

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA Cumberland North



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Nova Scotia Legislature

January 24, 2022

Hon. Allan MacMaster
Department of Finance and Treasury Board
7th Floor, Provincial Building
1723 Hollis Street
P.O. Box 187
Halifax, NS
B3J 2N3

Dear Minister Allan MacMaster:

Greetings from Cumberland County. I hope you had a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season.

Thank you for your service to the people of Nova Scotia, especially your leadership in the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, as Minister of Labour Relations and Minister of Gaelic Affairs.

As the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Cumberland North, I am always looking for ways to improve the lives of the people I represent. I am requesting a meeting with you to discuss the needs and priorities identified below.

I think your department has a unique opportunity to lead the way in creating cooperation and collaboration between our maritime neighbours and advancing our region for our mutual betterment. I believe a more strategic approach and more regional planning will benefit all and will make us more competitive as a strong region in Canada.

I am looking for your assistance to advance priorities related to your department:

- With regard to your position managing the Province's Treasury, I urge you to (a) build a Nova Scotian economy that will remove the need for federal transfer payments due to us being a "have-not" province, (b) pay down the debt of the province, and (c) urge the federal government to increase health transfer payments.
- In the Fall Session of the Legislature, I tabled a bill entitled "The Nova Scotia Recovery Bonds Act". This would create an additional revenue stream to boost our economy as we move forward after the pandemic and I welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you as it behooves us to consider all options to have a healthy economy.
- I ask that you consider the residents of New Brunswick that live near the provincial border and not charge an extra levy on the property they own in Cumberland County. The residents of Cumberland and Westmoreland Counties have long shared family and heritage. Many families in Westmoreland County

live in Cumberland County 5-6 months of the year and purchase household items here in NS paying HST on all purchases. This request comes out of respect of our longstanding shared services, economy, and families.

- With respect to Labour Relations, there is one item I request you and your staff examine closely. Nursing positions (at least in Cumberland) are being held by staff who are off due to long term disability or some type of leave for extended periods of time. I know of one nurse who had cancer who was unable to work for several years and due to union contract, the nursing unit was not able to place anyone in this nursing position. This is a barrier to hiring new full-time staff. The HR department are only able to offer casual or part-time positions to nurses even though there are several full-time vacancies. Many nurses require full time positions to cover the costs of living. Also, it is a competitive industry and not being able to offer F/T positions puts us at a disadvantage. Can you and your staff consider what changes could be made in future contracts to remove this barrier that is leading to staffing problems on nursing units here in Cumberland and likely province-wide?

Your department will play an integral part in advancing Nova Scotia and our Maritime Region to become competitive internationally and achieve economic independence in our own country by becoming less reliant on federal transfers. Cooperation among all elected officials in all three levels of government will strengthen our ability to adapt post pandemic.

I look forward to discussing the contents of this letter in a meeting with you. This can be arranged by contacting my office 902-661-2288.

Thank you for your leadership as Minister and I look forward to working with you in these important areas.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin

Cc: Dr. Stephen Ellis, MP Cumberland Colchester; Mayor Murray Scott, Cumberland County; Mayor David Kogon, Town of Amherst