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February 26th, 2019

Municipal Units of Nova Scotia,

Dear Municipal Units of Nova Scotia,

The Town of Shelburne would like to propose that a portion of the Provincial HST goes back to municipal units who own and are responsible for two thirds of public infrastructure. As we all know, property taxes alone can't keep up with our growing local needs. There is mounting evidence that the main risk to financial viability of our communities is both the cost of infrastructure to provide services and service levels that don't reflect fiscal capacity. Asset Management studies have demonstrated that our infrastructure is in need of maintenance and repairs that already exceed our budgets, let alone expanding infrastructure to help our communities grow. As municipal units, we are often faced with new responsibilities that are forced upon us by the provincial government.

In Shelburne, we have a former federal government wharf that requires major repairs to maintain; we are being told to contribute to doctor retention programs, fund libraries, fund education, pay for policing, and so many more additional expenses that were not part of our responsibility in the past. These new additional costs, ones that we have no choice but to accept, make it even more difficult to plan future projects and stick to our budgets. By distributing a small portion, we are asking for 0.75% of the HST to municipal units, this will result in municipal units receiving a portion of the taxes collected from both tourists and residents who use our infrastructure without having to resort to imposing large increases in property taxes to cover our basic needs.

HST makes up roughly 18% of the total tax revenue. We are asking for 0.75% of that 18%. The Nova Scotia Provincial Government is balancing their budgets while many municipalities are struggling to maintain basic standards. The Town of Shelburne is asking other municipal units to collectively lobby for a small share of this HST and asking you to write to us showing support. This item could then be forwarded to the NSFM.

Please send all letters of support to: clerk@town.shelburne.ns.ca or by mail.

Sincerely,

Karen Mattatall
Mayor, Town of Shelburne