

September 18, 2025

Dear Party Leader,

Thank you for your attention to municipal issues. While there is still much work to be done, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador is grateful for the progress we have made so far, in collaboration with the Province, to improve the lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We look forward to continuing this work together.

Ahead of the 2025 Provincial Election, we are asking that the Province prioritize municipal concerns. Municipal leaders are dedicated to improving their communities. But they can't do it alone. They need the cooperation and support of all orders of government to continue building a strong foundation for the future.

MNL, on behalf of our member municipalities, is asking for your answers to questions on the following key topics. We look forward to hearing from you by October 3.

Wastewater

There are currently 94 municipalities in dire need of wastewater treatment infrastructure upgrades. These communities have wastewater systems that still dump untreated effluent directly into the ocean, placing them in direct contravention to the federal Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations. These communities are unable to bear the cost of infrastructure upgrades on their own, and require the financial support of provincial and federal orders of government.

Drinking Water

On any given day, more than 100 municipalities are under a boil water advisory. A not-insignificant portion of these towns have longstanding infrastructure issues, including multi-year boil water advisories. A lack of long-term infrastructure planning and an outdated funding structure for municipalities create unnecessary challenges for municipalities resolving issues such as an inability to complete drinking water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades.

Will your party commit to developing a 10- to 20-year provincial infrastructure strategy focused on innovation, tailored to Newfoundland and Labrador's geography and inclusive of the financial/technical realities of small municipalities?

Does your party agree to conduct a comprehensive review of municipal funding tools, recognizing that property tax alone is insufficient to meet modern infrastructure and operational demands?

Community Health and Safety

The lack of policing services in rural areas, including vacant positions, under-resourced departments, and a lack of police presence, continues to be a point of contention for our members.

How does your party plan to work with the Federal Government to resolve policing challenges in rural communities?

Fire departments, a municipal responsibility, are severely under-resourced and continue to lack appropriate levels of support from the Province. Fire departments continue to rely on community fundraising to purchase essential equipment. The safety of our communities should not be funded by bake sales and card games. Our members have identified fire departments as a prime example of the benefit of regional approaches to service delivery.

Municipal fire departments are under-resourced. What is your party's plan to support public safety through ensuring adequately resourced fire departments?

Cell phone service across the province is inconsistent at best, and in some areas completely non-existent. These are populated areas and travel corridors, not remote wilderness. As we saw in recent wildfires, residents are unable to contact help or notify family members due to a lack of available cellular service.

Cellular service has become an indispensable public utility. What is your party's plan for ensuring residents have cellular access in their towns and cities?

Regionalization

To create truly sustainable communities, municipalities require from the province a coordinated, planned execution of regional approaches, with municipalities at the decision-making table, has long been an MNL advocacy issue. MNL encourages the Province to return to the table and to continue developing a formalized, planned approach to municipal cooperation within a regional framework.

Will your party commit to adopting a formalized regional approach to address shared municipal infrastructure challenges and improve service delivery?

Harassment

Municipal council members and administrators continue to report excessive harassment. This has led to resignations of council members in some towns, while other towns have had to close the town office due to a

staff shortage following harassment-induced resignations. Additionally, Code of Conduct processes and ATIPP requests have been weaponized, creating an undue burden on municipal resources.

To address harassment-related challenges, additional tools and supports are required for the sector, including access to enhanced training, Employee Assistance Programming, and a dedicated anti-harassment campaign. What steps will your party take toward providing these supports?

Cities Act Updates

MNL expresses gratitude for the much-needed updates to municipal legislation in the form of the Towns and Local Service Districts Act. There is still work to do, though, as the three Cities Acts governing St. John's, Mount Pearl, and Corner Brook still require an update.

Will your party commit to prioritizing the update of the three Cities Acts?

Job Creation Partnerships (JCP) and Community Enhancement Employment Program (CEEP)

The JCP and CEEP programs need reform, as they continually fail to meet the needs of municipalities. The project application and approval process is lengthy, often resulting in project approval occurring after the proposed start date. This delay leads to municipalities abandoning projects.

Does your party commit to working with municipalities to ensure employment programs meet their needs?

Thank you. We look forward to working with you to continue building vibrant, sustainable communities.

Sincerely,

Amy Coady
President
Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador

Rob Nolan
Chief Executive Officer
Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador