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**From:** Holley Grant [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 02, 2017 9:05 PM  
**To:** Office of the Legislative Counsel  
**Cc:** MacDonald, Heather M  
**Subject:** Submission regarding Bill 59  
**Attachments:** Lord Nelson.doc

As an able bodied person, I do not have any expertise on the issue of accessibility. I would have remained sublimely ignorant of what physically disabled people probably experience all too frequently had it not been for the fact that my elderly mother has recently been confined to a wheelchair.

Attached is a letter that I wrote to the Manager of the Lord Nelson Hotel regarding an incident involving my mother, myself and my sister when we tried to gain access to the hotel's wheelchair "accessible" washroom. What transpired was frustrating, extremely unpleasant for all three of us and particularly mortifying for my mother who was subjected to an overlong wait and having a private matter become public since it took place in the hotel lobby.

Accessibility is a matter of importance to everyone; illness, an accident, or age could put any one of us in a wheelchair. Barriers like those at the Lord Nelson are inexcusable.

I think it is also worth noting that I have not had any response from the hotel manager, Ms. Lesa Griffin. This reinforces my decision to share this incident with the Law Amendments Committee.

I believe that the people who can affect change should be aware of the common, everyday occurrences of those who affected by inaccessibility and whose quality of life are compromised as a result.

Sincerely,

Holley Grant  
[REDACTED]  
Sydney, NS  
B1P 1Y1

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Lesla Griffin  
General Manager  
Lord Nelson Hotel  
lesla@lordnelson.com

[REDACTED]  
Sydney, NS B1P 1Y1

15 November 2016

Dear Ms. Griffin:

Re: Accessibility

On Sunday, 9 October 2016, my family took my elderly mother to the hotel's Victory Arms Pub for supper to mark Thanksgiving. We have been to many meals in the pub over the years and believed it would be a special outing for my mother. However, the evening was marred by an incredibly frustrating and unpleasant experience.

My mother has recently been required to use a wheelchair and she asked me and my sister to take her to the washroom. We were to discover that a wheelchair "accessible" washroom in the Lord Nelson involves an extraordinarily convoluted and difficult route. An elevator was required to get from the pub level to the lobby. Despite the existence of three elevators, only one will take patrons from the pub level to the lobby. A long wait for that particular elevator ensued. From the lobby, we had to wait for another elevator to the mezzanine level where, the hotel staff informed us, the washrooms were located. We finally reached the mezzanine level only to be confronted by a set of stairs to the washroom. The staff person suggested we carry our mother up the stairs. Really?

Staff then told us there was an "accessible" washroom on the mezzanine level at the *opposite* end of the lobby that had a special lift to that level. We had another long wait for that one elevator from the mezzanine level we were currently on to the lobby. Twice the elevator arrived and opened to exiting patrons but each time the door closed so quickly behind them that we were unable to push the wheelchair in. Interminable wait.

We finally reached the lobby—again—and headed to the lift on the opposite end. It was locked! By this time, a young doorman was assisting us (unfortunately I can't recall his name. Chris?) He was embarrassed by the circumstances but was doing everything in his power to get us to our destination including finding the key to the lift which was eventually located in the manager's office. Another wait. By the way, the lift requires someone to open the gate from the outside once it reaches the mezzanine level. Thankfully, our doorman made sure he was there to let us out. I can't imagine any individual in a wheelchair being able to successfully negotiate all these obstacles

without assistance. The situation in the Lord Nelson takes away the ability to act independently.

Once we reached the mezzanine level, our agonizing excursion wasn't over because now we had to go through a ballroom to reach the washroom, a ballroom where a wedding reception was being held. Thankfully, the wedding party had yet to occupy the room. It would have been incredibly embarrassing for everyone to have our little parade cross the room while the reception was underway. We wound our way around tables and chairs to the hallway on the *other* side of the ballroom to finally arrive at a wheelchair "accessible" washroom.

This exercise took us more than 20 excruciating minutes with the added insult of having to navigate the torturous route back to the Victory Arms. To say we were exhausted and distressed would be an understatement. It is extremely regrettable that my mother, who is in her 90s was subjected to this but no one, regardless of age, should have to face this degrading and ludicrous experience. I am grateful we were only seeking a washroom, not trying to escape a dangerous situation such as a fire.

Our return to the Lord Nelson is unlikely. I would, however, like to commend the young doorman who did so much to assist us and was unfailingly polite and apologetic on behalf of the hotel. He was put in an appalling position by a blatantly oblivious or, worse, discriminatory management. The rights of persons with disabilities are fundamental human rights guaranteed by Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. From our experience, your hotel is in flagrant violation.

In light of the Government of Nova Scotia's initiative to develop accessibility legislation for the province, I am copying this letter to the Community Services Minister, Joanne Bernard.

Sincerely,

Holley Grant