



NOVA SCOTIA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

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October 24, 2024

Dear Fire Chiefs,

On behalf of all Nova Scotians, I want to express my deep gratitude for your commitment and service to your communities and our province. When we pause and reflect on the past two years we have been through so much; devastating wildfires, flash floods, hurricanes, and record-breaking snowfall. I know in each of these events, when we have called on firefighters to help, you have answered the call. You take risks every day to protect Nova Scotians, our homes and our communities.

That's why we are proud of the investments our government has made in supporting fire departments and other first responder organizations. I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the many ways we are supporting the work you do, so you can focus on being there when Nova Scotians need you the most.

- Most recently, we have been working with the Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia and have committed \$200,000 to fund a governance review of fire services in Nova Scotia, including training and fire dispatch.
- We have provided 64 organizations with a total of \$1.2 million in funding to buy and upgrade equipment they need for fire and other emergency response operations through the Emergency Services Provider Fund.
- Earlier this year, we delivered fitness training to the Department of Natural Resources Firefighter Reserve, which is made up of volunteer fire departments. The Department also expanded the delivery of the emergency firefighter training to include more people and to provide more courses.
- Supporting volunteer firefighters and other first responders by providing almost 2,000 more new trunked mobile radios. This investment of \$10.5 million will help improve first responders' ability to communicate while they help people in need.
- Provided over \$850,000 in funding during the past two years through the Community Facilities Improvement program and other grants from Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage to support building upgrades and improvements at fire halls. These included replacing roofs, installing heat pumps or new septic systems.
- The Province contributes \$4.37 million annually to provide WCB presumptive cancer and immediate heart attack coverage for volunteer firefighters.

Many of you would know we have created the new Department of Emergency Management, which will lead, direct and support a coordinated response and help meet the needs of Nova Scotians when a crisis or disaster occurs. It will focus on better planning and preparation before an emergency, and better communication and coordination during an emergency, ultimately leading to faster recovery for communities impacted.

In Nova Scotia, we also have an incredible resource in our people. To harness this Bluenoser spirit, we've created the Nova Scotia Guard, made up of volunteers from across our province who are willing to help during and after emergencies. The voice of professional and volunteer firefighters are critically important in these initiatives. To that end, the Minister's Advisory Panel on the NS Guard has representation from both Halifax Fire and the FSANS.

We recognize the invaluable service you provide to your communities and we want you to know that we will continue to be here for Nova Scotia's firefighters.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Houston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "H".

Honourable Tim Houston
Premier of Nova Scotia