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Subject: Letter from John Lohr to Mayors and Wardens
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Dear Mayor Abraham Zebian and West Hants Regional Municipal Council,

I am writing with regard to John Lohr's letter to Mayors and Wardens, dated February 11, 2025. Together with Premier Houston's paid advertising in The Chronicle Herald, this letter raises concerns and contradictions. Before deciding whether or not to signal support for reductions in trade barriers and for resource development, I urge Mayor and Council to deeply consider the implications for democracy, the environment, municipal autonomy and authority, and our community.

Given the current economic threats posed by USA-imposed trade tariffs, I agree that reducing inter-provincial trade barriers makes sense. However, I caution that an *a priori*, *carte blanche* expression of support for resource development would pose a dangerous precedent.

I acknowledge that any society needs to use resources to support life and livelihoods. Nonetheless, it is crucial that resource development be carefully planned and managed to ensure it is ecologically sustainable and socially just. Provincial pressure tactics and strong-armed requests for support and approval prior to such considerations are directly opposed and counter to the stated need in the letter to take such steps "carefully and in consultation with our communities."

I caution that any prior signalling of council's "support for greater resource development within our province – by letter or press release" may well be used against you/us in the future. Such a letter may be used by John Lohr or others to counter any future democratically derived conclusions, concerns, or policies arising from careful consideration and consultation within our local communities. Prior and wide-open expressions of approval in effect pre-empt democratic processes, and instead represent an autocratic approach.

In addition to the current political situation, we are facing existential threats to life on earth posed by the climate and biological diversity crises. Scientific studies show that

we are at or beyond planetary limits for both. Any resource development must also maintain and restore our life supporting ecological systems and their ecosystem services. There will be no economy without clean air, water, soil and the diversity of species that comprise the living component of ecological systems. Excessive and poorly sited resource development will further fragment and degrade these systems.

Premier Houston does not have a mandate from the people of Nova Scotia to forge ahead with fast-tracked, intensive and extensive resource extraction and to roll back or disregard carefully considered environmental policies and protections. Premier Houston did not run on these issues, but rather on health care. Further, the Houston government's base of support is thin, receiving only 27% of the votes from registered voters; and he did so by calling an early election in contravention of his own election policy. As evidence that there is not a broad base of support, a vast majority of calls and e-mails to a CBC radio Maritime Noon call-in show earlier this week did not support, and indeed strongly opposed, Premier Houston's scheme to expand resource extraction.

Nova Scotia is a small province with a limited land base. Competing uses of this limited land and water base need to be carefully considered in both ecological and sociological terms and in regard to both long and short term costs and benefits. Decisions made today will impact life for the indefinite future. We need to ensure they result in a liveable environment for our children, all peoples, and all of nature.

I urge Mayor and Council to hold on to your municipal powers, autonomy, and sovereignty to do what is best for our community. I urge you to not signal *carte blanche*, *a priori* support for resource development in the Province, either by letter or press release.

Respectfully,
Karen Beazley

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