

**Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin**  
**MLA Cumberland North**



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**Députée Cumberland North**

**Nova Scotia Legislature**

January 30, 2025

The Honourable Greg Morrow, M.L.A.  
Minister of Agriculture  
Department of Agriculture  
3rd Floor, Founders Square  
1701 Hollis Street  
P.O. Box 2223  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3C4

Dear Minister Morrow,

Thank you for agreeing to serve the people of Nova Scotia as Minister of Agriculture. 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 food security and strengthening agriculture in our province. 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 Agriculture, your leadership will be pivotal in fostering innovation and sustainability in Nova Scotia's agricultural sector. Your work will play a crucial role in supporting farmers, advancing food security, and promoting sustainable land-use practices that ensure the long-term health of our agricultural economy and environment. Specifically, I ask that you prioritize:

1. Promoting Cumberland County's agricultural sector by encouraging young farmers, sustaining family farms, and advancing programs for generational renewal in agriculture to **Achieve significant growth in local food production** to strengthen food security and economic sustainability in Nova Scotia.

2. Explore mechanisms to **measure the productivity of arable farmland in Cumberland and Nova Scotia**. Cumberland has 30% of the arable farmland in Nova Scotia. An assessment of unused farmland is needed to determine why it is unused and then find a good use for the land whether it is for pasture, produce, forestry or other. **Getting all arable land into production is essential.**
3. Work with Dalhousie University **Truro AC Campus as growth is needed** in the University sector to grow the student population and build new student residences for students interested in a career in farming and agriculture.
4. Collaborate with stakeholders to boost food production by fostering partnerships with agricultural organizations, government agencies, and local communities to develop innovative strategies that enhance sustainable farming practices and provide targeted support for farmers.
5. Work with **Maritime Beef Strategic Partners** to expand beef production by supporting initiatives aimed at increasing beef production in Cumberland and across the Maritimes, with a focus on improving supply chain efficiency, scaling operations, and investing in infrastructure and training for farmers.
6. **Remove interprovincial barriers** to agri-business growth by advocating for the harmonization of regulations and streamlined trade policies to eliminate barriers that hinder economic growth and competitiveness for farmers and producers.
7. Mitigate risks for local farmers by collaborating with farmers to address critical risks such as disease outbreaks, climate-related challenges, and other vulnerabilities. Develop risk management programs that include access to insurance, emergency planning, and educational resources to safeguard their businesses.
8. Support the building of commercial greenhouses and vertical farming as a tool to increase food production in Nova Scotia. Cumberland County is the ideal location for this initiative as geothermal energy is readily available near the Town of Springhill. Geothermal energy is considered superior in this region due to the old coal mine shafts that are filled with warm waters. Please see Bill 393 that was tabled October 31st, 2023 that outlines this idea. [https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th\\_1st/1st\\_read/b393.htm](https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th_1st/1st_read/b393.htm)
9. Supporting the building of residential greenhouses would also increase local food production and promote food self-reliance as tabled in this bill in April 2022. [https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th\\_1st/1st\\_read/b180.htm](https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th_1st/1st_read/b180.htm)
10. Expanding market access for Nova Scotia's agricultural products, while promoting locally sourced food to achieve 20% of household food spending on local products by 2030.
11. Collaborating with local farmers and organizations on climate-resilient farming techniques and sustainable land management practices to address climate challenges and ensure long-term agricultural viability.
12. Our government must lead the movement to increase local food production and remove interprovincial barriers. Please consider passing legislation to support this. Such as the Buy

Maritime First Act that I tabled in October 2023

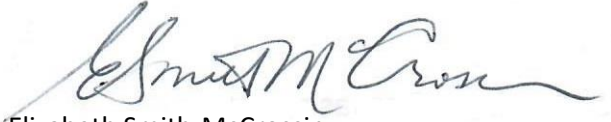
[https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th\\_1st/1st\\_read/b392.htm](https://nslegislature.ca/legc/bills/64th_1st/1st_read/b392.htm)

13. Advocating for investments in agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation systems and storage facilities, to boost productivity and resilience. Cumberland has lost a great deal of the infrastructure in farming. Investment is needed to remove fallen structures such as barns and build new ones.
14. Addressing workforce challenges and improving access to skilled labour within the agricultural sector through targeted initiatives and partnerships.

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 build 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