



September 11, 2023

The Honourable John Lohr, Minister
Department of Municipal Affairs & Housing
14th Floor North, Maritime Centre
1505 Barrington Street, PO Box 216
Halifax, NS
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Email: dmamin@novascotia.ca

Re: Proposed Service Exchange and Municipal Reform

Dear Minister Lohr,

During the month of August elected officials and staff from municipalities have participated in the Service Exchange engagement sessions conducted by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As a result of the information provided by DMA&H and the conversations around Roads and the proposals outlined as options, I would like to outline our concerns.

Specifically, to the issue of Roads, two programs were consulted on. Program A dealing with trunks and routes owned by municipalities impacts mainly towns or former towns. We have no concerns with this program as it appears to provide towns with the support that they have been looking for.

Our concern lies with the implementation of Program B as it stands. Over the course of several consultation sessions, it appears that information provided to municipalities differed a great deal, leaving us with more questions than answers. Terminating the existing option to cost share repaving of J class roads (while remaining in Provincial ownership) would leave municipalities with little choice than to participate in the take over of these roads when political pressure to maintain the roads came to bear. Further, the request of the NSFM in 2018 to increase the budget for provincially owned J-

Class roads has expanded to include potential municipal ownership of Class G, H, I and J roads - an unintended consequence of these discussions.

Program B as proposed requires refinement. We do not understand how this new program will be administered, nor were we provided with any analysis on the condition of the 14,000 kms of roads and related infrastructure (ditches, culverts, bridges, etc.) in the proposal. Some have argued that without understanding the current condition of and the long-term costs to maintain these roads, we are not in a position to begin these discussions. I would argue that we should not be taking over provincial roads as a matter of course, or as a result of political pressure. Municipalities do not have the financial means to consider this nor does it make sense for the taxpayers in Nova Scotia to begin duplicating TIR resources in each of 49 municipalities.

The solution to what has been described as “roads that are deteriorating at a greater rate than the rate which they can be maintained”, is not to give them to Municipalities to worry about. The Provincial Road network is the responsibility of the Province and to suggest that municipalities take over this vast web of roads, or any part thereof, is well beyond the scope of the NSFMR request to increase the J-Class road budget and well beyond our financial capacity.

Regards,



Eleanor Roulston
Warden, Municipality of the District of East Han

Cc:

- Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister DMAH
- The Honourable Brad Johns, MLA Sackville-Uniacke
- John A. MacDonald, MLA Hants East
- Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA Hants West
- Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities
- Nova Scotia Municipal Units