

[REDACTED]

From: Helen Kennedy [REDACTED]
Sent: March 4, 2024 8:47 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Fwd: Consolidation in Antigonish

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Please find attached letter in support of consolidation that I sent earlier today to Premier. Thank you for your consideration.

Helen Kennedy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Helen Kennedy [REDACTED]
Date: Mon, Mar 4, 2024 at 8:25 AM
Subject: Fwd: Consolidation in Antigonish
To: <premier@novascoti.ca>
CC: <johnlohrmla@gmail.com>, <michellethompsonmla@gmail.com>

Dear Premier Houston:

I am writing to support the legislation currently before the legislature that would consolidate the Municipal Councils of the Town and County of Antigonish.

In light of your letter to Minister Lohr's requiring him to review municipal governance across the province, Councils of both the Town and County voted unanimously to explore consolidation through an open and inclusive consultation process. I took part in that process and was very impressed with how substantive the discussions were and how available and transparent councillors were to the public. One of those councillors is my sister. All concerns were addressed.

As a result of the process, I became convinced that consolidation is in the best long term interests of the community. We have a combined population of about 20,000. It makes little to me to have two separate municipal units, particularly also because town and county are increasingly integrated by the growth happening on the fringe of town. Why should

someone living on the fringe be unable to vote for town representation when their water supply is coming from the town?

Couldn't our scarce resources be better used than in duplication of departments and in some cases competing for investments from the public and private sectors? We are up against other cities and towns for the best business, academic and medical talent. We are trying to keep young people here. To maintain our quality of life, including our education and health care services, we will need to grow. We won't be able to tax our way out of a problem. Consolidation will give us a better shot at that necessary growth.

Lacking any substantive reason to oppose consolidation itself, opposition to the idea has come in the form of calls for a plebiscite. There is no democratic deficit on this file. Council members were duly elected. They held an open process to try and improve democracy in the municipality! They established guiding principles for consolidation against which they'll be judged in the only plebiscite that should matter—the next election. I'd rather Council used its resources on improving existing services and further engagement with the public on a new governance model than in a plebiscite.

In closing, I believe consolidation is in the best long term interests of Antigonish. Therefore, I respectfully request that you pass the special legislation to that effect.

Sincerely,

Helen Kennedy

[REDACTED]

Antigonish, NS

[REDACTED]

The Honourable Greg Morrow, Minister of Agriculture

The Honourable Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness

The Honourable John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing

Laurie Boucher, Mayor of the Town of Antigonish

Owen McCarron, Warden of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish