then letting the current MOU continue, un-amended, is an option. This week will guide us. We only want to do what is right for the residents of our municipalities. If we got it wrong and this Bill is not the wish of the municipalities, then we will admit we got it wrong and let the status quo stand.

However, if you feel it is important that this Bill pass, perhaps you could contact your colleagues in the CBRM and help them understand what value you see in the Bill and encourage them to make the decision noted above that has been on offer for over a month.

Bill 340 will go before the Law Amendments Committee later this week. Law Amendments Committee is the opportunity for any Nova Scotia to appear before a group of MLAs and share their thoughts (good or bad) on any Bill.

Finally, if you support this Bill, it may help tone down the negative rhetoric if you contact Opposition MLAs and explain the value of the Bill to your municipality.

Yours truly,

Minister John Lohr