



Municipal Government Act Released for Consultation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2016 - Today, the Government of PEI released the proposed Municipal Government Act, giving municipalities a chance to comment before it's tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Federation of PEI Municipalities President, Bruce MacDougall, welcomed the release of the draft act. "The process for modernizing our legislation has been unprecedented," he said. "Municipal representatives were at the table when the original draft was written," he explained. "And as far as I know, this is the first time in PEI that an act has been released for consultation before being tabled for first reading," he added. "It's taken a lot of hard work to get us to this point, but it's been well worth it. I commend Minister Mitchell and the Province for the outstanding level of collaboration."

"At first glance, I'm pleased with the new legislation," said MacDougall, "but that doesn't mean the Federation won't be looking for changes." "One of the priorities is to include a requirement for the provincial government to consult with us when it considers changes concerning municipal finances," he stated. "The Municipal Government Act includes a commitment to consult with FPEIM on future changes to the new Act and regulations. This is a positive step, but we're asking the Province to take it one step further," he explained. "As the Province considers matters that relate directly to municipal finances, dialogue shouldn't be optional."

MacDougall emphasized that it's early in the process. "Councils are now able to look at the draft legislation, consider what it means for their municipality and give feedback," he said, "and in the coming days and weeks we'll be talking to municipal leaders throughout the province."

"We'll also continue looking over the legislation," he added, noting that it has been reviewed internally by the province and gone through the legislative drafting process since the committee completed its work.

According to MacDougall, "the Municipal Government Act includes many positive changes that improve clarity, increase accountability and broaden municipal authority." "There are many new requirements in this act that bring us in line with other provinces and the territories, but implementing some of those changes will be challenging for many of the small municipalities," he said.

He explained that when work on the new act began in 2010, there was an expectation that boundaries would change to create viable municipalities across the province, but that hasn't happened yet.

MacDougall pointed out that the Island will be stronger when it has strong municipalities from tip to tip. "For municipal governments to be strong," he concluded, "they need three things: adequate and predictable revenue; modern legislation; and province wide incorporation of municipalities that are large enough to be viable in the long-term. We've taken important steps forward and, through ongoing collaboration, I'm confident that we'll continue to make progress. I look forward to renewing the discussion on revenue sharing soon."

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