

## NEWS RELEASE

For interviews or more information, contact:

**Mayor Dave Corkum**  
**UNSM President**  
Phone: 902-680-6125  
Email: dcorkum@kentville.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Nova Scotia FCM Board Members Call on Federal Government to Fix Flaws in New Building Canada Fund**

**Halifax, March 12, 2014:** UNSM President Mayor Dave Corkum, Mayor Don Downe, Councillor Wayne Atwater and Councillor Bill Karsten join other members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Board of Directors in calling on the federal government to fix serious gaps in the design of the New Building Canada Fund. Those gaps could put much-needed infrastructure investments in Nova Scotia at risk.

UNSM President Mayor Dave Corkum issued the call in Thunder Bay, following a meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Board of Directors from March 5-8.

Municipalities in Nova Scotia welcome the federal government's investment in the New Building Canada Fund, the longest and largest infrastructure program in Canadian history," said Mayor Don Downe. "But it is critical that these gaps be addressed so that the program can meet the needs of our communities over the next decade and give our residents the best value for money."

Councillor Atwater joined with other board members in calling on the federal government to work with local leaders to address flaws in the design of the BCF, and to work to prevent similar concerns from emerging in the future by improving the quality of federal consultations with local governments.

In 2012-2013, consultations between federal and local governments led to ground-breaking federal infrastructure investments, including a commitment to a new 10-year, \$14 billion Building Canada Fund (BCF), a 2 % annual index of the federal gas tax transfer, and a pledge to work with FCM on the detailed design and rollout of the plan. However, a lack of meaningful program design consultations followed and there was inadequate study and discussion of the issues. This left important concerns with the New Building Canada Fund unaddressed and important questions unanswered.

Municipalities own the vast majority of Canada's roads, water systems, public transit and other core infrastructure, but to date they have received no clear indication that a fair share of the new BCF will be invested in vital municipal projects, such as changes to wastewater systems to comply with federal regulations, solid waste improvements, and disaster mitigation. The new BCF's funding rules further reduce local flexibility by eliminating core infrastructure categories from eligibility, such as local roads.

The new BCF also introduced new requirements that could result in unnecessary red tape and cost property taxpayers more money, including a cumbersome "P3 screen" and rules that could force local governments to carry a higher share of project costs. Without changes, these restrictive rules will have a major impact in municipalities, many of whom are facing aging infrastructure and declining resources.

"It's not too late for the federal government to work together with us to resolve these issues," said Councillor Karsten. "It is our joint responsibility to do so. Nova Scotia municipalities count on their federal representatives to work with local leaders to make informed decisions that serve the people of Nova Scotia and get the most out of every tax dollar."

*The UNSM is a non-profit organization that has represented the Provincial interests of municipal governments across Nova Scotia since 1906. Total membership is 412 elected officials representing all 54 municipalities.*