



## **FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA**

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### **Submission to Law Amendments Committee - Bill 455**

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To: Nova Scotia Law Amendments Committee

Date: September 9, 2024

Re: Bill 455

The impact of Bill 455 on the fire service of Nova Scotia is significant, particularly as it affects the rural volunteer fire services, however it is the position of FSANS that it can be an overall positive move, consolidating into one government department, several of the entities with which the fire service must interact with on a regular basis which currently is spread over several departments.

There are a few aspects of Bill 455 which FSANS feels a need to comment on in particular:

- 1) Consolidation of access, dispatch and notification: because the need is universal for fire departments, ground search & rescue teams, the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue team (Halifax fire) and eventually the NS Guard to be accessed by Nova Scotians in need or distress, it is essential that the method be as seamless as possible and as coordinated as possible to avoid duplication of requests and delay of response. Responses involving multiple agencies must be coordinated in order to be most effective and prompt and this can only be assured through a consolidated public safety service provider meeting established service standards and in full communication with partner agencies such as ambulance and police dispatch services. Because of the broad coordination required, and overlapping jurisdictions, this is a task that must be managed by the province rather than resting solely with municipalities.
- 2) Because of the potential for members of the NS Guard to become engaged with the public, the question of personal liability must be addressed in this legislation. Fire services and GSAR teams typically carry public liability insurance (at considerable cost); this must be extended to the NS Guard and in fact would be best extended to ensure current fire and GSAR organizations are fully covered under a consolidated program.
- 3) The fire service, GSAR and Heavy Urban Search and Rescue team (Halifax fire) communities have intrinsic training requirements for active members generally well established, documented and accredited. It is important that NS Guard members have some elementary level of training to recognized standards to ensure they are able to operate safely and in harmony with the other service providers. A list of training requirements must be developed in regulation reflecting the scope of tasks expected to be assigned to members of the Guard.

Sincerely,

Greg Jones, ECFO  
President - Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia