



NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION  
OF MUNICIPALITIES

July 23, 2020

The Honourable Chuck Porter  
Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing

Delivered via email

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Dear Minister Porter,

**RE: Priority Areas, Partnership Framework, Minister's Roundtable**

On November 19, 2019, NSFM wrote to you outlining our five priority areas of focus as voted on by our membership at our annual general meeting earlier that month.

Those priorities are:

- Removing the **CAP** on property assessment
- Implementing **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** for printed paper and packaging
- Addressing inadequacies in funding levels and the formula for **Municipal Funding**
- Acting to bring legislation to enable **Municipal Modernization** including new governance and collaboration models
- Funding for **Roads**, including equitable funding for towns and former towns for shared arterial and collector roads, and increased funding for J-Class roads.

Prior to COVID-19, NSFM was encouraged by discussions we were having with you and other members of government on three of these files, namely CAP, EPR and Roads. The events of the last several months have necessarily diverted focus away from these issues as we collectively worked to support Nova Scotians impacted by the pandemic. And, while there are still many issues related to COVID that require attention, NSFM is now looking to re-engage with government on advancing these priorities.

In the coming weeks, NSFM will be working to reconvene the all-party committee reviewing the Capped Assessment Program. As you may know, NSFM made a request to DMAH in February 2020 for information pertaining to CAP on behalf of members of the all-party committee.

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We have not received the information and are requesting it be forwarded urgently so that we may proceed with our work.

Extended Producer Responsibility is another file where we would like to see immediate movement by government. Our neighbouring province of New Brunswick announced in October 2019 that they are committed to implementing EPR which creates an urgency for Nova Scotia to get out in front and lead the Maritimes.

Last year's AECOM study argues that the nine materials recovery facilities (MRFs) we currently have in Nova Scotia are an example of overinvestment in waste management infrastructure, and that reform is required. The consultants who produced the report were adamant that a single MRF could serve all Atlantic Canada, and that a business led EPR solution would make the same determination.

Logistically, it would make sense to locate that single MRF around Aulac or Moncton. But locating that facility near Amherst or in Cumberland would also be sensible, and of economic advantage to our province. We have a lot to lose if New Brunswick goes first. If they do, we'll be harmonizing our recycling standards with their lower standards, and we'll all be trucking our materials to Aulac, not Amherst.

Roads were a top resolution at the 2018 and 2019 NSFM Fall Conferences, and a joint committee was struck, with participants from NSFM, AMANS, TIR, and DMAH. The committee's work includes clarifying the ambiguities identified in the old service exchange agreement during the 2017 resolution process and laying out a plan for addressing road issues.

The roads committee is working toward developing a proposal for a new funding agreement with respect to both J-class roads as well as trunks and routes in towns and former towns. It is expected that a proposal will be complete sometime this summer or in early fall. At that time, we hope that the report and recommendations would be presented to the Deputy Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal, as well as to NSFM and AMANS members.

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Another important area of focus outside of our priorities is updating the Partnership Framework between DMAH and NSFM. Last year we mutually agreed to review and update the Framework with the expectation that a new one would be signed during our Spring Conference planned for this May. Understandably, we were not able to meet that timeline, but we believe now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to joint decision making and collaboration in achieving our shared vision of healthy and vibrant communities.

Finally, NSFM respectfully requests that a September meeting of the Minister's Roundtable be scheduled as soon as possible. The Roundtable is an important opportunity for NSFM to engage in conversation with Ministers on issues important to the health and success of municipal governments.

I look forward to meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss refocusing our collective efforts to address these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P Mood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Pam Mood

President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

CC: The Honourable Gordon Wilson, Minister of the Environment  
Gary Burrill, Leader, NS New Democratic Party  
Tim Houston, Leader, NS Progressive Conservative Party