

Law Amendments Committee

Office of the Legislative Counsel
CIBC Building
802-1809 Barrington Street
PO Box 1116
Halifax NS B3J 2X1

Re: Bill #407, Antigonish Consolidation Act

Attention: Committee Members

Chair, Hon. Brad Johns, PC
Vice Chair, Dave Ritcey, PC
Hon. Pat Dunn, PC
Hon. Steve Craig, PC
Melissa Sheehy-Richard, PC
Lorelei Nicoll, Liberal
Braedon Clark, Liberal
Gary Burrill, NDP
Lisa Lachance, NDP

Members of the Law Amendments Committee,

For your consideration, I would like to bring to your attention the fact that the actions of the Office of the Mayor of the Municipality of the Town of Antigonish and the Office of the Warden of the County of Antigonish to request "Special Legislation" to consolidate the two municipalities is in the Court of Appeals. The Special Legislation, the creation of Bill #407 to consolidate the Municipality of the Town of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish is based on the request from these two offices. Whether this request for Special Legislation is lawful has yet to be determined. The action of those two Councils circumvents legitimate legislation in the Municipal Government Act for amalgamation of municipalities. The two Municipal Councils circumvented existing, established pathways within the Municipal Government Act and instead made the request for the Special Legislation to create this Bill #407 now before you. I believe this was deliberate and malicious. The office of the Mayor of the Town of Antigonish and the Office of the Warden of the County of Antigonish conspired to remove the rights of the constituents of this community to have a voice and vote on their future. In doing this, they violated the democratic rights of the residents of Antigonish Town and violated the democratic rights of the residents of Antigonish County to participate in any meaningful way in the exploration, let alone request for consolidation of the two municipal units. None of the Municipal Council members were elected with a mandate to pursue consolidation and there was no mention of consolidation at the last Municipal election. As it stands, the residents have no respect at all for the Mayor of the Town of Antigonish or the Warden of County of Antigonish. Neither will ever be re-elected for any office in Antigonish as the people despise those two for their actions in meetings, mistreatment of honest inquiry, and disregard for

requests for information. Any path forward should not include Owen McCarron or Laurie Boucher. The legality of the request from the office of those two Municipal Councils, for the Legislature introducing this Bill, Bill #407 Antigonish Consolidation Act, remains in question. Please give this your full consideration.

Please help to undo this injustice by recommending a plebiscite or a vote of the people of Antigonish Town and Antigonish County be included as part of Bill #407, Antigonish Consolidation Act. Bring back the voice of the people into this process. The residents did not initiate this request to consolidate. It was created in the council chambers of the Mayor of the Town of Antigonish and council chambers of the Warden of the County of Antigonish and far from the having the will of the residents as part of the plan. The Pictou County residents got to vote—Antigonish residents deserve the same respect. Why are the residents of Antigonish County or Antigonish Town any different from those of its neighboring County? They are not. The people of Antigonish Town and the people of Antigonish County deserve the same rights as those granted to the people of Pictou County. The people deserve the right to have a voice and to vote. Please consider amending this Bill #407 to include a vote or plebiscite.

In addition to the noted need for people to have a voice and vote, if the Committee would please consider to require a detailed study prior to a vote of the people into the advantages and disadvantages of joining together the two Municipal units. It would be wonderful to have a meaningful investigative look into what the details of such a merger would mean with all relevant facts available for people to make a decision. Would this not be in the best interest for everyone? This has not happened and yet here we are with this Bill #407 on the table.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Margaret Layes

Antigonish, Nova Scotia
Canada B2G 2K9

