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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: March 6, 2024 6:06 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Do not support this rushed consolidation process (Bill 407, Antigonish Consolidation Act)

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Dear Law Amendments Committee Members,

I am writing in regard to Bill 407, the Antigonish Consolidation Act. As you have been told by numerous people, we aren't against consolidation. We just want our democratic right as Nova Scotians to decide our future.

Please either reject Bill 407 or amend it to require a full study by the UARB and a plebiscite that the MGA (and our rights as Canadians) allows us to have.

If you allow this bill to go through, you are ignoring the facts:

The issue is still in front of the courts. At least wait for the court decision before proceeding.

A very accurate poll shows that over 75% of people in the Antigonish Town and County want a vote.

The same poll shows only 22.4% of people feel the Mayor and Warden provided enough information. Despite the Mayor and Warden's claims that they did wide spread consultations, that just isn't true. They did all their meetings during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, when many people were afraid to go to large gatherings, and therefore, very few people showed up. And those who did show up weren't listened to. They were just told what was going to happen. That's hardly democratic.

The request for this legislation barely passed in both Councils (in the Town, the Mayor cast the deciding vote, and in the County, it passed by one vote. And one of the Councillors, who has stated he wants a plebiscite, was told he couldn't vote due to conflict of interest).

The Councillors did not run on this issue and therefore have no political or ethical mandate to push this through without a plebiscite.

You will have submissions saying nothing more than "we want consolidation because it will be better." If this is true, then there is no harm in a vote. Show us how it will be better, and we will vote for it. That way, you'll have the peoples' support the way it should be done.

Sincerely,

John Blackwell and Laurie Stanley-Blackwell