

March 1, 2024

Office of the Legislative Counsel
Barrington Street, Halifax NS
B3J 2X1

RE: Bill NO. 407 - Antigonish Consolidation Act

To the members of Standing Committee on Law Amendments;

I wholeheartedly support the consolidation of Antigonish Town and County as I firmly believe it is the most advantageous path for our community's future. The outdated ideology of Town vs County should no longer hold a place in the discourse of the Antigonish Community.

The current inefficiencies stemming from maintaining two separate municipal units for a relatively small population have become increasingly apparent over time. Thankfully, we have seen a shift in our councils' mindset away from the divisive "us vs. them" mentality. Therefore, now is the opportune moment to unite and consolidate our resources. ***I see absolutely no advantages to the status quo of two municipal units for a population of less than 20,000.*** Conversely the disadvantages of two municipal units will eventually tip the scales, with one or both units finding themselves in dire circumstances, and amalgamation will occur, then the negative consequences of waiting will come home to roost. The fallout in this scenario will put the residents of our community at a disadvantage, one which can be avoided.

Our elected councils bear the responsibility of making decisions for the greater good, and it is essential that we place our trust in their judgment. With thorough investigation, careful consideration, and inclusive public consultations, both municipal units have reached a consensus in favour of consolidation. This is an administrative move aimed at reducing expenses and enhancing operational efficiency. Similar decisions are routinely made across the province without resorting to plebiscites.

I urge the Province of Nova Scotia to honour the wishes of these units and pass the necessary legislation.

To reiterate, I express my unwavering support for the consolidation of Antigonish Town and County, firmly believing it is in the best interest of our community's ongoing progress. Our elected representatives have diligently assessed the situation and engaged the public in this decision-making process, and it is crucial that their efforts are respected and acted upon.

Ashley Bouchie
Harbour Centre, Antigonish County Nova Scotia