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February 26, 2014

The Honourable Mark Furey
Minister, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Minister Furey:

Please find enclosed three reports prepared by sub-committees from the Towns Task Force—Land Use Planning, Economic Development and Regional Service Delivery. These reports expand on the recommendations in the original Towns Task Force Report endorsed by the previous SNSMR minister.

All three reports were endorsed by motion of the UNSM Board of Directors on February 14, 2014. The only exception would be the issue of the Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC) as outlined in the Regional Service Delivery Report. The original Towns Task Force report recommended that the UNSM and SNSMR work with the Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC) to explore options for regional projects that may fall under the MFC's mandate. After meeting with MFC staff, the subcommittee concluded that the promotion of shared services is not applicable to the MFC model, as funding is awarded after projects are completed. *The UNSM Board has requested that SNSMR review the role and mandate of the MFC to determine if the current MFC model could be changed to encourage or reward shared service applications where possible.*

The reports recommend a number of amendments to the MGA as well as new programs which will require provincial funding.

While the UNSM Board recognizes that financial requests will require time for the Province to review, it is our feeling that the legislative amendments could begin implementation within the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Please note there are still two sub-committee reports outstanding—Governance and Dispute Resolution, and Financial Condition Indicators. While the FCI is complete for each municipal unit, the committee still needs to determine how to interpret the results in a fair and consistent manner and develop strategies to improve the fiscal situation of those with lower scores. The Governance and Dispute Resolution Committee is in the process of developing a strategy to promote the benefits of using mediation to resolve disputes among municipal units and proposing MGA changes to ensure the use of alternate dispute resolution mechanisms are consistent throughout the Act. The next phase will focus on governance issues.



The UNSM Board requests that SNSMR begin working on addressing the recommendations in the three reports immediately. Addressing the recommendations in the two outstanding reports can begin upon their submission over the next six to twelve months.

In closing, I want to express our sincere thanks to SNSMR staff for their major contribution towards this important project. Their efforts were essential in completing the work of the sub-committees.

We really appreciate your willingness and desire to be so supportive and work cooperatively with our organization.

I look forward to speaking with you in the near future on the progress of these reports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'David Corkum'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D'.

Mayor David Corkum
UNSM President

cc: UNSM Board of Directors