



Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
1-79 Mews Place
St. John's, NL
A1B 4N2

Dear Ms. Coady and Mr. Nolan,

Thank you for your correspondence of September 18, 2025, where you outlined the concerns of municipalities across the province. I appreciate you taking the time to share these issues, and I will address them one by one below.

Municipal governments and Local Service Districts are deeply in tune with the problems their residents face. They should be empowered to grow their communities, but too often they are caught up in red tape and long delays from the province. Municipal leaders have shared that they do not feel listened to by the Liberal government; instead, they feel ignored. A Wakeham PC government will show respect to municipal leaders. We will listen to them, support them, and work with them to implement the local solutions their communities need.

Wastewater

A PC Government will work with municipalities and the Government of Canada to find wastewater solutions that are innovative and right-sized for the communities they serve. We will advocate to the federal government for regulations that realize the real-life scenarios that small and rural communities face. We will also advocate for greater federal funding for water treatment infrastructure upgrades - federal funding should be prioritized for the municipalities who are currently in contravention of the federal regulations.

We want to find solutions, we want to help municipalities be compliant with regulations, we do not want to see our municipalities punished.

Drinking Water

A PC government will be committed to improving the delivery of safe, potable drinking water across Newfoundland and Labrador. We will work closely with local leaders and communities to develop practical, size appropriate solutions that are tailored to the needs of each area. We will also prioritize funding for municipalities that wish to invest in creating or improving their municipal water supply systems.

We will pursue a multi-year planning approach that covers roads, water, sewer, and recreational facilities. This will include a full evaluation of existing infrastructure and a commitment to work with communities to replace what is outdated or failing. Many facilities in this province are well past their best-before date and in danger of crumbling due to Liberal inaction.

Finally, yes—we will conduct a comprehensive review of municipal funding tools. We will invite Municipalities NL to be a part of that process.

Community Health and Safety

A. Policing challenges in rural communities

Every Newfoundlander and Labradorian deserves to feel safe in their community. Yet after a decade of Liberal inaction, crime, drug-related violence, and repeat offenders are on the rise. Newfoundland and Labrador had the largest increase in the crime rate of any province last year. What was once a safe province where people left their doors unlocked has become one where rural residents fear break-ins, overdoses, and being told to “shelter in place,” while police services are stretched thin and unable to provide the investigations or preventative presence people need.

A Wakeham PC government will work closely with the federal government to fix this. We will hire 25 new RCMP officers dedicated to rural Newfoundland and Labrador, increase police presence in communities, and reinstate community-based policing to focus on prevention and stronger community relationships. We have publicly stated that we hope these RCMP officers are used to restore policing to communities who have lost their full time police presence - like Grand Bank.

Public safety must be a top priority. Our communities deserve a properly resourced police service that not only responds in emergencies but also prevents crime before it happens. A Wakeham PC government will ensure they get it.

B. Adequately resourced fire departments

Safer communities are about more than policing and crime prevention—they are about safe roads, safe schools, safe places, and ensuring our first responders, both paid and volunteer, have the resources they need. A Wakeham PC government will fix the problems with the 911 system, including ambulance delays and the lack of funding for fire departments that respond to medical calls. We will provide funding for training and equipment to fire departments who respond to medical calls.

We will ensure the province is better prepared for natural disasters such as floods, storms, and wildfires by reviewing recent emergency responses and making improvements for the future.

Volunteer firefighters are the backbone of public safety in many communities, and as such we will provide them with the training and equipment they need to respond to floods, forest fires, medical calls, and other emergencies.



Unlike the Liberals, who are only committed to providing wildland coveralls for 35 volunteer departments, we will ensure every department has the protective gear they need. We will also double the Volunteer Firefighter and Search and Rescue Tax Credits to recognize the vital work these volunteers perform.

A Wakeham PC government will maintain a fully operational water bomber fleet, making repairs to the fifth water bomber a priority so it can return to service and be stationed in Labrador. We will also hire 50 more wildland firefighters and recruit them four weeks earlier each year to improve readiness. These measures will provide stronger support for first responders and ensure safer communities across Newfoundland and Labrador.

C. Cellular Service

We will increase cellular coverage throughout the province by working with industry and advocating for additional investment from the federal government. In addition to more money from the federal government, we will increase the annual provincial investment into cellular infrastructure. We will use this money strategically, focusing on public safety and economic development.

Regionalization

A Wakeham PC government will facilitate and support the regional sharing of services among municipalities that choose to collaborate. We believe any formalized regional approach to shared services or infrastructure must be community- and region-led. At the same time, we will actively support and encourage regions and communities that wish to participate in regional service delivery, providing guidance and resources where needed.

The Liberals have overlooked the importance of cultivating rural economies and delivering essential services. A renewed focus on rural regional development is critical to ensuring a vibrant future for residents and businesses alike. We believe regional economic development must be a key priority in rejuvenating rural Newfoundland and Labrador, and that everyone has a role to play in a region-led, government-supported model.

We will take a region-by-region approach, working with Municipalities NL, industry stakeholders, local leaders, businesses, and community organizations to help each region achieve a sustainable and prosperous future with strong local economies, robust amenities, and accessible services. We will build on existing local efforts and encourage new regional collaboration where no partnerships currently exist. To avoid duplication, we will follow the lead of communities and existing partnerships.



Regional economic development funding will be provided for up to five years to establish or strengthen regional initiatives. This funding will focus on approaches that are collaborative, regionally driven, and designed to become self-sustaining over time, ensuring that regional economic development is both effective and lasting.

Harassment

A Wakeham PC government recognizes that harassment is unacceptable and that employees, volunteers, and councillors deserve a safe, respectful, and supportive environment.

Harassment-related challenges are not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador. To make municipal governance safer for everyone, we suggest collaborating with colleagues across the country. We believe that the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (CFM) and Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL), together with other provincial partners, can share resources and best practices.

At the provincial level, we will advocate to the Council of the Federation and the federal government to support the efforts of the CFM and, by extension, MNL.

Cities Act Updates

Yes, we are committed to prioritizing the update of the three Cities Acts.

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

Yes we will work with municipalities to reduce red tape and fix these programs.

A Wakeham PC government believes in reducing red tape and administrative burdens for municipalities. We hear you when you say that programs such as JCP and CEEP require reform because the current application and approval processes are often lengthy, resulting in project approvals coming after proposed start dates and forcing municipalities to abandon important projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Wakeham".

Tony Wakeham
Leader
Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador