

LAW AMENDMENTS COMMITTEE

Red Chamber, Province House

Monday, October 1, 2018

**Bill #58 - Municipal Government Act (amended) and
Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended)**

- 3:00 p.m.
1. Nathan Rogers
Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia (LPPANS)
 2. Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville
Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

Bill #49 - Gaming Control Act (amended)

- 3:30 p.m.
1. Sue Birge
Responsible Gambling Council in Toronto ON
 2. Jon Kelly
- 4:00 p.m.
3. Chris Roberts
Casino Nova Scotia
 4. Jamie Wiebe

Bill #55 - Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act

- 4:30 p.m.
5. Anna Allen, Mayor
Louis Coutinho, CAO
Town of Windsor
 6. Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville
Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

**Bill #58 - Municipal Government Act (amended) and
Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended) (continued)**

- 5:00 p.m.
3. John Traves, Counsel or Kelly Denty
Halifax Regional Municipality
 4. Victor Oulton
Henry Vissers
Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

**Bill #39 - Cemetery and Funeral Services Act (amended) and
Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act (amended)**

Deferred from previous meeting

Bill #51 - Halifax Convention Centre Act (amended)

No representation

Bill #63 - Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Act (repealed)

No representation

Bill #67 - Securities Act (amended)

No representation



THE TOWN OF WINDSOR
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

28 September 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: legc.office@novascotia.ca

Honourable Minister Mark Furey,
Chair of Law Amendments

Dear Minister Furey and Members of the Law Amendments Committee:

Re: Bill 55 – Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act

The Town of Windsor and the Municipality of the District of West Hants have jointly requested by motions of our respective councils on the 19th day of July 2018 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Honourable Chuck Porter for consolidation of our two municipalities by December 31, 2020.

We hope Bill 55 will receive support at Law Amendments. The Town is making the application from a position of relative strength given its financial condition indicators and its governance record of sound management practices. Our council recognizes that consolidation will spell the demise of many Town councillors but it has not deterred them from making the decision that best serves our larger communities of Windsor and West Hants. We respectfully ask that the consolidation of these two units be considered without delay. Our desire is the creation of a new regional municipality with a new charter that embraces the differences and strengths we will bring in unison.

As evidence of how long this discussion has been going on we submit the following notations from Town Council minutes of 08 March 1966 (some 52 years ago) and the minutes reflect the following:

Entitled in the minutes margin "Proposal Regional Government" and it was submitted at that time by the Municipality of the District of West Hants and it reads as follows:

"Municipality of West Hants under date of February 8th, 1966 was read:

"At our Annual Session of Council, on January 31, 1966, the following resolution was passed:

*"Whereas as the administration costs of Municipal and Town Governments are increasing, And,
Whereas needless and wasteful duplication exists under our present form,*

Be it Resolved that this Council is in favour of amalgamation of the District of West Hants and Town of Windsor and Town of Hantsport into some form of Regional Government,

*AND THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Council shall appoint a committee of three,
together with similar committees in the Towns of Windsor and Hantsport, if and when*

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appointed, to fully investigate the feasibility of Regional Government for this area and such committee to report back to this council at the 1967 Annual Session."

The Council appointed Councillors Long, Crossley and Edwards to this Committee"

This matter was discussed and on motion of Town Councillors Hood and Campbell it was RESOLVED that a Committee be appointed to meet with the Committee appointed by the West Hants Council and the Town of Hantsport to investigate and report. Motion carried. One Councillor McLellan voting "Nay"

Councillors Stephens, Nott, Hood and Ross were nominated. A ballot was taken and Councillors Stephens, Nott and Hood were declared appointed by the Mayor".

