



The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

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April 8, 2015

Honourable Zach Churchill
Department of Natural Resources
3rd Floor, Founders Square
P.O. Box 698
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T9

Dear Minister Churchill:

I am writing on behalf of the members of Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) who have expressed concern about the decision made to lay off seasonal employees at provincial parks. The concern is not only about the loss of jobs, but about the loss of personal service to visitors, many of whom visit Nova Scotia because of its hospitality. We understand the opportunity provided by the tourism sector is one of the bright lights in our economy, and we believe the personal touch and local knowledge provided by the staff at the parks are important in helping visits make the most of their stay. We need visitors to return to our communities.

More specifically, our members are concerned with the manner in which the decision was made. Municipalities understand the Province needs to improve their fiscal situation. The lack of discussion around the issue to find alternative solutions, and the timing of the decision leaves little opportunity for solutions to be put in place for this summer.

Municipalities care deeply about what is happening to their communities. They are willing to work with the province and with industry to find ways to use resources efficiently and effectively and to support economic growth in the province. We are proud of the personal touch our people provide. We think first time visitors to our communities especially welcome the friendly service our communities can provide.

My members want to be part of the solution, but they can only help when they are given advance notice of issues and concerns and have time to work collaboratively in the community to find solutions and alternatives. While municipalities are not in position to assume the service on behalf of the province, they may be able to facilitate an effort to perhaps find sponsors or partners who might be able to contribute. There has to be a willingness on the part of the province to reach out to municipalities, not just on this particular issue, but whenever the province is contemplating changes to services.

I know our municipalities look forward to a closer working relationship with you.

Sincerely,

Warden Keith Hunter
President, Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

KH/tv

cc: The Honourable Mark Furey, Minister, Department of Municipal Affairs
The Honourable Michel Samson, Minister, Department of Economic and Rural
Development and Tourism