



Town of Truro
695 Prince Street
Truro, NS B2N 1G5
www.truro.ca

October 27, 2023

Via Email: legc.office@novascotia.ca

Law Amendments Committee
c/o Office of the Legislative Counsel
Mr. Gordon Hebb, Chief Legislative Counsel
CIBC Building, Suite 802
1809 Barrington Street
PO Box 1116
Halifax, NS B3J 2X1

Dear Law Amendments Committee:

Re: Bill 340

Truro Town Council has been anxiously awaiting the results of the Service Exchange review as we are facing increasing financial challenges. Truro is a regional commercial service center for several communities and counties in the region. Many non-residents rely on services provided within the Town of Truro. The burden of this growing regional role has been for the most part carried by Town taxpayers as residents cover the cost of services enjoyed by many non-residents. While we welcome everyone into Town as it drives the economy, it does place additional strain on our infrastructure and in many cases requires us to build additional capacity to accommodate the increased demand.

On behalf of Truro Town Council, I would like to thank the SERMGAR committee for the challenging work they have completed. This work has resulted in several recommendations, some of which the Province is prepared to act on and bring into legislation. I would also like to recognize the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing and their effort in a very short period of time to consult with municipalities on what was being brought forward from the committee's report and for taking action on some of the concerns they heard from municipalities.

With the recommended changes to the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant and access to additional funds for former provincial roads now vested to the Towns, Truro Town Council sees the proposed agreement as a positive step towards rebalancing some of the inequity that exists in the current agreement. We support the approval of Municipal Reform Bill 340 and implementation for the 24/25 fiscal year. Council also feels that it is vital that the Province continue to increase the funding allocation for the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant to support the growing cost of services and the ever-expanding responsibilities municipalities face.

We also support the establishment of a legislative framework that will permanently remove the financial obligation for municipalities to fund corrections and the shortfall for provincial housing located within municipalities. These changes have been recommended. Clearly neither of these services are a municipal responsibility and we strongly encourage the changes to be made, and the applicable Acts to be amended.

Truro Town Council understands that not all issues that were part of the discussion resulted in amendments and these have been included as part of Schedule A. It is important that none of these items be allowed to linger on this list and an agenda needs to be created to drive the required discussions so they can be addressed in a timely manner. Currently Part B of the Roads proposal is to be moved to Schedule A to allow for further discussion given issues identified by municipalities during the consultation process. We support this action but feel that there must be a clear process for finalizing the roads discussion to ensure that recommendations are fair to all concerned, including Towns that assume this responsibility mostly on their own under the current agreement.

While this agreement provides financial benefit to many municipalities, some will be disadvantaged. In the case of CBRM, the Province should extend the new agreement to CBRM until such time separate terms can be negotiated and implemented for their unique circumstances under their own Charter. It is important that the Province negotiates fairly with CBRM and recognizes the critical importance the regional municipalities play in the sustainability of Cape Breton as a whole.

We look forward to the approval of Municipal Reform Bill 340 and to ongoing consultation on the items in Schedule A and to a fair resolution on the Roads proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W.R. (Bill) Mills". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "R".

W.R. (Bill) Mills
Mayor
Town of Truro