This all took place 52 years ago when West Hants submitted the proposal for a Regional Government for discussion with Windsor. From our search of the minutes of the Town of Windsor since this date, there is no evidence of the former Town of Hantsport joining in this effort and no evidence that any meeting of the two willing Councils of Windsor-West Hants ever took place. Clearly, 52 years of waiting requires the kind of leadership being shown by our two Councils to move this agenda forward; and clearly it was recognized that far back that we are far too small to have such duplication and extra costs borne by our communities. The significant leadership of Warden Abraham Zebian and his Council and similarly of Windsor Town Council should not be overlooked in this important process. This process will succeed with new thinking and leadership taken by those who can affect change which will not only benefit our communities but will offer hope for other communities in the same position.

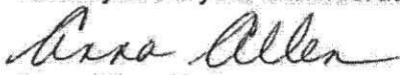
Town Council has made some statements pertaining to this Special Legislation for a Regional Municipality:

- We will work together on a consolidated regional government model for our communities in Windsor-West Hants
- We will actively engage and inform the communities in decisions that will shape the new regional government
- We will maintain ongoing and meaningful communications with the community and stakeholders throughout the transition process

Town Council has also passed a motion at its Council meeting on the 25th of September 2018 withdrawing and rescinding its application before the UARB for amalgamation through partnership with the Avon River Citizens Coalition (ARCC).

We look forward to the passing of this legislation as Nova Scotia moves towards more progressive governance models in addressing one of the observations stemming from the One Nova Scotia Report which points to the province being over governed and a challenge to everybody on what we can do to make a change. That time has arrived where our two Councils have united in a spirit that will ensure our communities are well served into the future.

Thank you for your consideration.


Anna Allen, Mayor



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THE TOWN OF WINDSOR
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

30 September 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: legc.office@novascotia.ca

Honourable Minister Mark Furey,
Chair of Law Amendments

Dear Members of the Law Amendments Committee:

Re: Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act – Bill # 55

I write in support of Bill # 55.

The Graham Commission Report of 1974; the Task Force on Local Government Report of 1992; the Towns Task Force Report of 2012; the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review of 2013 and, of course, the One Nova Scotia Report by Ray Ivany of 2014 all have one thing in common, a plea that the status quo not prevail.

The Councils of Windsor and West Hants have made a decision to seek Special Legislation to form a Regional Government. This is a bold initiative and as a 42 years public servant who has been through the amalgamation of HRM, and now the CAO of the Town of Windsor since 2006, I have witnessed how our region's growth has been impeded by neighbourly disputes, competition with one another for development and common sense solutions being thwarted over political differences. The administrative staff on both sides have usually been aligned in their thinking.

In Windsor's research when considering amalgamation in partnership with the Avon Region Citizens Coalition (ARCC), we recognized that our efforts were aligned with many studies carried out over the years.

Below is a summary for consideration:

The "Graham Commission" - The Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations (1974)

The Graham Commission issued three major recommendations:

- The province should assume responsibility for all general services such as healthcare, education, housing, community services and justice;
- The existing grant structure should be replaced by a provincial equalization grant; and
- The number of rural units should be reduced to eleven and that towns and villages be stripped of almost all responsibilities.

Many of the recommendations contained in that report were implemented but the major reforms to municipal structures were deemed too controversial.

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The Task Force on Local Government Report (1992)

Eighteen years later in 1992, the Province explored municipal restructuring once again. The Province commissioned an independent review of municipal government structures entitled *The Task Force on Local Government Report (1992)*

- The report recommends that the five most populous regions be consolidated into single-tier regional municipalities: Cape Breton, Colchester, Halifax, Kings and Pictou.
- Following this report CBRM and HRM were created through forced amalgamations in 1995 and 1996.

Municipal Government Act (1998)

The MGA was passed in 1998 and was the product of a four year Joint Municipal-Provincial legislative review. The current MGA consolidated the County Incorporation Act, Towns Incorporation Act, Village Services Act, Municipal Affairs Act, Municipal Boundaries and Representation Act, Deed Transfer Tax Act, sections of the Assessment Act and the Planning Act, into a single piece of legislation to guide municipalities.

The new MGA recognized municipalities as a responsible order of government, accountable to the people and provided councils with the broad authority necessary to provide good government within the jurisdiction given to them. It also acknowledged the vital importance of maintaining a good working relationship between provincial and municipal orders of government.

Towns Task Force (2012)

The Towns Task Force was formed in order to make recommendations to the Province and UNSM that address the many challenges facing Nova Scotia towns.

- Challenges addressed by the Task Force included: erosion of many towns' tax bases; rigid boundaries that don't accommodate economic growth; declining population; an uneven playing field where Towns had double the tax rates compared to their rural municipality neighbours; and aging infrastructure.

Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review (2013)

Municipal restructuring is once again raised in Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review report 21 years after the Graham Commission report.

Municipalities struggle to maintain existing service levels in the face of rising costs and other external pressures. The Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review report recommended that:

- The Province conduct comprehensive viability reviews of municipalities that demonstrate three consecutive years of fiscal difficulties as measured by the Financial Condition Index.
- The Province develop incentive programs to encourage municipalities to restructure voluntarily

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- All incorporated villages be phased out. Existing villages should be encouraged to apply for town status, merge with an adjacent town, or dissolve into their encompassing rural municipality.

Again, not all recommendations were adopted but some progress was made.

One Nova Scotia Report – Ray Ivany (2013-2014)

Goal # 18 in the report begins by stating that ... "the provincial government will immediately initiate a comprehensive review of current municipal government structures and of federal and provincial regional service delivery systems, improving efficiency, cost effectiveness and community engagement."

This is evident from the work DMA has been doing these past months which includes *Municipal Modernization* efforts.

Dissolutions 2015 / 2016:

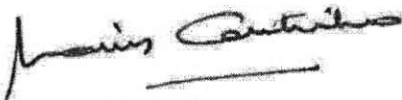
- Towns of Canso, Springhill, Bridgetown and Hantsport opt for dissolution in 2015. They are followed by Parrsboro in 2016.

"Trustee" Role:

Members of Law Amendments, my final plea for consideration is the **trustee** role of councils to make decisions on behalf of their constituents. All elected officials at every level of government (federal, provincial or municipal) make decisions based on information that they can research, see and read. While it would be advantageous to distribute such volumes of information to all citizens, it is impractical to do so. Democracy is being served as Councils act as trustees in serving their constituencies, contrary to what some may argue. Their role is not simply as a delegate to convey a message; they have the role to act in the public interest. They have exercised that trustee role by the resolutions passed by both Councils.

Nevertheless, both Councils have also committed to ensuring that the public will be engaged in a continuous and responsive way to inform decision-making towards a regional government... and that work will have to be our (my) first priority after the legislation is passed.

Sincerely,

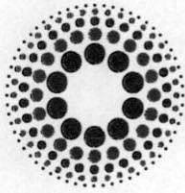


Louis Coutinho
CAO Town of Windsor

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**NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES**

October 1, 2018

A Submission to the Nova Scotia Legislature Law Amendments Committee

PRESIDENT:

Councillor Geoff Stewart
County of Colchester

VICE-PRESIDENT:

Deputy Mayor Waye Mason
Halifax Regional Municipality

IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT:

Deputy Mayor Laurie Murley
Town of Windsor

REGIONAL CAUCUS CHAIR:

Councillor George MacDonald
Cape Breton Regional Municipality

RURAL CAUCUS CHAIR:

Warden Jim Smith
District of East Hants

TOWN CAUCUS CHAIR:

Mayor Jeff Cantwell
Town of Wolfville

A submission regarding Bill 55 as introduced in the 2nd session of the 63rd General Assembly of the Nova Scotia Legislature, titled:

An Act to Incorporate the Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality

My name is Jeff Cantwell, Mayor, Town of Wolfville. I am a member of the Board of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, and Chair of the Towns Caucus. I am extending regrets on behalf of the President of NSFM, Councillor Geoff Stewart who cannot be here today. He is attending an NSFM meeting in Port Hawkesbury. I am here representing NSFM.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities is the voice of Nova Scotian Municipalities. On behalf of my Board and our members, I wish to speak in support of Bill 55.

Our current municipal structure and geographical boundaries were established over a century ago. How we live and work today was never even imagined back then. Yet our structure and the environment in which municipalities operate has not changed with our progress. We are set up to compete with each other.

We need new tools and new approaches if we are to help our communities be sustainable and viable. We need to ensure our communities are resilient and vibrant. We need to be better able to respond to the needs and desires of our citizens. We need to be able to adapt to new technology and new expectations. We need to become more efficient and more effective.

Recognizing communities of interest, and willingness to work together requires an environment that encourages innovative ways of working together.

The Towns Task Force in 2011 made a number of recommendations aimed at encouraging greater collaboration and cooperation amongst municipalities. We are a small province, and there are many linkages between our communities. We cannot afford to continually duplicate services. We need to help each other, and by doing so, our province will be more successful.

.../con'td



**NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES**

Law Amendments Committee, Bill 55
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We need more flexibility in how municipalities can do this. The current Municipal Government Act is not flexible enough.

The circumstances communities find themselves in varies across the province, and there needs to be new tools available to help them improve their communities and the everyday lives of their citizens.

Windsor and West Hants have come together and agreed on an approach that meets their needs. This Bill will serve them well.

NSFM would like to add our voice in support of Windsor and West Hants and congratulates them on their courage and innovation.

Municipalities will learn from their experience as they move towards a new regional government.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jeff Cantwell, on behalf of
Councillor Geoff Stewart
President, NSFM

JC/GS/tv

From: joanne lowthers <[REDACTED]>
Sent: September 28, 2018 12:50 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel; Debbiefrancis@eastlink.ca
Cc: joanne lowthers
Subject: Bill55

To my councillor Debbie Francis and our MLA Chuck porter. I am writing to inform you that I would like to see a Plebiscite before moving forward. I feel that a petition was what started this. So if they have been heard then we should be heard as well. I feel the process is moving to fast without any public meetings to inform us. Having the meetings after the fact is not Democracy. I'm hoping you will consider the Plebiscite for the residents of West Hants. Thanks in advance Joanne Lowthers. District 5.

From: Tanya Leopold <TLeopold@westhants.ca>
Sent: September 28, 2018 10:33 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill 55, Special Legislation re: Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act

Dear Chair of Law Amendments Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to Bill 55 relating to Special Legislation re: Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act.

In the interest of full disclosure I would like to point out that I am a Councillor in the Municipality of the District of West Hants. Please know that this submission does not represent the position of my council. It represents the position of myself, a resident of West Hants and an elector in the Province of Nova Scotia.

This area of the province has been seen many attempts and variations of collaboration in governance. Admittedly, the journey to a palatable form of collaboration in Windsor and West Hants has been arduous. At times there have been periods of discontent with the governing municipal "councils of the day". There was a disintegration of joint council activities between Windsor and West Hants. Finally, and most notably, there was a citizen driven movement to stimulate change to local governance. The journey to a collaborative approach in governance has certainly been unique and complicated for Windsor and West Hants.

To provide some background, the desire to unite these two communities was launched years ago by a group of concerned citizens known as ARC, Avon Region Citizen's Coalition. Notably, at the time of the ARC uprising, there was a position of discontent with, or at least prolonged discussions on, the delivery of fire protection within Windsor and West Hants. Further to that was the appearance of general displeasure with the councils of the day. As such, an application was made by ARC to the NS Utility and Review Board for amalgamation of Windsor and West Hants. (Note that the Town of Windsor later joined this application. West Hants declined joining the application). With the use of a mechanism provided in the Municipal Government Act, these two groups used a petition to garner support for a change in government structure.

