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March 23, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Submission Against Bill 24

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Date: March 23, 2024

Dear Members of the Public Bills Committee,

I am writing to formally submit my concerns and opposition to Bill 24.

Municipalities are best positioned to understand and respond to the unique needs of their communities. Local governments are familiar with their residents' priorities, challenges, and opportunities. Allowing the provincial government to override municipal decisions pertaining to infrastructure and transportation compromises the very foundation of local democracy. The autonomy of municipalities is essential for fostering responsive, effective, and accountable governance.

Municipalities are elected by their residents to make decisions that directly impact their communities. Bill 24 introduces the possibility for provincial interference in local governance, which undermines the democratic process. Granting the Minister of Public Works the authority to order any municipality to build or remove infrastructure under Bill 24 raises several concerns, particularly about local governance, accountability, and the balance of power between provincial and municipal authorities.

Additionally, it was particularly alarming that despite receiving many informed and well-reasoned submissions from concerned citizens and experts during last week's Public Bills hearing, no significant changes were made. This demonstrates a concerning lack of responsiveness to public input, which further deepens the concerns about the provincial government's disregard for local perspectives and needs.

Pertaining to Bill 6, this government's track record on environmental protection and public health raises significant doubts about its ability to effectively manage critical issues surrounding uranium mining and fracking. The ongoing situation with the Donkin coal mine -- where long-standing concerns about the noise from methane-venting fans and the resulting chronic sleep deprivation and deteriorating health of nearby residents persist-- highlights the government's failure to protect the well-being of its citizens. Given their failure to address this existing issue, I have little confidence that this government would adequately protect Nova Scotians if uranium mining and fracking were to resume.

I trust that you will take these concerns seriously and act in the best interests of Nova Scotians by voting against Bill 24.

Sincerely,
Catherine Fergusson