

December 14, 2015

Honourable Eddie Joyce
Minister of Municipal Affairs,
Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador,
Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services,
Minister Responsible for the Government Purchasing Agency,
Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL,
and Registrar General

Dear Minister Joyce:

I am honoured to welcome you to your role as Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services, Minister Responsible for the Government Purchasing Agency, Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL, and Registrar General. We have been given an extraordinary opportunity to serve the people of our province and together we will work to create a stronger tomorrow for Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the next four years, we will fulfill our commitments, building on the trust placed in us on November 30, 2015. We shall, without fail, act with integrity in all aspects of our service, striving for excellence in discharging our responsibilities.

Embarking on this journey together, we will be guided by *A Stronger Tomorrow: Our Five Point Plan* to Restore Openness, Transparency and Accountability; Build a Stronger, Smarter Economy; Improve Health and Healthcare; Support Safe and Sustainable Communities; and Invest in Our Future Through Education.

As Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador I expect you to follow the principles of openness, transparency and accountability. It is my intention to ensure policy decisions in government are informed by research, evidence, and evaluation so that citizens can understand how and why decisions are made. It is critical that our government's decisions are also informed by engagement with stakeholders, including our Aboriginal partners, to ensure everyone's voices are heard.

Our government is committed to modernizing our province's legislative process in accordance with these principles and I call upon you to engage your fellow Members, constituents and the general public; avail of the Committee process of the House of Assembly; and seek opportunities for non-partisan cooperation.

We are also committed to creating an environment that captures the full potential of our province's many riches, through diversification, job creation and growth. We will take action to improve the health and well-being of people, empower sustainable community development, protect public safety and advance educational opportunities and outcomes.

Our province is facing significant fiscal challenges that require our collective leadership and the engagement of the public. Together, our government will lead our province towards a more sustainable, economic future.

In your position as Minister of Municipal Affairs, you serve an important role in supporting local governments and empowering communities through a strategic approach to sustainable development and the delivery of services and infrastructure in the province.

Municipal Support

Provincial support is critical to the growth and development of municipalities. To support greater engagement with municipalities, in collaboration with your colleagues, you will organize an annual Premier's Forum on Local Government where community leaders will be invited to discuss issues of concern to their municipalities. This work will be undertaken in conjunction with Municipalities NL and the Combined Councils of Labrador.

In partnership with the Municipal Assessment Agency and Municipalities NL, you are directed to immediately initiate a review of the Assessment Act, 2006 that will address the timing of assessments, assessment criteria, and implementation of the associated mill rate.

You must also develop a strategic plan for addressing the infrastructure gap in Newfoundland and Labrador and establish a committee comprised of representatives from Municipalities NL and the Professional Municipal Administrators to bring forward recommendations for government's consideration. Our government will provide municipalities with infrastructure funding under a multi-year framework to allow better planning, management and completion of infrastructure projects.

Crown Lands

You are to undertake a review of land transfer options for municipalities including long-term leasing and lease to own arrangements.

As Minister of Service Newfoundland and Labrador, you are responsible for a department that impacts residents and businesses throughout the province. It is a position that comes with a broad spectrum of responsibilities that include public health and safety, commercial registrations, vital statistics, occupational health and safety, consumer protection and motor vehicle registration. I expect you to lead these functions for our government, as well as the specific items outlined below.

Consumer Protection

We need to do more to protect consumers against fraud or bad business practices. As part of your mandate, you will establish an online searchable database to alert consumers of bad business practices, and explore the possibility of posting convictions made under our provincial consumer protection legislation. You will also review legislation in other jurisdictions, to determine what the province can do differently to strengthen consumer

protection to deter bad business practices and ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are protected in common business dealings.

Automobile Insurance System

I also ask that you complete a thorough review of the automobile insurance system in the province. This review will include consultation with private-sector stakeholders and the public with the goal of modernizing the system to provide greater benefits and better value to residents of the province.

As Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services, you will oversee the important mandate of developing and maintaining a modern and robust emergency management system in the province. Together with these responsibilities, I expect you to focus on:

Emergency Notification

I expect that you will ensure that the NL 911 Bureau has implemented a multi-agency emergency notification approach for 911 calls in the province.

Maritime Safety

The federal government has committed to re-open the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's. I expect you to work with your provincial and federal colleagues to re-establish the Centre in our province.

As Minister Responsible for the Government Purchasing Agency, your mandate is to ensure government has the products and services required to support its daily operations. As you carry out this work, you are expected to find opportunities to modernize our procurement processes, as outlined below.

Public Procurement Framework

The current Public Tender Act was drafted in 1990, with the last amendments undertaken in 2009. I expect you to modernize the public procurement framework and expand opportunities for local businesses. This work should include examining barriers to local businesses bidding on public works, with a goal of removing obstacles and strengthening local opportunities, and working with industry to look for ways to improve the overall public procurement system, and ensure an open and competitive bidding process.

Our government supports healthy, safe, respectful and productive workplaces throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. As Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL, you are responsible for working with employers, injured workers and dependents, and ensuring there is a fair and timely review process in place. I expect you to oversee this aspect of our mandate, together with the specific item outlined below.

Presumptive Cancer Legislation

Firefighters constantly risk their lives, health, and safety to serve their communities and there is increasing evidence linking exposure of firefighting to various cancers. You will work with career firefighters, their municipal employers, and volunteer firefighters to bring forward presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters in our province.


In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister you must ensure collaboration, in a positive and constructive manner, with your Cabinet colleagues. I take this opportunity to remind you that as you carry out your responsibilities, as a Member of the House of Assembly and Member of Cabinet, adhering to the Code of Conduct and the Conflict of Interest guidelines are mandatory, to ensure you discharge your duties with the highest ethical standards.

Deputy Ministers are your key source of support and will provide you with non-partisan advice in meeting your responsibilities. I expect you to develop a positive, respectful and trusting relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public service. I would also ask that you be mindful that Deputy Ministers, among their various responsibilities, are ultimately accountable to me, through the Clerk of the Executive Council.

Our government will report back to the public annually on the achievement of our commitments and make adjustments as required. As a Minister you are accountable for achieving these priorities and meeting other responsibilities within your Department.

Together, we will provide strong leadership to deliver the change we need to move beyond today's challenges and on to a stronger tomorrow.

Sincerely,



DWIGHT BALL

Premier