These petitions were left at local businesses, or were circulated outside of busy shopping stores. In some cases ARC members knocked on the doors of citizens and presented a document intended to change the governance structure using the disguise of addressing inadequate fire protection along with fostering an opposition to the "council of the day".

I have spoke to many citizens about the lack of details offered at the time signatures were requested. Approaching people in areas of congestion and busyness led to rushed decisions and pressure to sign so they could continue running their errands. Many citizens were not explained the impact or the intended use of the petition and are now most regretful that their signatures exist on the petition.

I also call in to question the validity of the petition given there is a lack of representation from citizens on the petition. Upon reviewing the unredacted version of the ARC petitions it was evident to me that 7 out of 10 districts in West Hants were grossly underrepresented. If one were to look at these petitions

you will see that, by and large, Hantsport, Falmouth and Three Mile Plains were targeted for their signatures but not so much in the more rural areas. I am talking about the vicinities of Walton, Cameron Lake, Vaughns, Woodville, Mosherville, etc. This concerns me greatly because I feel it speaks to the lack of thought for your most rural citizens and it serves to validate the grave concerns that rural residents feel towards the idea of regional government. Rural citizens were not engaged on the single most important instigator of regional government in this region.

The issue has been debated extensively at the municipal level. It is obvious that the Council of Town of Windsor has consistently and unanimously supported amalgamation and/or regional governance. With my knowledge of the affairs of the West Hants Council I can tell you this has not been the case in West Hants Council. For years the issue has been under heated debate and discussion. The UARB process was extended for lengthy periods which complicated, and sometimes, superseded the intention of the process which was to work together. Nevertheless, Bill 55 is before you after these two councils motioned for special legislation to permit a regional government for Windsor and West Hants.

As part of my duties as Councillor I have attended information sessions offered by the Dept. of Municipal Affairs. Recognizing the challenges in being the first units to pursue a regional governance structure of this nature, I continue to be apprehensive. Respecting the expertise and professionalism of staff I have found the details of the proposed process (specifically the financial support offered by the province for the new Regional Government) to be very vague. For a process which requires a lot of trust between parties, this lack of information is challenging. As seen by the background provided the units involved struggle with trust. Further to that is the building of trust between province and municipal levels. I did not find 3 information sessions to be sufficient time to repair trust issues that have existed between Windsor and West Hants for over 50 years. In my opinion, with the lack of details from the DMA, it compromised trust building between province and municipalities.

If nothing else, I hope it is recognized that there lies an issue within the wording of the Municipal Government Act, itself. This should be of critical importance to this committee and also to the Department of Municipal Affairs. This clause enables a small sample of residents (only 10% of a municipal unit's population) to create significant upset with provision of governance. Undoubtedly, this clause of the MGA has contributed to the division and frustration of collaboration efforts. If nothing else, this written submission should be used in consideration of modernizing the legislative terms of this act. Serious consideration should be given to the minimum percentage of citizens that can request change (minimum number of signatures on a petition). I would argue that additional parameters should be included to ensure fair representation in all geographic areas within a municipal unit.

I trust that you have a better understanding of my opposition to Bill 55. Firstly, the origins of this process do not lend themselves well to acceptance. Secondly, insufficient time has been spent repairing trust between parties involved. Lastly, there was insufficient time to digest the information required to support the legislation. It was my belief that municipal modernization was intended to be cause for jubilation. My level of uncertainty and apprehension is inhibiting this. Our last information meeting immediately prior to first reading was anything but jubilant.

This bill could be amended to include a plebiscite to ensure that fair representation of citizen support has been offered. This bill could be tabled while DMA offers support to build trust between councils and trust within the community. Or this bill could be dropped citing a lack of confidence in the remaining process after legislation is passed.

Respectfully,

Tanya Leopold
Councillor, Municipality of the District of West Hants and
Concerned Citizen of West Hants

From: Abraham Zebian <AZebian@westhants.ca>
Sent: September 28, 2018 3:59 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill 55- Law Amendments

Good afternoon. I am writing today because I will unfortunately be unable to present in person on Monday due to a conflict in a previously scheduled Council meeting. I fully support Bill 55. The political differences between the Town of Windsor and the Municipality of West Hants has been, and remains, a solid barrier to the growth of this region. Every political cycle, new councils are sworn in but the difference in visions has never changed. I firmly believe, with the passing of this bill, that the united vision of a single group of elected officials will realize the potential of this region. We are ideally positioned for immense growth, have a younger, skilled work force, have many festivals and attractions nationally and internationally known, and have incredible residents that are the backbone of what we are. I look to greater days and a future for my children in the new regional Municipality that the passing of Bill 55 will create. I thank you for the time to read my brief, but very meaningful comments.
Kindest regards.

Abraham Zebian
Warden, The Municipality of The District of West Hants
(902)790-1566
azebian@westhants.ca
76 Morrison Drive
P.O. Box 3000
Windsor, N.S. B0N 2T0

From: Glenn Robinson <GRobinson@arbormemorial.com>
Sent: September 29, 2018 9:28 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Re Bill 55: A Bill To Consolidate Windsor West Hants

To Mr. Gordon Hebb, NS Legislature Executive Council Office

Dear Sir,

We are Hants West constituents living in the Municipality of the District of West Hants in Garlands Crossing NS.

My wife and I are solidly behind our council's, and the provincial government's, effort to consolidate the two local municipalities into one.

Further, we DO NOT support the motion that a plebiscite be held in December (or anytime) on this matter. It will be a waste of money as these events get little participation
And I believe especially so the last Saturday before Christmas.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn and Elizabeth Robinson

902-798-7827

Glenn Robinson | Para Funeral Assistant
R.D. Lindsay / Windsor Funeral Home | Arbor Memorial Inc.
194 King Street, PO Box 2218, Windsor NS CA, B0N 2T0
T: (902) 798-2232 | F: (902) 798-2233 | E: GRobinson@arbormemorial.com | C:



From: Alicia Smith <[REDACTED]>
Sent: September 30, 2018 11:07 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Law amendments committee re Bill 55

My name is Alicia Smith and I live at [REDACTED], Windsor NS [REDACTED]. I am in favour of Windsor and West Hants consolidating. I support Bill 55 and encourage you to move this legislation forward. I feel a plebiscite is unnecessary and costly. I feel municipal and provincial governments should act on this issue and move forward with the best interests of the community.

Respectively submitted
Alicia Smith

[REDACTED], Windsor NS [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

From: Richard Smith <[REDACTED]>
Sent: September 28, 2018 8:43 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: law amendments committee re Bill 55

My name is Richard Smith. My wife and I live in Windsor, as tax payers, at [REDACTED]. **We are both in favour of Windsor and West Hants consolidating.** We support Bill 55 and encourage you to move this legislation forward. We feel a plebiscite is totally unnecessary (as well as costly) and that the Municipality and Provincial Governments should act on this issue in the best interest of our communities.

Respectfully submitted

Richard Smith

[REDACTED]

Windsor NS

From: Ian & Shelleena Thornton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: September 28, 2018 8:33 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill 55

Dear Law Amendments Committee,

I understand that Bill 55 has had Second Reading. I would like to express that I am a resident, tax payer, in the Municipality of the District of West Hants (Brooklyn/Newport) and work in the town. I strongly support the consolidation of West Hants and Windsor and really hope it will be passed for the benefit of all citizens and the business sector. Together the area is much stronger.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ian Thornton

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Newport, NS. [REDACTED]

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

To: the Law Amendments Committee, Province of Nova Scotia

Concerning Bill 55, Region of Windsor and West Hants Municipality Act

Submitted by: Rupert Jannasch, Councillor, District 1, Municipality of the District of West Hants

I am making this submission on behalf of my constituents, most of whom oppose the special legislation to amalgamate West Hants and the Town of Windsor. Their opposition is, first and foremost, a direct result of having never been asked for their opinion. The amalgamation process was launched by a petition requiring the signatures of only ten percent of eligible voters in the two districts.

