



Municipal Affairs and Housing Office of the Minister

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June 10, 2022

Via email: dmuise@munargyle.com

Dear Mayor/Warden Muise:

Spring is upon us, and it is usually at this time of year we see new housing starts crop up across the province, and 'For Sale' signs on homes as people are seeking a fresh start. In recent years, however, we have not seen this to the degree we need to support our growing population.

Nova Scotia's population growth is targeted to increase to two million by 2060, averaging 25,000 new residents per year. Our housing supply has not kept pace with our growing population and, as you are aware, this has created an urgent need to build more housing quickly.

Critical to the social, economic, and wellbeing of Nova Scotians, their families, and those who arrive as new residents, is access to appropriate housing for now and into the future. Adequate housing is needed to attract business and allow people to stay in their communities, which all contribute to advancing economic growth and maintaining a vibrant community.

To enable municipalities to have the flexibility to improve incentives and remove barriers to building affordable housing in their communities, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) has made changes to the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, such as the use of inclusionary zoning, to provide local governments with more planning powers to help address affordable housing needs in your communities. We will continue to explore other changes with you that will provide you with the tools you need to ensure adequate housing for Nova Scotians.

As you are aware, in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, a Municipal Housing Needs Assessment by Turner Drake is underway and will provide valuable insight into municipalities' housing needs. In addition, as part of their work, the HRM Housing Task Force will share identified opportunities to streamline, improve, and modernize aspects of residential housing which will help accelerate housing development for all municipalities.

These actions alone cannot solve the housing issue. Municipalities can and have taken concrete steps to facilitate more housing development. I encourage you, your council, and your planning staff to continue to consider such opportunities to expedite residential development in your municipality. These opportunities may involve streamlining processes, amending bylaws, increasing density, and creating residential development opportunities to take advantage of existing infrastructure capacity such as water/wastewater.

Please know we are in this with you. We recognize each of you are facing your own unique housing successes and challenges, and our team at Municipal Affairs and Housing are here to listen and learn, to respond, and to support.

Reimagining the way we grow residential development will be vital in the coming years, and working together we can make progress towards meeting the housing needs of Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,



Hon. John Lohr
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- c. Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Mark Peck, Associate Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Vicki Elliott-Lopez, Senior Executive Director, Housing