

May 10, 2016

By Email: Legc.office@novascotia.ca

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Halifax, N.S.
B3N 1S6

Hon. Diana Whalen
Chair
Law Amendments Committee
P.O. Box 1116
Halifax NS B3J 2X1

Dear Ms. Whalen and Members of the Law Amendments Committee:

We are writing as long-time residents of Halifax Regional Municipality to provide a few comments on Bill 177 which amends the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

While we are not writing to oppose the intent of the Bill, we are very concerned that this Bill has been introduced while a major review of the *Municipal Government Act* is still underway and not to be completed until next year. Why would changes to this Act be introduced midway through that process? What is the urgency of bringing forward these changes when there are many others that could also be included as well?

We are also very concerned about what is not included in the Bill, which seems more pressing as local, municipal issues. These additional issues are very ably expressed in the letter of May 5, 2016 from the Friends of Halifax Common and also, as publicly articulated by members of the Safe Young Avenue group. My wife and I are alarmed at the current pace of demolition of many long-established homes and buildings such as the Cleveland Estate on Young Avenue, the former CBC Radio building on Sackville Street, and homes on May Street and Fern Lane.

In our view, we support the long-overdue need for demolition controls, greater protection of existing affordable, low-cost housing, additional requirements for new affordable housing and long-term care facilities and other housing options for seniors, strengthening of the *Heritage Protection Act*, and greater oversight by the Utility and Review Board to ensure these stricter protections are in place and being enforced.

At this time, it appears to us as though local developers are proceeding with condominium and commercial development at the expense of the social, housing and cultural needs of the vast majority of residents. We question the need for Bill 177 at this time in light of these pressing concerns. We want to see our concerns reflected in new and stronger protections in both the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

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In our view, this legislation should be put on hold until there is further public consultation on changes to both Acts, and these additional areas of concern can be included in new, more comprehensive pieces of legislation.

Yours sincerely,

(Original Signed)

Ian Johnson

Olga Milosevich

- c. Jamie Baillie, Leader of the Opposition and NS PC Leader
- Gary Burrill, NS NDP Leader
- Mayor Mike Savage
- Councillor Linda Mosher
- Councillor Wayne Mason
- Friends of Halifax Common