



NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES

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Provincial Budget Leaves Out NS Municipalities

While the provincial budget provides for the needs of our most vulnerable citizens, NSFM is disappointed with its failure to address the increasing financial gap municipalities face due to rising costs and outmigration.

"We recognize the importance of a healthy province and no one knows better than municipalities what it takes to build strong communities," says NSFM President Pam Mood.

The budget puts Nova Scotia municipalities at risk because of the government's failure to respond to NSFM's concerns.

The budget fails to respond to NSFM's requests for increases to the capacity grant, and for more equitable cost-sharing of provincially mandated accessibility upgrades.

"We have sacrificed, and belt tightened for five years so the province could make its financial goals, and now it's time to address our concerns about serious and damaging underfunding that impacts the lives of our residents every day."

In the face of increasing financial challenges, municipalities have one tool at their disposal to cover these rising costs: raising property taxes.

The budget fails to respond to NSFM's requests for increases to the capacity grant, and for more equitable cost-sharing of provincially mandated accessibility upgrades.

It also neglects to address NSFM's request for a freeze on mandatory education contributions.

Last year, NSFM requested the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant be increased by \$6.6 million a year for three years, with the new funding targeted at CBRM, towns and rural municipalities that operate town infrastructure, for a total of \$20 million.

That would support the future viability of CBRM, challenged by outmigration and the rising cost of municipal services, outlined in their own provincially commissioned *Grant Thornton* report.

Municipalities have been paying more and more to the province each year for housing, corrections and education. But the province isn't reciprocating by increasing its payments to municipalities.

The province is spending a lot of money around the province to upgrade its 100-series highways, with a capital budget reaching more than \$1 billion.

But none is targeted directly to upgrade the provincially owned Trunk 1 that brings visitors directly into the heart of Nova Scotia's towns.

"Hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on highways, and a fraction of that would go a long way to saving our Main Streets and keeping our rural routes in shape for the thousands of people who call our towns home."

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities is the collective voice of municipalities in the province. Members include all 50 of Nova Scotia's municipalities, and the 379 mayors, wardens and councillors that represent them.

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