



**Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Office of the Minister**

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April 22, 2024

Your Worship Carolyn Bolivar-Getson  
President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities  
Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 2K8  
Via email: [president@nsfm.ca](mailto:president@nsfm.ca)

Dear President Bolivar-Getson:

Under the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing must provide to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) 12-months' 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 2025-2026 and beyond.

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) canvassed all other provincial departments to seek information on plans for legislative, regulatory, and policy changes in the coming fiscal year. Below you will find a summary of the results of that process.

**Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage\***

Review of the *Libraries Act Funding Regulations*

Public regional libraries receive annual operating funding from the Province, municipalities, and their regional library boards. The *Libraries Act Funding Regulations* stipulate a sharing ratio that requires a contribution from municipalities. Currently, for libraries outside Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the Province contributes 71%, municipalities contribute 26%, and library and boards contribute 3%, while within HRM, the Province contributes 26%, the municipality contributes 71%, and the board contributes 3%.

The department is currently conducting a funding review that may have an impact on the municipalities on April 1, 2025. However, at this time, the impact on the municipalities is not known, as this work is underway and will require Executive Council approval.

We will provide further updates on any potential impacts as we get closer to a decision on this initiative.

**Department of Intergovernmental Affairs**

Procurement Thresholds and Free Trade Agreements

Intergovernmental Affairs would like to advise that there are procurement thresholds under several free trade agreements that could impact municipalities.

Every two years, Global Affairs Canada updates its thresholds for covered procurements under the Canada-Europe Trade Agreement (CETA), the Canada-UK Trade Continuity Agreement (TCA) and the Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA). Municipal procurements are covered under these obligations. All procurements above the thresholds must be publicly tendered unless subject to an exemption.

The threshold values in Canadian dollars for the period of January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025, are as follows:

<b>FTA</b>	<b>Goods</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Construction</b>
<b>CFTA</b>	<b>Province</b>		
	<b>\$33,400</b>	<b>\$133,800</b>	<b>\$133,800</b>
	<b>Municipalities and MASH</b>		
	<b>\$133,800</b>	<b>\$133,800</b>	<b>\$334,400</b>
	<b>Crowns, Utilities, etc.</b>		
	<b>\$353,300</b>	<b>\$668,800</b>	<b>\$6,685,000</b>
<b>CETA/TCA</b>	<b>Province, Municipalities and MASH</b>		
	<b>\$353,300</b>	<b>\$353,300</b>	<b>\$8,800,000</b>
	<b>Crowns</b>		
	<b>\$627,200</b>	<b>\$627,200</b>	<b>\$8,800,000</b>
	<b>Utilities, etc.</b>		
	<b>\$706,700</b>	<b>\$706,700</b>	<b>\$8,800,000</b>

**Department of Justice**

The Department of Justice are aware of the following changes:

1. The current RCMP labour contract for regular members and reservists below the rank of inspector expires on March 31, 2023, and new labour negotiations began on April 1, 2023. The negotiations remain ongoing and are moving to mediation as of January 2024. The cost implications cannot be determined at this time.
2. RCMP Multi-Year Financial Plan (MYFP) of Nova Scotia's RCMP "H" Division includes RCMP salary increases, fleet requirements, accommodation, and business cases in 2023-24. The total financial impact for the new Provincial Police Service Agreement to Municipalities is \$6.231 million.

3. Biological Casework Analysis Agreement provides municipalities with DNA analysis arising from criminal investigations. Costs will be determined upon the release of the "Total Uniform Assessment" by Municipal Affairs.
4. Work is underway for the development of the accessibility standards and compliance of the Act. The cost implications cannot be determined at this time. At a minimum, one-year notice will be given to municipalities and villages of any policy and regulation change related to obligations under the *Accessibility Act* and standards that impact revenue or expenditures.
5. The *Dismantling Racism and Hate Act* enables the Minister to require prescribed public sector bodies, including municipalities and villages to develop equity and anti-racism plans to address systematic hate, inequity, and racism. The provincial government is providing municipalities and villages with \$1.185 million to support this work. It is anticipated that plans will be required by April 1, 2025.
6. The Attorney General and Minister of Justice's Mandate Letter of September 14, 2021, directs the Minister to amend the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to give order-making ability to the Privacy Commissioner. The Department of Justice is undertaking a comprehensive review of access and privacy legislation with the goal of modernization. To ensure consistency in access and privacy legislation, Part XX of the *Municipal Government Act* is included in this review and will be updated at the same time. The Department of Justice is undertaking engagement with municipalities and villages as part of the review.

## **Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration**

### Firefighters' Compensation Regulations

This item is regarding the Firefighters' Compensation Regulations under the *Workers' Compensation Act*, and the expanded cancers included in the presumption in Nova Scotia. The estimated financial cost of this amendment was determined via an actuarial assessment. The Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia (WCB) will need to determine if the impact of cancer claims on the liability requires a rate increase for municipalities, as they are considered employers for volunteer firefighters in the *Workers' Compensation Act*. The WCB will communicate the 2025 rates to employers by September 2024.

## **Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

### Statement of Provincial Interest

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) has initiated a review of the Statement of Provincial Interest (SPI) Regarding Housing and the Statement of Provincial Interest (SPI) Regarding Infrastructure. The current SPIs have not been amended since their inception in 1999. Municipalities are required to have a comprehensive land use plan for the entire extent of their municipality and new municipal planning documents, as well as

amendments made after these statements come into effect, must be reasonably consistent with them. Municipalities are also required to review their planning documents every 10 years, at a minimum. It is difficult at this time to determine if there will be a potential financial impact on municipalities, in the form of additional studies to support their planning work, as this will be dependent on the results of the review.

### **Department of Emergency Management**

Regulations to support the new Act to Establish a Department of Emergency Management and Authorize the Establishment of a Nova Scotia Guard will be developed in the coming year which may have a financial impact on municipalities. This includes regulations respecting regional emergency management offices; the relationship between municipalities and regional emergency management offices; the provision of fire dispatch services through regional emergency management offices; vulnerable persons registries and their implementation; and a regional emergency alert system and the participation of municipalities in the system.

### **Department of Economic Development**

The Department of Economic Development has two initiatives underway that could potentially have financial impacts on municipalities:

#### Review of the *Peggy's Cove Commission Act*

This review is seeking to modernize the role and administration of the Peggy's Cove Commission. Given the location of Peggy's Cove within the boundaries of HRM, any proposed changes to the Act or its administration could have an impact on the municipality, for example shifting responsibility for planning approvals.

#### Regional Enterprise Networks (RENs)

In 2023 the department engaged in a series of interviews, interactive sessions, and discussions around our vision for economic growth, the existing tools and partnerships that support this shared work, and opportunities to support continued economic growth in Nova Scotia. This, in part, involved municipalities and the Regional Enterprise Networks (RENs). There were common themes that emerged from the sessions, most notably the need for consistent service delivery across the province, complete geographical coverage, and improved navigation of existing programs and services for businesses. The outcome of addressing these challenges has the potential to impact the existing REN model, and therefore our municipal partners.

Sincerely,



Honourable John A. Lohr  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing