

From: Karen Beazley
To: [Abraham Zebian](#); [PublicOnlyCouncilEmail](#)
Cc: [melissa.mlaoffice@gmail.com](#); [FinanceMinister@novascotia.ca](#); [dmamin@novascotia.ca](#); [Claudia Chender](#); [premier@novascotia.ca](#); [Blois, Kody - M.P.](#)
Subject: Re: Letter from John Lohr to Mayors and Wardens
Date: February 21, 2025 1:41:16 PM

Caution [External Email]

This email comes from an outside sender. Verify the sender and use caution with any requests, links or attachments.

Dear Mayor Abraham Zebian and West Hants Regional Municipal Council,

Thank you for your response to my letter of February 13th to you and all council.

In the interim, Tim Houston's government has introduced bills in the legislature that raise grave concerns for me and many others. They are relevant to the issues I raised in my previous letter to you.

- Bill 6 introduces measures such as lifting well-justified bans and reducing environmental and other protection and assessment provisions so as to facilitate fast-tracked resource extraction.
- Bill 1 exacerbates this by reducing opportunities for public and legislative debate, accountability, and transparency. This is also the bill that aims to give the government the power to dismiss the Auditor General without cause and other measures.

These and other introduced bills should be of concern to you and council because they reduce the powers and participation of municipal governments and citizens in decision making with potentially serious and long-term negative impacts on our communities and democracy.

Below, I provide a copy of the letters I have sent to our MLA which outline my concerns. I urge you and all council to read and consider them carefully. I further urge you to NOT provide a letter of support as requested by John Lohr.

Do you support these Bills (1 and 6)?

Further, will you reject John Lohr's request for expression of support as outlined in his letter to you of February 12th (please and thank you)?

I ask you to express these concerns, which many constituents share and that I hope you and council also share, to John Lohr, the Premier, our MLA, and the Leader of the Opposition.

The following are copies of the letters I have sent to our MLA and copied to others.

Feb 19th letter to MLA, copying the Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Finance Minister, and MP, sent in response to introduction of Bills 1 and 6 in the legislature

Dear MLA Melissa Sheehy-Richard,

I do not support Bills 1 and 6 that were introduced yesterday in the legislature, and I urge you to vote against them. Such impactful changes warrant public discussion. These proposed changes were not part of the Progress Conservative's, Tim Houston's or your election platforms.

I really do not think you have the support of the public for these bills. It appears the content of these bills has largely been kept from the public and the media and yet these bills are now being fast-forwarded behind closed doors in the legislature as we speak, with no opportunity for public input. Further, it is my understanding that the media are not being allowed or engaged except under strictly controlled government settings. These are egregious denials of transparency, accountability and democratic processes by this government, including you as our MLA.

Bill 1, which gives the government the power to dismiss the Auditor General without cause and withhold and redact their report, would enact an alarming abdication of financial accountability and transparency. The bill also reverses the government's own fixed-election-date legislation and earlier election promise. Further, it aims to do away with the non-partisan Communications NS and make changes to the Freedom of Information Act to enable the refusal of applications. All of these represent dangerous precedents for accountability, transparency and democracy itself. Such proposed changes warrant broader public discussion.

Bill 6, which repeals the bans on uranium mining and fracking and fast-tracks mining and other resource extractions, is irresponsible and denies past, present and future public processes. Nova Scotia is too small in land mass and too permeated with ground and surface waterways to safely conduct activities such as uranium mining and fracking. Further, fast-tracked resource extraction is not an appropriate response to tariff threats from the USA. Instead, innovative economies based on safe and sustainable value-added products and services are warranted, such as developed through ecological forestry, sustainable fisheries, agriculture and mining, tourism, and educational institutions.

By extension, I do not support the tabled deficit budget that finances the fast-tracking of resource extraction. Rather, the budget should support the development of made-in-NS value-

added products and services, such as from ecological forestry, sustainable fisheries and agriculture, and tourism. Revenues for this should be generated by further taxing the wealthy, both corporations and individuals.

Further, Premier Houston has said the government has no intention of listening to so-called “special interests,” which he seems to characterize primarily as anyone with environmental concerns. It is unfathomable to me how the pros and cons of any proposed resource development policy or project can be considered and discussed without input from environmental experts and communities. This is a problematic approach, given this government says they intend to fast track the resource extractions and developments “that can be done safely”. How can safety be confidently and responsibly defined and determined without inputs from environmental experts at arms-length from industry and government?

The situation we now find ourselves in is exacerbated by the fact that the current government now claims a broad but shallow (pseudo-)majority that does not reflect the majority of the public. Unfortunately, however, this (pseudo-)majority appears to have emboldened and enabled the Premier and conservative MLAs to ignore democratic process and public input. The bills as proposed represent nothing short of a further attempt to consolidate power and exclude community input.

I’m curious as to what your thoughts are on these bills and the government’s behaviours. To me, they are so egregious that I cannot imagine anyone would support them except for the power-and-wealth elite who want to concentrate it further into their own hands, such as developers and resource extraction industries, who are already extremely powerful “special interest” groups whose opinions should be suspect, given their self-serving conflicts of interest. To the outside observer, the government’s actions are more akin to authoritarianism than democracy.

I look forward to your response. I urge you to express my concerns, which are shared by many others who do not feel comfortable writing letters, in the legislature. I also urge you to not support either of these bills.

Respectfully,

Feb 12th letter to MLA in response to Tim Houston’s full front page ad in The Chronicle Herald

Dear Melissa Sheehy-Richard,

I am writing to you to request a meeting in your role as my local MLA as well as Ministerial Assistant to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Ideally, I would like to meet with you in person, but a telephone or Teams conversation may be more feasible given the pending sitting of the House. I would also then like to meet with you in person when you are back in Windsor.

In the interim, I am expressing via this email message my concern about the content of Premier Tim Houston's paid advertising in The Chronicle Herald on January 25. As my MLA, and as Ministerial Assistant to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I hope you will express these concerns during the sitting of the House. I also hope that you will bear my concerns in mind in carrying out your other duties as MLA and Ministerial Assistant.

First, as a citizen who has also had a long career in environmental sciences, both social and natural, I am concerned that this government may consider environmental issues and advocates as "special interests" with "outsized voice in policy creation." We are in a period of both climate and biodiversity crises. These are fundamental components of our life support system. There will be no economy if our ecological life support system and its associated ecosystem services fail. It is well established in science that we are at or beyond planetary limits for these crucial systems. As a society and a species we must make immediate transformative changes to restore these life-supporting systems to sustainable levels. Environmental concerns are not "special interests" or "irrational fears." They are central to the continuance of life on earth.

Second, ecological sustainability is crucial to economic sustainability. Any talk of sustainability must be grounded in ensuring ecological sustainability. And to get there, we need to shift to restoring and enhancing ecological systems, not further degrading and fragmenting them. If the next generation is to "be better off than this generation," any resource extraction and development must be done with ecological restoration and protection and careful siting as a fundamental part of the plan.

Third, bans in NS are not "lazy public policy". Bans on fracking and uranium mining and the moratorium on Georges Bank, for example, are grounded in well-established environmental sciences including those related to human health. They are also the result of extensive public processes and considerations of complex, interrelated factors. Such governance practices and policies are not "lazy", but are rather key tools of best practices in a democracy.

Fourth, the current government was not elected on a platform of ramping up resource extraction. Rather, it was elected on a platform of public health and housing, and on the basis of past promises, such as to protect 20% of NS as parks and protected areas and implement

the ecological forestry recommendations of the so-called Lahey report.

I acknowledge that it is important to pursue responsible opportunities for mining, renewable energy, and other value-added resource-based initiatives. It is equally important, however, that these be carefully planned and sited to ensure they do not destroy the best of what's left for wildlife habitat, especially for species at risk such as American moose and wood turtle, older forests, and other key components of our life-supporting ecological systems.

Finally, I do not support my tax dollars being spent for paid advertising that espouses such a blatantly partisan perspective, especially one that comes across as threatening, bullying and insulting. Such advertisements should be paid for by the PC Party, not by the Government of Nova Scotia.

Especially in your role as Ministerial Assistant to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I urge you to listen carefully to the concerns of those who understand environmental issues. I also urge you to uphold current environmental laws, policies and practices, and work to strengthen those that are needed for ecologically sustainable development and a liveable future, for all peoples and nature. I have ideas for these that I would be happy to discuss with you.

I also urge you to respect and advance Indigenous rights and leadership, especially the Mi'kmaq, the original stewards of this land, and listen to and stand with them in peace and friendship, as treaty people.

I welcome your response and the opportunity to speak with you further about these issues.

Respectfully,

Karen Beazley

From: Abraham Zebian <Mayor.Zebian@westhants.ca>

Date: Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 3:21 PM

To: Karen Beazley

Cc: PublicOnlyCouncilEmail <allcouncil@westhants.ca>, melissa.mlaoffice@gmail.com <melissa.mlaoffice@gmail.com>, dmamin@novascotia.ca <dmamin@novascotia.ca>

Subject: Re: Letter from John Lohr to Mayors and Wardens

CAUTION: The Sender of this email is not from within Dalhousie.

Thank you for the email Karen.

It will be added to correspondence for Councils information.

Kindest regards.

Mayor Abraham Zebian
West Hants Regional Municipality
76 Morrison Drive, Windsor, NS B0N 2T0
902-790-1566

On Feb 13, 2025, at 2:38 PM, Karen Beazley

Caution [External Email]

This email comes from an outside sender. Verify the sender and use caution with any requests, links or attachments.

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