

Reference 2022-053

November 16, 2022

Hon. Daniel Allain, Minister
Local Government and Local Governance Reform
Marysville Place
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Minister Allain,

The Town of Sackville is writing in support of the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick's (UMNB) recent request to expand communications on the upcoming changes to our province's local government system. We urge you to consider the Resolution passed at the UMNB Annual Conference held in October 2022 as follows;

WHEREAS for over 50 years municipalities in New Brunswick have lobbied the provincial government for much needed municipal reform in order to ensure vibrant and sustainable communities;

AND WHEREAS in December 2021, the Government of New Brunswick introduced legislation to initiate much needed municipal reform;

AND WHEREAS the implementation of the proposed reform will have significant impacts on municipalities, their staff, elected officials and the residents they serve including the creation of new municipalities and the downloading of additional services to municipalities through enhanced mandates of the Regional Service Commissions;

AND WHEREAS despite assurances that they would, the Government of New Brunswick and the Ministry of Local Government and Local Government Reform, have done little to inform residents of New Brunswick on how the reform will impact the services they receive from their municipal governments and what they will pay for such services;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT on behalf of all municipalities in New Brunswick and the residents they serve, the Union of Municipalities request that the Government of New Brunswick and specifically, the Ministry of Local Government and Local Government Reform, immediately begin a fulsome and sustained education and awareness campaign through all possible communication platforms in order to inform residents of New Brunswick on why municipal reform is so important and what impacts it will have on their interactions, service offerings and tax rates with the municipalities in which they live.

We believe that in order to have vibrant and sustainable communities we must have residents that understand the purpose and rationale for this reform and that has not happened as of yet. With new elections coming quickly, it is critical to get this important information out there now.

As community leaders, we have been engaged in the reform process since the beginning. It has become clear that there remains a high level of disengagement as well as misinformation on both the advantages and challenges related to local government reform. In new entities who will have elections, candidates will be called on to not only explain the reform, but potentially defend the increased costs that may be associated with new services as mandated by the provincial government. To ensure this burden does not fall on municipal officials, we are supporting UMNB's request to expand communication and education efforts as they relate to local government reform. At the AGM on October 9th, members of the union supported a resolution calling on government to increase its educational effort on municipal reform to ensure that all residents not only understand the benefits, but the responsibilities that come along with our new local governance system.

We all share the goal of vibrant and sustainable communities. A key element of that goal requires an informed citizenry, and the province has a responsibility to provide that information to them. We know that council candidates will be out there doing the work in the next number of weeks, but they cannot do it alone. It requires support from your department to ensure the message is not only received, but also heard. Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Shawn Mesheau, Mayor
Town of Sackville

CC: Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick
MLA Megan Mitton