

Municipalities NL – Info Sheet on Municipal Issues

January 25th, 2021

Responses from NL NDP

Specifically, Municipalities NL (MNL) tends to advocate for the interests of municipal governments, around 4 major themes:

- Municipal fiscal stability
- Innovation in infrastructure
- Regionalization
- A municipal seat at the table

This election campaign, they are asking all the parties the 4 following questions, concerning each of the themes above:

- Do you support exploring additional sources of revenue for municipalities such as access to income and sales tax, thereby lessening the burden currently placed on property tax?
 - We recognize that municipalities deliver many vital services to our communities, but they rarely have the funding to provide them adequately.
 - We pledge to work with municipalities to create a sustainable and obtainable set of funding mechanisms for our municipalities. The current system of operating grants is failing our communities. We need a new formula based on need and the cost of meeting obligations to provide quality services.
 - We are open to exploring new opportunities for municipalities to generate their own revenue, particularly through municipal sales and income tax, or grants in lieu of taxes. We will also lobby the federal government to back up their municipal regulations with the proper funding so that our communities can actually comply with them.

- Will you advance efforts to support the design, funding, and implementation of new, innovative infrastructure solutions that address longstanding but solvable municipal issues?
 - For any provincial policy or program regarding municipalities to succeed, we need the input of the communities on the ground, who are in the best position to tell government what they actually need.
 - For far too long, municipalities have had to rely on outdated, inadequate, or non-existent infrastructure. Our communities cannot go on this way.
 - We would work directly with Municipalities NL and our communities to develop a multi-year infrastructure plan. This plan would provide mechanisms to determine which communities get what funding and when, based on need.

- Are you willing to work with MNL and the elected local leaders of this province to implement the necessary structural and legislative changes to implement regionalization in Newfoundland and Labrador?
 - We were very excited with the announcement by communities in Conception Bay regarding the sharing of resources to avoid duplication of effort and improve service delivery. What excited us in particular was the voluntary nature of deal struck.
 - We can't force a one-size-fits-all formula for regionalization on our communities. Not only is that undemocratic, but what works on the Burin Peninsula might not work in Coastal Labrador.
 - However, we can create – in partnership with Municipalities NL – a framework in which those municipalities that would like to co-operate on a regional basis, can do so in the most efficient manner possible.

- What concrete plans do you have for giving the municipal order of government a real seat at the table when making decisions about us?
 - Municipalities are often left to implement many of the laws and regulations put in place by the provincial government. It just doesn't make sense that these are designed without the input of our local governments from start to finish. To do so is to invite failure, and it would amount to a waste of our precious time and resources.
 - That is why the NL NDP would regularly invite MNL and our local governments in. We pledge to make every decision that affects municipalities in consultation with the communities affected by them.