



**Municipal Affairs
Office of the Minister**

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October 7, 2025

Dear Mayors and Wardens:

On October 3, 2025, the *Municipal Modernization (2025) Act* received Royal Assent in the Nova Scotia Legislature. The Act includes several amendments to the *Municipal Government Act*, *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, *Halifax Regional Water Commission Act*, *Municipal Elections Act*, *Municipal Grants Act*, and the *Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act*. The *Municipal Modernization (2025) Act* also includes a new *Transportation Corridors Control Act*.

These changes aim to support development across the province, modernize existing provisions to improve municipal elections, as well as a suite of other requested changes to update the legislation.

Due to the number of amendments included in the *Municipal Modernization (2025) Act*, I have included a summary document that provides amendment descriptions, amendment section numbers within the amended legislation, amendment clause numbers within the *Municipal Modernization (2025) Act*, and clarification about whether the amendments have been proclaimed or still require regulations.

I want to thank you for your continued support in making Nova Scotia a better place and taking bold steps together to meet the changing needs of your communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Lohr".

Honourable John A. Lohr
Minister of Municipal Affairs

c: Juanita Spencer, NSFM

Attached

Summary of Amendments through the *Municipal Modernization (2025) Act*.

Changes to the Municipal Government Act and HRM Charter				
Amendment	Amendment Description	Section # in Act	Clause # in MMA	Regulations Required for Proclamation?
Tax Reductions due to Natural Disasters	Allow municipalities to adopt policies to reduce property taxes for homes rebuilt after destruction by wildfire, hurricane, flood, or other natural disasters. Enables reimbursement of overpayments and considers pre-disaster assessed values.	87A (HRMC) 69B (MGA)	2, 26	This amendment has received Royal Assent.
Establishment of Childcare Centre Areas	Enable the Minister to designate sites for Provincially licensed childcare operated by a private for profit, or not-for-profit entity to be exempt from the application of municipal land use requirements established by Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use Bylaws, and the associated approval processes.	229D (HRMC) 214D (MGA)	8, 28	This amendment has received Royal Assent.
Allowing Tax Sale Payments to be Made Electronically	Allow municipalities to accept electronic payment for tax sale purchases - options like online banking, debit or credit card payment, wire transfer or Automated Clearing House payments, bank transfers, or digital wallet/virtual card payments.	163 (1), 163(1A) (HRMC) 148(1), 148 (1A) (MGA)	4, 27	This amendment has received Royal Assent.

Changes to the HRM Charter and Halifax Regional Water Commission Act				
Amendment	Amendment Description	Section # in Act	Clause # in MMA	Regulations Required for Proclamation?
Ministerial Authority to Mandate Planning Documents	In situations where the Minister has refused to approve planning documents, the Minister can now require council to amend its planning documents within a prescribed timeline and set parameters for the required public participation program.	219(3), 223A (1) (HRMC)	6, 7	This amendment has received Royal Assent.

Changes to the HRM Charter and Halifax Regional Water Commission Act				
Site Plan to the External Appearance of Structures HRM Wide	Expands the current authority of Development Officers to approve changes to the external appearance of buildings—currently limited to the Downtown and Centre Plan areas—so that it applies across all areas of the Halifax Regional Municipality.	246(3)(1) (HRMC)	10	This amendment has received Royal Assent.
Enable Bonds and Liens to be Applied to Municipal Permit Fees	Enable HRM to apply either a bond or a lien to secure permit fees that had been deferred until occupancy.	188(2)(e) (iva), (ivb), (ivc) (HRMC)	5 (2)	This amendment has received Royal Assent.
Cogswell Energy District Authority	To enable property owners located outside the mandatory connection to the Cogswell District Energy System area to voluntarily connect to the system with the consent of the municipality, and to allow the municipality to set terms and recover costs of that connection and extends liability protection to Halifax Water for voluntary connections the same as for mandatory connections.	104A(1) (aa), 188(1) (laa), 235(5) (jba) (HRMC) 2(1) (ea), 9(1), 26(a)(i), 27A (HRWCA)	3, 5 (1), 9, 11, 12, 13, 14	This amendment has received Royal Assent.

Municipal Grant Act Amendments				
Amendment	Amendment Description	Section # in Act	Clause # in MMA	Regulations Required for Proclamation?
Removal of requirement for Governor in Council approval for annual Municipal Financial Capacity Grant allocations	This is an administrative amendment only. It removes the requirement for the Minister to obtain annual approval from Governor in Council for the amount of the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant (MFCG). The MFCG is distributed to municipalities based on the formula included in regulation and adheres to the formula agreed as part of the negotiated Service Exchange Agreement.	8(2)	30	This amendment has received Royal Assent.

<i>Municipal Elections Act Amendments</i>				
<i>Amendment</i>	<i>Amendment Description</i>	<i>Section # in Act</i>	<i>Clause # in MMA</i>	<i>Regulations Required for Proclamation?</i>
<i>Allowing returning officers to vote</i>	Removes the prohibition against a returning officer being on the municipal list of electors and eligible to vote.	15 (a)	23	This amendment has received Royal Assent.
<i>Amend Elector Eligibility Trigger Date</i>	Amends the trigger date for the determination of the eligibility of an individual to vote in a municipal election from the current “first advanced” polling date, to upon the “ordinary” polling date for consistency with provincial and federal eligibility.	14	22	This amendment has received Royal Assent.
<i>Provide Optional Methods for Public Notice</i>	Allows municipalities to post notice on the municipality’s publicly accessible website and in at least five conspicuous places in the municipality rather than in the newspaper.	2A	21	This amendment has received Royal Assent.
<i>Elector Privacy</i>	Allows an elector to have their name obscured from any copies of the list of electors that are to be made public or shared. Only the municipal returning officer’s final list of electors for internal use will still include the elector’s name and other personal information so that the person can participate in the election.	35(1)(ba), 35 (2A), 35 (2B), 36 (5), 36 (6)	24, 25, 32	Yes.

<i>Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act Amendments</i>				
<i>Amendment</i>	<i>Amendment Description</i>	<i>Section # in Act</i>	<i>Clause # in MMA</i>	<i>Regulations Required for Proclamation?</i>
<i>Remove barriers on development in Special Planning Areas</i>	The amendment broadens the language to clarify the original intent that the Minister has authority to create, amend, or repeal planning documents—such as Municipal Planning Strategies (MPS), land use by-laws, and subdivision by-laws—in designated Special Planning Areas. Previously, this authority was implicit, as changes to an MPS required corresponding changes to other planning documents to fulfill the intent of the Act.	16(1), 16(2), 16(3), 16(5)	18	This amendment has received Royal Assent.

<i>Housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality Act Amendments</i>				
<i>Update legislative requirements for public notification</i>	This amendment will allow for public notification to take place on the Province's public website rather than in the newspaper.	15(3)(b), 17(3)(a)	17, 19	This amendment has received Royal Assent.

<i>New: Transportation Corridors Control Act</i>				
<i>Amendment</i>	<i>Amendment Description</i>	<i>Section # in Act</i>	<i>Clause # in MMA</i>	<i>Regulations Required for Proclamation?</i>
<i>New legislation</i>	Enables the Province to designate priority transportation projects and their corridors to safeguard land for future transportation and infrastructure development, especially in urbanizing areas, and streamline coordination among government departments, landowners, municipalities, developers, and utility companies.	N/A	31, Schedule	Yes.