

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA Cumberland North



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Nova Scotia Legislature

February 4, 2025

The Honourable Tim Houston, M.L.A.
Premier of Nova Scotia
Office of the Premier
7th Floor, One Government Place
1700 Granville Street
P.O. Box 726
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T3

Dear Premier Houston,

Nova Scotians have placed their trust in your government for a second mandate, and with that comes a responsibility to address the significant challenges facing our province with transparency, accountability, and urgency.

Your role as Premier places you in a unique position to make decisive and impactful changes. Cumberland County, like much of Nova Scotia, faces critical challenges that require focused attention and effective leadership.

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 Premier of Nova Scotia, your leadership is instrumental in addressing the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing our province. From bolstering our

healthcare system and economic stability to navigating external pressures such as potential tariffs from the United States, your guidance will shape Nova Scotia's future.

The challenges before us demand a results-driven approach, particularly as Nova Scotians grapple with healthcare access, economic pressures, and external threats such as tariffs from the United States.

Specifically, I ask that you prioritize:

1. Strengthening Nova Scotia's position in international trade by addressing external challenges such as potential tariffs from the United States, ensuring our industries remain competitive on the global stage.
2. **Massive infrastructure investment is needed in Cumberland County.** This area of the province has been neglected and has not gotten its fair share of government investment for decades. Upon examination of healthcare capital costs needed for more acute care beds, long term care beds, diagnostic imaging - MRI, Detox, Mobile Crisis Unit, palliative care beds and a hospice, roads, bridges, storm sewer, energy development for geothermal, cell and internet, NSCC Amherst campus and student housing, Sportscentre, Marina(Pugwash) and protection of the **Chignecto Isthmus**, it is estimated that 1 Billion of Infrastructure investment is needed in Cumberland in the next 4 years.
3. Bolstering healthcare by addressing staffing shortages and ensuring accountability and efficiency in service delivery.
4. Addressing systemic issues such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) through comprehensive prevention strategies and support programs. Despite 18 million dollars being promised through the Mass Casualty Commission, there is no special clinic added with mental health professionals that are trained in trauma in either Colchester nor Cumberland. Nonprofits are being asked to provide services but I join others with legitimate concerns that the psychological needs are not being met in our areas that were directly impacted by the mass casualty.
5. Enacting legislation to ban the misuse of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) in cases of sexual assault to ensure survivors can share their experiences freely and seek justice.
6. Tackling the Crown Prosecutor shortage by improving recruitment and retention efforts to ensure timely and effective prosecution of cases. Too many sexual assault cases, and other cases are being thrown out due to Jordan's rule. More must be done to ensure court backlogs are removed so criminals are brought to justice in Nova Scotia.

7. Advocating for equitable federal funding and partnerships to support long-term investments in healthcare, education, and infrastructure.
8. Promoting workforce development and retention strategies to meet labor market needs, particularly in healthcare, education, and skilled trades.
9. Implementing measures to enhance housing affordability and accessibility. Affordable housing and transitional housing is needed. If public housing is not being built by the province then the rental supplement amount needs to be increased so that it reflects current market rents in places like Amherst and Cumberland.
10. Elevating Nova Scotia's role as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship by fostering partnerships with academic institutions, private industry, and global investors. Innovation centres need to be in rural Nova Scotia, towns like Amherst, to support entrepreneurs and new business growth.
11. Ensuring fiscal responsibility and accountability while maintaining a focus on delivering critical public services and fostering economic growth. Responsible government brings spending decisions before the legislature for proper legislative oversight. Balancing the provincial budget and paying down the debt is also needed.
12. Enhancing transparency in government operations through improved data collection, public reporting, and open communication to strengthen public trust and accountability.
13. I request to serve on Standing Committees. Ensuring there is an opposition voice on Standing Committees for rural Nova Scotia is important.
14. APSEA must reinstate classroom instruction. Nova Scotia is the only province that does not provide in-person classes.
15. Specific requests from each department have been made. I would be pleased to review any of these requests with you or your staff.

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 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', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin
MLA for Cumberland North