



The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

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August 29, 2013

Stephen McNeil, Leader
Nova Scotia Liberal Party
P.O. Box 723
5151 George Street, Suite 1400
Halifax, NS B3J 2T3

Mr. McNeil:

I am writing you on behalf of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) to determine your party's position on a number of key issues which will help ensure healthy and viable municipalities across the province.

Municipalities are facing a number of challenges, namely that:

- Only 8 cents of every tax dollar collected goes to municipalities
- 65 per cent of the infrastructure in Canada is owned by municipalities
- Close to 18 per cent of municipal budgets pay for provincial services of education, housing and corrections
- New federal and provincial regulations will require more than \$1 billion from municipal taxpayers
- Service costs are escalating
- Declining populations are impacting the ability of municipalities to maintain existing service levels.

To address these issues, the UNSM is seeking feedback on the following series of questions from all three political parties leading up to the 2013 provincial election.

Will your Party:

1. See municipalities as a partner in serving communities and work with them as another order of government?
2. Work with the UNSM to develop a long term strategy for municipalities?
3. Work with the UNSM and other stakeholders to support an independent study on an appropriate municipal taxation model?
4. Ensure direct negotiation with municipalities when contemplating new provincial regulations?
5. Ensure federal infrastructure programs are focussed on municipal infrastructure and address the community's highest priorities?
6. Be willing to make difficult decisions in the long term interest of communities?
7. Create a separate municipal program to tackle wastewater regulations?

8. Eliminate or at least limit mandatory education payments to school boards, corrections and housing?
9. Provide more support for roads while exploring new revenue sources such as a municipal fuel tax?
10. Implement a province-wide asset management plan?
11. Undertake a review of the Municipal Government Act, Halifax Charter, and Municipal Elections Act?
12. Create a standalone Municipal Affairs Department?

Please respond to these 12 questions by Friday, September 20, 2013. You can forward your Party's response to:

Betty MacDonald, Executive Director
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Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street
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Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Please be advised we will be sharing your response with our membership and posting it on the UNSM website.

Regards,



Councillor Russell Walker
President, UNSM

cc: UNSM Board of Directors