

At this upcoming review of the Newfoundland and Labrador municipal legislation, I respectfully call for the inclusion of the Municipal Elections Act, the Urban and Rural Planning Act, and relevant municipal taxation legislation. These pieces of legislation are critical in creating an opportunity to strengthen our democracy as well as improving the engagement and prosperity of our citizens, finally they are critical to our plan for the future.

During the review of Municipal Elections Act, I encourage you to act upon the calls to action of the [Citizens' Assembly for Stronger Elections](#). Elections are the embodiment of what it means to truly belong to a community, the lack of fairness, transparency, accountability, and accessibility, would be an indictment of everything our government and the governing process stands for. In order to be effective, a government must understand and cater to the needs of the communities of which they serve, should those needs not adequately be addressed, it means to govern poorly or not at all. The time to act on these suggestions is now to provide sufficient time for the municipalities to prepare and meet the needs of their constituents.

Additionally, it is critical to consider the Urban and Rural Planning Act as well as the municipal taxation legislation which affects all municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador. The open review will allow more residents the opportunity to voice their concerns and provide their governments the opportunities to represent those voices when shaping their future communities. With such radical changes occurring and a large differential between the wealth and income of communities across Newfoundland and Labrador, we must focus on developing sustainable communities that encourage proactive support for the residents. This means holistic support through design and financing, all the way to implementation.

As for taxation, with the uncertainty surrounding our current housing market and the likelihood of a decline in housing prices, municipalities will likely have to raise their taxation through the way of mil rates. A unidimensional mechanism to control revenue is a concern, much like an undiversified portfolio. As a result, this provides a significant disadvantage to the constitutions in the municipalities where these mil rates will be most affected. The question must be asked: does this form of taxation allow our communities to succeed sustainably?

Thank you for the wonderful opportunity to affect real change that can benefit current and future generations of this province. I am sure the review will be comprehensive and beneficial to all.