



## The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

*PRESIDENT:*

**Councillor Russell Walker**  
Halifax Regional Municipality

*VICE-PRESIDENT/*

*SECRETARY-TREASURER:*

**Mayor David Corkum**  
Town of Kentville

*IMMEDIATE PAST*

*PRESIDENT:*

**Deputy Warden Jimmy MacAlpine**  
District of Digby

*REGIONAL CAUCUS CHAIR:*

**Councillor Claire Detheridge**  
Cape Breton Regional Municipality

*RURAL CAUCUS CHAIR:*

**Warden Keith Hunter**  
County of Cumberland

*TOWN CAUCUS CHAIR:*

**Deputy Mayor Laurie Murley**  
Town of Windsor

Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 3K8

Tel: (902) 423-8331  
Fax: (902) 425-5592  
E-mail: [info@unsm.ca](mailto:info@unsm.ca)

August 29, 2013

Premier Darrell Dexter  
Office of the Premier  
PO Box 726  
Halifax, NS B3J 2T3

Premier Dexter:

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  
Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities  
Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 3K8  
Ph: 423-8673  
Email: bmacdonald@unsm.ca  
Fax: 902-425-5592.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Councillor Russell Walker**  
**President, UNSM**

cc: UNSM Board of Directors