



**Municipal Affairs
Office of the Minister**

PO Box 216, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2M4 • Telephone 902 424-5550 Fax 902 424-0581 • novascotia.ca

October 20, 2025

Colleen Freake

Via Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Colleen Freake:

Thank you for your e-mail of October 8, 2025, regarding water and sanitation in rural Nova Scotia.

If you believe that outhouses in your community have not been installed or maintained appropriately and may be contaminating your water, you may report these concerns to your Regional Office of the Department of Environment and Climate Change at 902-679-6086.

The West Hants Regional Municipality (WHRM) does not currently have a program for the financing of wells. Should you wish to raise this matter with the Municipality, you may consider connecting with your elected member on WHRM's Council and/or Mayor Zebian.

Please be advised that WHRM offers some financial assistance programs that may be available to you should you meet the eligibility criteria, including income thresholds. For example, the Municipality has a *Utility Assistance Rebate Policy* (see attached) that includes a bulk water assistance rebate. Should you wish to speak with someone about those programs, you may contact the Chief Administrative Officer for WHRM, Mark Phillips, at 902-670-4255.

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns on this matter.

Sincerely,

Honourable John A. Lohr
Minister of Municipal Affairs

c: Honourable Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer, WHRM

Attached

PNS-60159/nb

From: Colleen Freake

Received: Wed Oct 08 2025 15:46:18 GMT-0300 (Atlantic Daylight Time)

To: PNS Municipal Affairs <dmamin@novascotia.ca>; Abraham Zebian <mayor.zebian@westhants.ca>; Health and Wellness Minister <health.minister@novascotia.ca>; Melissa Sheehy-Richard <melissa.mlaoffice@gmail.com>; PNS - Municipal Affairs <dmamin@novascotia.ca>; Michelle Thompson <health.minister@novascotia.ca>; DMA Minister <dmamin@novascotia.ca>; K. Aldous <melissa.mlaoffice@gmail.com>; DMA Minister <dmamin@novascotia.ca>; councillor.jannasch@westhants.ca;

Subject: Water and sanitation

To Melissa Sheehy-Richard,
To Rupert Jannasch,
To Abe Zebian,
To Michelle Thompson,
To John Lohr,

I have a suggestion to address the persistent drought in my community on the Hants Shore. The majority of homes have surface water wells which have been dry since early July.

I do not see water or sanitation in the plans for rural Nova Scotia. There is nothing more foundational to our wellness than water and sanitation. Many homes are using outhouses. While we can access bottled water, we have no consistent means of water for cleaning, including our hands and bodies. I believe my household has been more fortunate than most. I see a lot of poverty, crime and addiction in my area. I can also smell the outhouses. I know that when it rains, we all hope our wells will refill, but we don't know when it might happen. What can anyone do about the contamination of our dug wells due to runoff from outhouses upstream and other sources of contamination? Pollution that has been concentrated on the surface due to the drought will run downstream and into our groundwater.

I believe that firstly, plans must be amended to include water and basic sanitation as the very foundation of our health system.

Secondly, we need solutions that work in the long term, such as a well drilling subsidy for rural and low income households. I just got an estimate for a drilled well that is \$30,000 and as you may know, that doesn't come with any guarantee that any drilled well would then contain any water when the bill comes due.

I believe urgent action is needed now to protect the health in my community from the complications due to the drought. We need basic water and sanitation now.

Sincerely,
Colleen Freake
(she/her)
Tidal Wild Farm