

December 16, 2015

Office of the Legislative Council
CIBC Building
Suite 802
1809 Barrington Street
P.O. Box 1116
Halifax NS B3J 2X1

Dear Law Amendments Committee:

The Halifax Chamber of Commerce is writing to express our support for Bill 148, the *Public Services Sustainability Act*.

We believe that this Act is necessary to ensure Nova Scotia's fiscal sustainability.

With 52 per cent of provincial spending on wages and benefits, ensuring that public sector wages rise at an affordable level is a critical part of putting our province on a sustainable fiscal footing. It is clear that public sector compensation has grown well above the private sector average, as well as above the rate of inflation and the rate of GDP growth, for many years now. Bill 148 will help restore some balance to public sector compensation in the context of Nova Scotia's economic and financial realities.

The government's most recent fiscal update shows that the province recently suffered a worrying drop in revenue and that the provincial deficit is now forecast to be above \$240 million. The passage of Bill 148 will help ensure that our province is able to achieve the sustainable public finances that are required to move Nova Scotia forward and create a positive business environment, as outlined in the Halifax Chamber's 2013-2018 strategic plan.

Sincerely,

Robert Batherson
Chair of the Board