

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA Cumberland North



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Députée Cumberland North

Nova Scotia Legislature

January 30, 2025

The Honourable Fred Tilley, M.L.A.
Minister of Public Works
Department of Public Works
3rd Floor, Johnston Building
1672 Granville Street
P.O. Box 186
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2N2

Dear Minister Tilley,

Thank you for agreeing to serve the people of Nova Scotia as Minister of Public Works. Your extensive experience and dedication to public service position you well to address the needs of your department.

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 Public Works, your leadership will be pivotal in ensuring the development and maintenance of vital infrastructure that supports Nova Scotia's communities and economy. Your department's work will play a crucial role in addressing transportation, public infrastructure, and connectivity needs, particularly in regions like Cumberland County.

Specifically, I ask that you prioritize:

1. **Advancing infrastructure projects in Cumberland County**, including road improvements and bridge repairs, to enhance safety and support economic activity. Unfortunately, infrastructure has been neglected in Cumberland North for decades and significantly in the last three years.

2. Addressing the long-standing concerns around the lack of investment in road work and winter road maintenance in Wallace and Malagash, ensuring consistent and reliable service. Formal requests have been made to place Malagash and Wallace back under the management of Cumberland. This area is located in Cumberland but managed out of the Colchester garages for about 12-15 years and it is not meeting the needs of the people in the area.

3. Supporting critical municipal infrastructure needs, such as the **replacement of storm sewers in Pugwash and Wallace**, to address flooding and improve resilience to severe weather events. The continued delay in getting this infrastructure replaced is causing further delays in sidewalks getting replaced to improve safe accessible walkways as well.

4. **Ensuring fair and equitable distribution of public works funding** for Cumberland North and across the province, guaranteeing that all regions, regardless of their elected MLA, have access to necessary infrastructure investments.

5. Over the past three years, unfortunately, the Conflict of Interest Act has been violated as the department's spending was partisan. The previous Minister rewarded PC MLAs with significantly more department spending than constituencies of opposition members. For example, one season there were **no** roads paved in Cumberland North, and the next year only **3 km** were paved. After one session when I voted against a motion, two tendered road projects in Cumberland North were cancelled. There were only three cancelled in the entire province and two were in my constituency. More recently a culvert failed on Route 366 in April of 2024. There was no urgency to get the work done and local businesses and residents (including our tourism industry) suffered greatly until the road was finally opened just before Christmas Day. This treatment is unfair to the taxpayers of Cumberland North. The road conditions are worsening significantly due to neglect and roads are unsafe in some areas such as Trunk 6, a main trunk roadway. Paving has been done in neighbouring constituencies on roads that were not in disrepair that have PC MLAs. Colchester North is an example of this where Trunk 6 was paved and the shoulders of the road were paved and ended at the border of my constituency. I ask that you lead your department fairly, respecting the Conflict of Interest Act and in the best interests of all Nova Scotians, ensuring that the people of

Cumberland North receive needed infrastructure work for roads, bridges and storm sewers.

6. Working with federal and municipal partners to secure funding for large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the **Chignecto Isthmus protection** plan, which is vital for Nova Scotia's connection to the rest of Canada. Work is needed now to ensure the protection of our area and all Nova Scotia. Communication should be done quarterly with local Cumberland residents so that they are aware of progress.

7.. Promoting green infrastructure initiatives, ensuring that public works projects align with environmental sustainability goals. Promotion of accessibility initiatives such as the **Blue Route** is a priority for my residents. Currently, Route 366 is identified as a portion of the Blue Route however there are no paved shoulders on the highway and road conditions are not safe for cycling.

8. **Roadside vegetation maintenance** is needed throughout all of Cumberland North to improve safety. In addition to safety concerns, tourism potential is untapped due to the poor aesthetics of our highways and roadsides. It will take significant investment to improve and I believe would be a good use of taxpayer dollars given the beautiful province we have to showcase to tourists.

9. Pass the Bill [Road Construction Relief Act](https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/bills-statutes/bills/assembly-64-session-1/bill-470) . This bill introduces a **relief program** aimed at supporting individuals and businesses negatively affected by prolonged road construction projects. Inspired by issues like the Oxley Creek culvert closure on Route 366, the act provides a streamlined process for applying for financial compensation through an online portal. The program prioritizes transparency and ease of access, with the goal of mitigating economic disruptions for local businesses, particularly those dependent on tourism and traffic flow.

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/bills-statutes/bills/assembly-64-session-1/bill-470>

10. Everyone who works on the road deserves to be safe. Tow Truck operators, Ambulance service, fire, Police and more are all included in the **Slow Down Move Over act**, I believe that Department of Public works staff and Municipal public works staff should also be covered under this law. Furthermore Under this act I am also asking that tow truck operators be able to use flashing red lights as way to make drivers more aware that they need to slow down and move over. <https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/bills-statutes/bills/assembly-64-session-1/bill-371>

11. In Cumberland North we have roads that are owned by the province, but are in densely populated areas that should have a lower speed limit. I ask that you the Minister pass legislation to give the minister authority to designate an area on a highway as a high population density area and **reduce the speed limit in that area to be lower than 50km/hr** and no lower than 25 kilometres per hour. The current limit is 50 kilometer per hour. I have two areas that this would apply too and residents have repeatedly asked for; Heather Beach and SeaGrove Road.

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/bills-statutes/bills/assembly-64-session-1/bill-400>

I have an extensive list of road work that is needed. I will not include it in this letter as I met with your staff in late 2024 to review and the local area managers are also aware.

I would like 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 delivering 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 create a stronger, more vibrant Cumberland County. Together, we will seize the opportunities before us and create lasting positive change for future generations.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA for Cumberland North
CC: Deputy Minister of Public works