

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA Cumberland North



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Nova Scotia Legislature

January 30, 2025

The Honourable John Lohr, M.L.A.
Minister of Finance, Labour Relations, and Municipal Affairs
Department of Finance and Treasury Board
5th Floor, Provincial Building
1723 Hollis Street
P.O. Box 187
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2N3

Dear Minister Lohr,

Thank you for agreeing to serve the people of Nova Scotia as Minister of Finance, Minister of Labour Relations, and Minister of Municipal Affairs. Your extensive experience and dedication to public service position you well to address the critical fiscal and municipal challenges facing our province. Cumberland County stands ready to collaborate with you in fostering economic stability, ensuring strong labor relations, and supporting our municipalities.

Governing is about people. On November 26th, 2024, Nova Scotians entrusted us with a mandate to shape a brighter future. We share a belief in the strength of our communities, the ingenuity of our industries, and the rich heritage that defines Cumberland County. Together, we will harness this potential to foster economic growth, improve healthcare, and elevate the quality of life for all residents.

Cumberland County stands on the precipice of tremendous opportunity. By investing in our people, supporting innovation, and ensuring sustainable development, we can unlock prosperity and lead Nova Scotia into a new era of progress. Our collective success hinges on collaboration, bold action, and a steadfast commitment to addressing the unique needs of our communities.

As Minister of Finance, Labour Relations, and Municipal Affairs, your leadership will be pivotal in driving initiatives that address the financial sustainability of our province, strengthening labor relations, and empowering municipalities to thrive.

Specifically, I ask that you prioritize:

1. **Increasing the Basic Personal Exemption** to be on par with the rest of Canada, ensuring Nova Scotians benefit from equitable tax policies. During your recent election campaign, the Premier promised an increase in **Basic Personal Tax Exemption**. It is very important that the increase will be enough to help those living in poverty and the working poor in our province. Increasing the basic personal tax exemption is one of the most cost effective ways to address affordability. Let people keep more of their own hard earned money.
2. Addressing affordability by **eliminating tax-on-tax practices** and revising the tax policy to **remove tax on the sale of used vehicles** to alleviate financial burdens on residents.
3. Supporting municipal modernization initiatives, including shared services and **infrastructure upgrades**, to improve efficiency and service delivery.
4. **Seniors Pharmacare late fees should be removed**, this is penalizing people who choose to continue work or are healthy and do not need to join when they turn 65.
5. Keeping life affordable for the people I represent and all Nova Scotians is needed now more than ever. Controlling the property taxes is necessary. Please consider amending the [Assessment Act](#) with this Private Member's Bill <https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/bills-statutes/bills/assembly-64-session-1/bill-175> which will **limit the increase in the taxable assessed value of qualified properties to the lesser of 2.5% and the increase in the Consumer Price Index for Nova Scotia**.
6. The Auditor General has made the recommendation to **amend the Finance Act** to table a report on supplementary warrants and appropriations made in a fiscal year. Parliamentary Democracy should have legislative oversight on all government spending.
7. **Cumberland has been neglected for decades and is in need of massive Infrastructure dollars**. Please honour the Conflict of Interest Act and ensure that department spending is done through a non-partisan lens.

For at least three decades, since the implementation of the Cobequid Pass Tolls, there has been division from Nova Scotia and Cumberland has felt cut-off from the rest of Nova Scotia. The residents and business owners of Cumberland County do not feel a part of Nova Scotia. Investment is needed desperately to make up for years of neglect. Please consider coming to visit our area and meet with some of our local leaders.

I would like to request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss these important priorities and how we can work together to address the unique challenges and opportunities in Cumberland County. Collaboration is key to ensuring that we deliver meaningful results for our communities, and I look forward to engaging with you to advance these goals.

I look forward to working with you to build a stronger, more vibrant Cumberland County. Together, we will seize the opportunities before us and create lasting positive change for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA for Cumberland North