

December 12, 2024

To: Municipality of Argyle Council

Fr: Councillor Darryl LeBlanc, District 6

Re: Presentation on Coastal Land Use that was gathered at the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities held in Halifax November 26<sup>th</sup> – November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

In late November, I attended the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities conference in Halifax. The presentation on Coastal Land Use was the most engaging of any presentation.

First, a background:

The Coastal Protection Act was a law passed by the Provincial Government in 2019 to protect the provinces coast from climate change, and development that harms the environment. The purpose was intended to:

- Protect coastal ecosystems
- Prevent inappropriate coastal development
- Make our coastlines more resilient to climate change
- Identify areas at risk from coastal flooding, erosion, storm surges, and sea level rise.

In 2021, Municipality of Argyle sent correspondence to Honorable Tim Halman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, expressing their concerns along with a suggested course of action (see attachment). To highlight, the concerns were the availability & cost of designated professionals required to assess new constructions within the zone.

On February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Coastal Protection Act was shelved by the current Provincial Government in favour of “The Future of Nova Scotia’s Coastline” <https://www.novascotia.ca/coastal-plan> . The main concept of this plan is that the Municipalities are the level of Government that are best equipped to deal with this, as they are the ones that are responsible for land-use planning, zoning, building permits & bylaws.

Under the province of Nova Scotia government website on Climate Change <https://novascotia.ca/coastal-climate-change> there is a section which outlines all our rolls. These include:

- Property owners’ decision on where and how they want to build and adapt
- Municipalities help create climate-resilient communities by considering climate change in their approach to zoning, land use planning, by-laws, and the criteria they use to issue building permits.
- Professionals (architects, engineers, contractors, real estate agents, **insurance companies**) to make sure the standard is met.
- Provincial Government sets building codes & standards and provides climate change impact information & advice.

At the conference, a presentation was done by Gordon Smith, who is the Coastal Land Use Planning Coordinator with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities. The main function of this role is to assist Municipalities to effectively implement policies and by-laws related to coastline land use. This includes:

- Identifying required resources and advocating for them.
- Connecting municipalities with available support.
- Facilitating capacity building at the local level.

Municipalities are facing significant challenges with the burden being put on them to oversee this. Some of the challenges are:

- Lack of financial capacity to construct the size of projects required
- Municipal elected capacity
- Municipal staff capacity – engineers, surveyors, contractors
- Strong desire for coordination from the province
- Consistent approach among municipalities
- How do we deal with erosion
- Public awareness.

Based on the feedback, and several discussions with elected officials and staff from several Municipalities, I have come away with the following.

- Municipalities across the Province are concerned about the cost of this, and the lack of expertise within their Municipalities
- Future insurance claims or lawsuits against Municipalities must be considered in what we do. (i.e. if we approve a building permit in a flood zone, there could be implications)
- If the province does not reverse course on this, Municipalities could eventually be mandated by the province.
- Due to the size and scope of this, and the fact that our local Municipalities all have similar infrastructure and concerns, Municipal units in our geographical area should work together to develop by-laws that are similar in nature regarding this topic.

Thank you for your time ....

Councillor LeBlanc  
District 6