



**Municipal Affairs
Office of the Minister**

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JUL 9 2015

Warden Keith Hunter
President, Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities
Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street
Halifax, NS B3J 3K8

Dear Warden Hunter:

Under the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act* the Minister of Municipal Affairs must provide to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities 12 month notice of any provincial legislation, regulation or administrative actions that could have the effect of decreasing revenues or increasing the required expenditures of municipalities.

This letter is intended to provide notice of such changes for fiscal year 2016-17. The Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) canvassed all other provincial departments to seek information on plans for legislative, regulatory and policy changes in the coming fiscal year. The following is a summary of the results of that survey.

Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA)

DMA intends to negotiate a Partnership Agreement with the UNSM in the coming months. This Agreement will establish both immediate and longer term commitments for the Province and the UNSM by addressing the numerous requests and recommendations from the Towns Task Force, Provincial Municipal Fiscal Review, and NS Property Tax Study, along with departmental initiatives.

DMA anticipates that the specific commitments established in this Agreement will include changes to several programs that, if implemented, could result in some municipalities netting less funding overall and some netting more. The Partnership Agreement has not yet been signed by the UNSM and Government. However, some of the commitments may be implemented in fiscal 2016/17.

In the 2015/16 Budget, the Province committed to increasing the NSPI Host Grant by \$760K in 2015/16, along with freezing the Equalization Grant at 2014/15 allocations. The Equalization Grant was reviewed by the Provincial Municipal Fiscal Review, which identified principles for how the grant should be structured. The Department of Municipal Affairs intends to redevelop the program, with the new program being phased in over a period of years, as early as fiscal 2016/17.

Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM)

In the past, the OFM has provided financial support for Hazmat response in Nova Scotia. Most recently, in 2014/15, monies were paid to the HRM Fire and Emergency Services (\$30,000) for 2014/15 and to the Special Hazard Response Unit, Bible Hill (\$20,000) for 2015/16. Given that monies were paid in advance to the Special Hazard Response Unit, there will be no payment in 2015/16, and HRM will again receive \$30,000.

Going forward, and into 2016/17, HAZMAT organizations looking for financial assistance will be eligible to apply to the Emergency Services Provider Fund. This grant program is administrated through the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM), effective April 1, 2015 and further details may be obtained at:

<http://novascotia.ca/dma/funding/community/emergency-services-provider-fund>.

Please note the application process is currently under review to provide opportunity for qualifying agencies to better access funds.

We recognize the important work of these Hazmat teams and the Department will continue to provide financial support through the Emergency Services Provider Fund.

Department of Environment

Solid Waste

Nova Scotia Environment is proposing amendments to the *Solid Waste Resource Management Regulations* which are predicted to result in a net positive financial impact to municipalities. The proposed regulations are expected to create revenue for municipalities primarily through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which is expected to surpass potential negative financial implications to municipalities caused by new disposal bans on construction and demolition debris sites. A two-phased study is underway to understand how proposed regulation amendments will impact municipalities financially. The findings will be made public when the study is complete, which is expected to be in spring of this year.

Contaminated Sites

On July 6, 2013, the province implemented new *Contaminated Sites Regulations*. These regulations, and supporting Ministerial protocols, replace all previous guidelines and policies pertaining to the management of contaminated sites in the province.

A key change of the new regulations requires a person responsible for a contaminated site (this can include a municipal government) to notify the Minister in accordance with a ministerial protocol.

The former municipal exemption policy is no longer valid as part of the new contaminated sites management program. As these regulations are now in effect, municipalities must comply with the regulations. Municipalities may contact Nova Scotia Environment directly to discuss sites that may be affected for the next year.

Yours truly,



Mark Furey