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Sent: March 17, 2025 1:00 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Fwd: Bill retractions

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Dear Mr. Premier, Nova Scotia MLAs:

Firstly, thank you for withdrawing the legislation which would have prevented the Auditor General from doing her job freely and fairly. I am very glad you saw the error of your ways and realised that the practices of the Alberta government may not, in fact, be best practices. That's a good start.

However, the FOIPOP Commissioner, the Communications NS staff, the NS Ombudsman and other arms-length bodies which scrutinize the NS government have also been hired - by the public, to report to us on how our government is governing. They need to be free to do their jobs without being hindered by Ministers who find their scrutiny annoying. Please withdraw any legislation limiting their ability to do their jobs.

Other things have also been drawn to the public's attention that indicate an alarming trend on the part of this government to avoid public scrutiny and public input. For example, the following passage was taken from a fundraising letter sent by Cole Harbour MLA Leah Martin, and, possibly, by other MLAs. It says in part: "Will you pitch in here right now to help us withstand NDP attacks, overpower the special interests and professional protestors, bypass the media when we need to, and stay on track with our plan to Make It Happen for Nova Scotia?"

Allow me to remind you that the NDP, along with the Liberal and Independent members of the legislature, were elected by the people of Nova Scotia to represent our interests in the Legislature. In fact, they received nearly as many votes as the Conservatives did - approximately one quarter of the population voted for these people. The fact that you received four fifths of the seats for half the ballots cast is a flaw in our electoral system. It doesn't change the fact that nearly half the voters voted for opposition parties.

The NDP, Liberals and Independents are members of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition and it is not your role to fight with them. You are elected to cooperate with them and work together to govern this province - in the best interest of all Nova Scotians, with an eye to what is good for the environment as well. The Legislature is not in place to rubber stamp whatever comes out of the Premier's office lest they lose their membership. They represent the people as well.

Limiting debate in the House, limiting the power of the law amendments committee, and other provisions you are making in Bill 1 will not actually help you in your elected task. They will, in fact, concentrate power in the

person of the Premier and his office. This is not the democracy Nova Scotians want. It verges, in fact, on dictatorship. It removes existing power from the Legislature and limits its ability to do what it was elected to do. I request that you withdraw this legislation as well.

Secondly, those people whom you are labelling “special interest groups and professional protestors” are Nova Scotians, who you promised in your victory speech to represent, and not to be demeaned. The Ecology Action Centre, whom I believe you singled out, the Council of Canadians, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, and many other groups are formed by Nova Scotians to represent the interests of Nova Scotians and they enjoy the support and confidence of many Nova Scotians of all parties.

Your efforts to discredit these groups by calling them names and dismissing their concerns is deplorable. It reveals your complete lack of respect for anyone who disagrees with you and also your fear that Nova Scotians may listen to them. These groups base their concerns on science and research, and listening to their thoughtful objections to some of your more dangerous environmental legislation. Furthermore, they work in partnership with Indigenous people, who you have acknowledged the legal and moral obligation of your attention. In dismissing their partners, you are also dismissing the First Nations of this land.

Good leaders pay attention when constituents raise concern with a problem in their planning. No one person or small group of people, such as the Premier’s Office or the Cabinet, holds all the knowledge or the wisdom. Good government requires you to listen to all citizens, not dismiss them with name calling. You started well in your first term, actually consulting medical professionals about how to fix health care. Perhaps you should continue, and consult environmental professionals and not just mining companies, who, by the way, actually are a special interest group.

Democracies only function where there is free and independent press. The media works for the people of this province. We want free and independent journalists to have access to you and your members. They need to be able to ask their questions, not your pre-scripted ones, in order to do their job, which is to report back to us. They form another layer of scrutiny of government and are essential to a working democracy. Dictatorships always control the free press and turn it into a party newsletter, like Pravda. Nova Scotians want a free press.

It is alarming to see that this government is systematically trying to erode the checks and balances on absolute power. You are limiting the power of officers the public has put into place to monitor legislation. You are limiting their access. You are treating the loyal opposition as enemies. You are treating organised groups of Nova Scotian citizens as the enemy. In fact, anyone who does not toe the party line is treated as an enemy. This is not the manner in which an honest government functions. This is the way an incipient dictatorship functions.

As a Nova Scotian who cares deeply about democracy as well as our beautiful province, I implore you to rethink these tactics. You have been elected by us, you are paid by us to serve us. Stop interfering with other groups whom we have chosen and whom we employ for the same purpose. You did this in the election by not mentioning these drastic and unpopular measures you planned to undertake if elected. We are alert to this now. Please rescind Bill 1,6 and 12 - rethink your resource extraction projects, restriction of FOI and attempts to control our schools education & research.