

Presentation to Law Amendment Committee on Bill 102 – Trade Union Act

The introduction of Bill 102, Trade Union Act, has created a frenzy of negative attention on Nova Scotia business. The Nova Scotia legislature must not pass this bill in its current form. This bill should be dropped or delayed to allow appropriate consultation with the businesses that will be most affected - the current non-union businesses in Nova Scotia.

There are three reasons for dropping or delaying this bill:

1. Bill 102 is counter-productive to business growth and retention in Nova Scotia.
 - a. It creates an uncertain economic climate placing doubt on future investment.
 - i. Current business succession is threatened because potential buyers will be scared away by this negative climate that has been created, regardless if it is a real or perceived negative climate. This will result in a lower valuation of the business.
 - b. This bill is one more challenge to overcome to go along with the high rates of taxes and electricity, our remote geography and declining population.
2. There is not an appropriate level of input from the owners of non-union businesses.
 - a. Mulgrave Machine Works has not been consulted.
 - i. I am here today to present my opinions on Bill 102, but I would rather be back in Mulgrave at the shop taking care of business, meeting the payroll for the 55 employees who depend on us. They are the heart of our business and the reason for any success we may achieve and the reason I am here today.
 - b. We have discussed this with other Nova Scotia fabricators and cannot find anyone who has been consulted from this sector.
 - c. Bill 102 changes the level of the playing field to the appearance of an advantage to union organizers and gives a false sense of security to employees in certifying.
 - i. Small businesses could be reduced to closure if the imposed contract removes their competitiveness, placing employees and employers out of work.
3. There is no urgency or immediate concern.
 - a. By introducing this bill, you have highlighted a non-issue and made it an issue, bringing unwanted attention to our province.
 - b. The current methods for resolution of contract disputes are adequate.

After reviewing the wording of the Bill and the transcripts of the debate in the House of Assembly, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. I encourage all Members of the Legislative Assembly to set aside the personal and partisan views and focus on meaningful debate that will make a positive difference for Nova Scotia. The level of preparation of this bill and the resulting debate on all sides of the house is lacking to the point of embarrassment.

On a positive note - There are many programs sponsored by the Nova Scotia government and its agencies that support business. Mulgrave Machine Works recognizes the value of your efforts to grow and retain business in Nova Scotia. For many years we have participated in government led initiatives to assist our growth which means putting more of our local people to work. It is our hope that we can continue this positive relationship with your support to broaden our exports and create a prosperous province for our families and neighbours in rural Nova Scotia.

In closing, I urge you to reconsider the need for this bill and strongly recommend you withdraw it or delay it to consult with those who will be impacted by it. There are three reasons for this recommendation:

1. Bill 102 is counter-productive to business growth and retention in Nova Scotia.
2. There has not been an appropriate level of input from the owners of non-union businesses.
3. There is no urgency or immediate concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Law Amendments Committee and present my case.