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Sent: March 14, 2025 4:52 PM
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Subject: Submission to the Public Bills Committee

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Submission to the Public Bills Committee Jan Morrell West Hants

Dear Committee Members, I am taking this opportunity to express my concerns in relation to some of the many bills you have to consider on Monday March 17th, 2025.

At the same time I feel I must protest the change in name from Law Amendments Committee. Having made this change fits well with the fact that you have lost the authority to propose amendments to the bills as suggested in the interest of democracy by citizens of Nova Scotia. To be blunt, as someone who has previously presented to the Law Amendments Committee, I am enraged at this removal of our right to participate in the democratic process.

Re: Bill 1 an Act Respecting Government Organization and Administration The proposals here are interfering with and/or removing our democratic checks and balances. Clause 6&7 place restrictions on the public reporting of the findings of the Auditor General. The provincial government should NOT have the power to demand a confidential report or to restrict it from being made public.

Likewise in Clauses 16-18 the government appears to restrict public or media requests for information made to the Privacy Commissioner. The control body is listed as a "public body" clearly an undefined entity.

I note that the Privacy Commissioner has stated that they are perfectly capable of deciding on the few "frivolous or vexatious requests" (the Premier's words) that they get and so do NOT need a "public body" to tell them what to discard. It was, however, stated by them that they have long requested funding for staffing to help with the volume of requests that the electorate has a right to.

Re: Bill 6 an Act Respecting Agriculture, Energy and Natural Resources This bill was deceitfully placed in 2nd reading late on a Friday afternoon just as many members were heading off to be with family during school break. This certainly undermines the trust in the government. The proposed lifting of the ban on uranium mining and restrictions on fracking run against decades of consultations and hearings in which many knowledgeable citizens and municipal groups and governments participated. A large swath of the province including much of my county (Hants) is in the designated high risk area for well water containing uranium (bedrock wells). Most of the same scientists (citizen and actual) have kept right up to date on the risks as well as any innovations in exploration and extraction. Their understanding of the dangers to our health, our water supply has not changed over those years. You will hear details from them but I wonder at the lack of due diligence and respect for citizens and municipal governments. Uranium exploration/mining and lifting the limitations on fracking must remain in place.

Re: Bill 12 an Act respecting Education and Research The proposed changes re governance in higher education to underscore this government's interference and weakening of democratic processes. Colleges and universities educate, train and carry out research for the public good. To do so they need autonomy. Aside from monitoring for misuse of tax

dollars governments must allow boards and research priorities to be chosen by those institutions have the power to govern themselves.

Most disturbing in this whole process is the blatant ignoring of the constitutional requirement to honour treaties and to consult with Mi'kmaw Chiefs. This even after 2 separate reminders from them. No, perhaps the most disturbing and embarrassing was having the Premier use our tax dollars to gift mining executives NS tartan scarves while announcing we were open for business. What an insult to Indigenous People!

For this and other reasons I believe this whole legislative agenda should be required to reset beginning with being guided by honesty, respect for democracy, the principles of Reconciliation and Constitutional Duty.

Yours sincerely,
Jan Morrell

Sent from my iPad