



April 15, 2020

Honourable Derrick Bragg, Minister
Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment
4th Floor, West Block
Confederation Building
PO Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Bragg:

I write this letter as a follow up from our last correspondence, dated March 26. Thank you for your response letter.

We continue our work with your departmental staff to source and to share information in a timely manner. We received updated information on portable water dispensing units (PWDUs) and direction on holding community parades. We were happy to collaborate on the Easter distancing campaign. The reach across our social media platforms ranged from 2000 to 10,000 views. We are aware of many instances where Mayors shared the message provided by MNL and distributed the posters. We are hoping that the measure of these efforts will be positive in the coming weeks. Again, the MNL Board of Directors thank you and your staff for the ongoing and open line of communication.

MNL held its second round of regional conference calls from April 1 to 3. Over 200 people participated, representing 123 municipalities. On Monday, we released the summary report from those calls. I would like to take this the opportunity to highlight the priority concerns of our members at this time:

1. **Municipal finances:** Municipalities are concerned about their financial sustainability moving forward. At the time of the calls, municipalities became aware that they were not eligible for business supports under existent Federal Government aid packages. Other sources of revenue are necessary, as municipalities cannot rely upon residential and commercial taxation. Already, tax deferrals, discounts and interest-free options are underway. Given that municipalities are not able to run deficits, what is the solution to the looming municipal financial crisis?
2. **Capital works project funding and starts:** Municipalities with approved projects are wondering about next steps for getting those projects shovel ready. What is the Department's plans for capital works projects schedule for the 2020 construction season?
3. **Municipal guidance document:** We are aware that the Department is working on a municipal guidance document. Can you please provide a status update on this document?

4. Chlorine and water testing: Our members want to know whether provincial water testing is ongoing. Further to this, they are concerned about chlorine stores and storage. They want reassurance that acquiring chlorine will not be an issue for them, and they want guidance on how best to store chlorine given the uncertainty in ordering lead times.
5. Municipal parks and beaches: The weather is slowly improving. As more people seek places to be outside and to find things to do, they will gather. We have had several questions from members, particularly those with municipal beaches and parks, regarding clear direction as to whether these spaces should remain open to the public or closed. Further to this, they want to know about regulations concerning the upcoming angling and hunting season.

Again, I want to express my thanks to you and your staff for the quick responses we've already received. Timely and clear guidance to the sector is critically important during this crisis and we appreciate your attention to these important issues.

We look forward to continuing our work with you and your team. We are happy that you will join us on the third round of regional calls that will take place next week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheila Fitzgerald".

Sheila Fitzgerald
President

Cc/ Dan Michielsen,
Deputy Minister (Acting)