Section 358 of the Municipal Government Act states that "Municipalities may be amalgamated or the whole or part of a municipality may be annexed to another upon application to the Board by (c) the greater of ten percent or one hundred of the electors in the area proposed to be amalgamated or annexed."

Democracy is not being served by Section 358 of the MGA for at least two important reasons. The petition was not circulated in rural areas and rural residents didn't even have the opportunity not to sign the petition. Secondly, Section 358 (c) does not require that a distinction be made between the two regions to be amalgamated, thereby allowing for the majority of signatures to be collected from citizens residing in the Town or communities close to it. West Hants is demonstrably a rural municipality and the submission made to the Utility and Review Board was clearly biased against rural voters.

Legislation which enables a small fraction of the population to influence the direction of an entire municipality generates discord and division. Representatives from the Department of Municipal Affairs have stated that plebiscites are divisive, but what can be more divisive than allowing 10 percent of the population to dictate the direction the other 90 percent must follow. My constituents are angry and becoming cynical of the political process. Despite promises of opportunity for public engagement attached to the creation of a regional government, the citizens have expressed little interest in participating because they were not consulted in the first place. The application for amalgamation has increased the divide between town and country which contradicts the spirit of the Ivany Report and the notion of "One Nova Scotia."

Despite the outrage at how Section 358 of the MGA was used to force amalgamation, Section 358 does provide a method for citizens to influence government by means other than electing councillors. Rather than suggesting this section be eliminated, I would argue that the MGA needs to be amended to ensure that citizen-led amalgamations require broader support. For example, I recommend that the threshold for the number of signatures on a petition be increased from 10 percent to at least 40 percent. Secondly, the petition must demonstrate that a fair attempt was made to collect signatures in all electoral districts in both municipal units or regions to be amalgamated. This would go a long way towards preventing the bitterness and controversy apparent in West Hants today. These changes would help prevent the hasty collection of a petition and allow for a more thoughtful consideration of the outcome by the UARB.

Respectfully,

Rupert Jannasch

From: Jonathan DeMont <jonathan@demontfamilyfuneralhome.ca>
Sent: October 1, 2018 1:57 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill 55

To whom it may concern,

I wanted to pass along my brief thoughts on the recent introduction of Bill 55.

As a resident and business owner in Windsor I am very much in favour of this legislation. The communities of both Windsor and West Hants are much intertwined. With one unit I believe we can create efficiencies in all departments.

I came back to my home town 13 years ago because I believed in the people and the community. Investing in and hiring local people. I believe we can and will do great things.

Through consolidation the community can create one vision to attract new families and businesses to our area. Anyone who moves here or starts a business is a win for our community...no matter where in West Hants they decide to plant roots.

In closing I'd like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs, The Honourable Chuck Porter for bringing this legislation forward. This is very much needed. I truly hope and expect that our community will come together and grow into what it is meant to be...a strong and welcoming community for one and all. I look forward to this being passed.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jonathan R. DeMont

DeMont Family Funeral Home & Cremation Service (Lohnes-DeMont Funeral Service Ltd.)

419 Albert Street, PO Box 981

Windsor, NS

B0N 2T0

(O) 902-798-8317

(C) 902-790-1630

(F) 902-798-8118

www.demontfamilyfuneralhome.ca

From: Jamie Juteau <[REDACTED]>
Sent: October 1, 2018 2:03 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Consolidation- Windsor and West Hants

Considering the strife between these two municipal units in the last decade, it is time to make them one. The citizens need responsible government in this area for a change. Prime example....West Hants voting for a non binding plebiscite that will potentially cost upwards of \$50 000of tax payer money with NO purpose other than agitating a process.

J Juteau

[REDACTED]

Windsor, N.S.

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