

January 13, 2020

Honourable Chuck Porter
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
14th Floor North, Maritime Centre
1505 Barrington Street
PO Box 216
Halifax, NS B3J 2M4

Honourable Minister,

RE: Funding Stability for Regional Economic Development

As you know, the original intention of the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model was to develop and deliver economic development in equal partnership between the municipal partners and the province. Much of the success of the Western REN is from adhering to the core tenets of the REN model; stable funding, keeping local politics out of operations, and respecting the autonomy of the organization's appointed Board and hired management.

Through core operations our REN has built respectful relationships with the private sector and the many other provincial and federal agencies involved in the economic development ecosystem. Additionally, the Western REN has a proven track record for delivering regional projects; in fact, both public and private sector agencies are bringing their partnership requests and pilot projects to us.

The Western REN has consistently delivered value for the investment of public dollars. Our LOC is in the process of negotiating a second multi-year Inter-Municipal Agreement before our first five-year agreement expires in September 2020.

On behalf of our Liaison and Oversight Committee (LOC), I am writing to formally request the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing commit to a three to five-year contribution agreement with the Western REN.

If Nova Scotia is to match the multi-year commitment of the municipal partners, the Western REN will be better positioned to rise to the bold actions required to achieve the many goals. Additionally, stable multi-year funding allows for longer term planning, as well as recruitment and retention of the skilled talent needed for our ambitious mandate. Regional economic development is a complex and long-term game.

If there is any further information or discussion required to support this request, please let us know. We look forward to a favourable response from your Department and your continued valuable support to the Western REN and its meaningful contribution to our region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jimmy MacAlpine, Warden, Municipality of the District of Digby
Chair, Western REN Liaison and Oversight Committee

JM/er

CC:

Lucien LeBlanc, Councillor, Municipality of the District of Argyle
Eddie Nickerson, Warden, Municipality of the District of Barrington
Ronnie LeBlanc, Warden, Municipality of the District of Clare
Patti Durkee, Councillor, Municipality of the District of Yarmouth
Ben Cleveland, Mayor, Town of Digby
Phil Mooney, Deputy Mayor, Town of Yarmouth
Ron Smith, Western REN Board Chair
Angélique LeBlanc, Western REN CEO