

**Submission to
Nova Scotia Law Amendments Committee regarding**

**An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia
Bill No. 59**

7 November 2016

Submitted by:

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Introduction

As a person with a disability I am very pleased by the Nova Scotia Government's legislative initiative to recognize accessibility as a serious issue in search of solutions. I have participated in the consultative process leading up to this draft Act and was impressed by the many thoughtful comments made by a diverse group of stakeholders.

I am however disappointed in the result. The current draft Bill is not an 'act' at all, it's essentially a promise for the Province to act. It is heavy on process and administrative structure but silent on commitments, outcomes and results. A cynic would describe it as a re-packaging of the status quo. I was expecting more, surely we can do better as a Province?

Below are some recommendations for consideration.

Recommendation 1:

The definition of the *Built Environment* in the Act ('...means building, a structure or premises.') is too limited and ambiguous. For example does it include infrastructure such as street and sidewalks, does it include parks?? It is unclear, let's have clarity!

Replace the current definition of Built Environment with the following:

Built Environment means the physical structure of communities, including buildings, structures, infrastructure such as streets and sidewalks, parks and recreational facilities.

Recommendation 2

The Act states *Whereas the Government is committed to establishing progressive timelines for developing accessibility standards....* But there is no evidence of such timeliness in the Act other than the requirement for a review of the Act every four years. Let's clarify and articulate these progressive timelines in the Act!

Include the following sub-sections in the Act:

The Province will ensure that:

- ❖ all of the Built Environment it owns, leases or operates is fully accessible to at least the Building Code Standard by the end of 2022;***
- ❖ All Municipal Built Environment owned, leased or operated by local government is fully accessible to at least the Building Code Standard by the end of 2025.***

All Municipalities with a population over 10,000 will be required to submit to the Minister its Accessibility Plan by the end of 2019.

The Accessibility Advisory Board will be required to submit to the Minister its recommended universal design standard dealing with the Built Environment by the end of 2018.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Post". The signature is stylized with a large, circular initial "G" and a distinct "P".

Gerard (Gerry) Post