From:	Rico ███████████████
Sent:	March 7, 2024 7:40 AM
To:	Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject:	Submission for antigonish act

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MAINSTREET RESEARCH Response to MAYOR Boucher
If you were listening to Mayor Boucher present at Law Amendments on Monday, you were no doubt as shocked as we were to hear her try and destroy the credibility of both the poll and the company who conducted them.
Shared with written consent of Mr Quito Maggi

The following is the letter of response and demand to Mayor Boucher from the President and CEO of MainStreet Research:

Good afternoon Madam Mayor,I have just completed viewing the Committee meeting where you testified yesterday and to respectfully ask that you withdraw your comments regarding the Mainstreet polls. I am ccing the County Warden, your council and the Committee members from the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.As you may or may not know, I have served many Mayors across Canada in numerous capacities and have always provided guidance and advice to my best abilities, I write you today only to correct the record and defend my work, not to pick a side in this discussion. I respect your work and those of your colleagues ccd above.First, let me commend you on the outreach you referenced in your testimony, the public meetings, mailings and online events. The 3000 touchpoints you referenced is something to be proud of.I will now address your subsequent comments about the Mainstreet polls.I am disappointed that you would reference 2 misses that Mainstreet has had in our 14 year history, out of more than 10,000 polls conducted, one from 5 years ago and another from 7 years ago. In the past year we have accurately measured the Manitoba election, the top three most accurate polls in that election were IVR (reference removed per posting). The same is true for the 2023 Toronto Mayoral election, Mainstreet was closest to actual results while 3 other polls had bigger misses than the 2017 Calgary mayoral election, this is not a reflection on the other pollsters, just to point out that all polling firms have misses, 19 times out of 20 means exactly that. (Reference removed as per posting requirements). We've also accurately measured 4 of the last 5 federal by-elections accurately. And in Calgary where we had our miss in 2017, we successfully measured the results of the Olympic bid Plebiscite. (Reference removed per posting requirements). Our total misses can be counted on two hands, what amounts to a 99.99% accuracy. I own and acknowledge those misses, but I remain proud of our track record.Your further comments also confused me, because they are simply not true.You claimed that we made "about 5000 calls" for the Antigonish polls, both in March of 2023 and in February of 2022, that is false. In March of 2023, we made a total of 14,723 and in February of 2024 (a 2.3% response rate), it was 14,692 calls in February of 2024. (a 3.0% responses rate)

You stated that the response rate are well below industry standards, that was also false, our response rates and those among IVR polls fall well within industry standards. We are Gold Seal members of the Canadian Research Insights Council and follow rigorous processes for quality.

You suggest that the methodology of IVR doesn't accurately represent public opinion, that is false. In the most recent Nova Scotia election, the top two closest pollster to actual results were Mainstreet Research and Forum Research, both IVR pollsters.

([r](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Nova_Scotia_general_election)efernce removed per posting requirements)

The American Association for Public Opinion Research reports after the 2016 election concluded that IVR was by a significant margin the most accurate in that election. (reference removed per posting requirements)

I could go on citing recent elections and polling reports, your sources are incorrect, no public official or non expert should speak about polls, or methodology, it can get quite embarrassing. But that's not all. In your further comments, you suggested that our demographics "were not representative of the population", again this is another example of how embarrassing amateur analysis can be of polling. You cited the unweighted frequency of those under 50, "around 10% of the population" but that population was weighted up, and the older population was weighted down. I would ask you to revisit your comments after you have a chance to understand how poll weighting works, and read the "Weighted Frequencies" in the tables provided.In your comments you also alluded to the possibility that non residents like your daughter who has an Antigonish cellphone could be included in polls unintentionally. This is not the case. The poll asked respondents whether they lived in the Town, the County or the "fringe". Screening for residency and eligibility is a best practice of polling, and one we follow. If in fact your children participated in our poll, as you alluded, they lied in the survey.Lastly, I should talk about ambiguous versus non ambiguous poll results. Calgary, Nanaimo and other polls where we have missed or other polls have missed tend to be ambiguous, 50% to 40% or 45% to 41% remains within several margins of error of the poll, and polls can have other sources of error, these can be viewed as ambiguous results. In fact, the "average error" in Municipal elections is 9% (that is per candidate) citing our 24 point miss in Calgary across 3 candidates was actually below average, similarly in the Nanaimo byelection.Neither of the Antigonish polls were at all ambiguous in their results. In February of 2023, 70% of residents expressed their opinion to want a vote in the amalgamation, that increased to 75% in February of 2024.Again, I will commend your outreach to 3000 residents. You've provided no statistics on what percentage of the feedback was positive or negative, this is an important ommission and should be provided to the Committee, surely the Town staff have those statistics.By contrast, Mainstreet attempted to reach residents multiple times, over 7000 unique numbers including 60% RDD cellphone frames were contacted 3 times on each occassion. The results were weighted to the census population of Antigonish County and Town 2021 to be representative of the entire adult population by age, gender and education. Our results are publicly available for examination and scrutiny. There is legitimate, educated and fair critique of public opinion research, your comments are none of these.You have fabricated facts, you have misrepresented our work, you have mischaracterized the results. We do not have a preference in the outcome of the debate, we measure without pride or prejudice. Politics can be a great force for good, I respect your service. But it can also blind us, ideology and anecdote is not data or analysis.I would respectfully ask that you retract your testimony and apologize to Mainstreet and/or that the Committee consider this written submission as a rebuttal to Mayor Boucher's testimony. We don't want our work weaponized for any purpose, but we do stand by it.

Regards,Quito Maggi

President & CEO

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