

Warden Keith Hunter
President, Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities
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Dear Warden Hunter:

I am responding to your letter of April 8, 2015, in which you expressed the concern of Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities members regarding the announced changes to several provincial campgrounds.

Government has undertaken a review of a number of provincial programs and services to ensure Nova Scotians receive the best value for their money. With respect to provincial parks, it was determined that changes were required to ensure provincial campgrounds remained financially sustainable over the long-term. For example, the 20 provincial campgrounds operated by the Department of Natural Resources presently cost over \$3 million annually, but generate only \$1 million in revenue. Changing seven provincial campgrounds to self-registration was seen as a way to keep all our parks open for campers to enjoy while reducing the cost of our park system by approximately \$600,000 annually and is reflective of current user needs with 80 percent of users self-registering.

Self-registration campgrounds have been used for many years by other provincial and territorial governments across Canada as well as by Parks Canada. Based on discussions with these and other jurisdictions, it is our understanding that self-registration campgrounds have been well received by campers in those park systems. It is also important to note that here in Nova Scotia the trend toward off-site registration of campsites is already firmly established. In 2013, for example, 80 percent of provincial campground users made their reservations and paid before they arrived at the park.

The department is confident that the move to a limited number of self-registration campgrounds will not significantly impact park visitor experiences and the changes will help ensure that these parks continue to be available for Nova Scotians and out-of-province visitors to enjoy for years to come.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

Zach Churchill
Minister of Natural Resources