



**Municipal Affairs and Housing
Office of the Minister**

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November 30, 2021

Work Commencing on Municipal and Village Code of Conduct Regulations

Municipal Elected Officials and Municipal Administrators:

I recognize that many of you have been waiting patiently on updates related to municipal codes of conduct regulations. Today, I am pleased to be sharing the most recent status of the project and what we hope to achieve in the next year.

As you may be aware, in 2017 the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* and the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (HRMC)* were amended to add a requirement for municipalities and villages to establish a code of conduct for elected officials. The MGA and HRMC were further amended in 2021 to add additional provisions regarding codes of conduct, including the requirement for municipalities to hire a third-party investigator to investigate alleged breaches and to enable councils to discuss alleged breaches in-camera. Neither the 2017 nor the 2021 amendments have been proclaimed as regulations are required to support their implementation.

In order to develop the regulations related to municipal codes of conduct in a thoughtful and collaborative manner, we have chosen to establish a Code of Conduct Working Group (CCWG). This working group has a mandate of developing recommendations on the content to be included in the municipal codes of conduct regulations. These recommendations will focus on the content to be included in a municipal code of conduct as well as possible sanctions for a breach. The CCWG has representation from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH), the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM), the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia (AMANS), and the Association of Nova Scotia Villages (ANSV) and will function similarly to the Joint Municipal Accountability and Transparency Committee (JMAT). The representatives will be from a regional, a rural, a town and a village to ensure accurate representation across Nova Scotia's municipalities which assures various sizes and unique needs are captured. The NSFM, AMANS and ANSV have already determined the individuals they will be appointing to the CCWG. We will work closely with the NSFM, AMANS and ANSV to set up an initial meeting to begin this important work soon.

It is important the recommendations developed by the CCWG are supported by municipalities and villages in Nova Scotia. Therefore, once the CCWG has developed their recommendations on the content, DMAH will consult with all municipalities and villages on the proposal. It is difficult to predict when the recommendations will be finalized by the CCWG. However, we will keep you apprised of their progress and look forward to your participation during consultations.

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I recognize how important this work is to all municipalities and villages in Nova Scotia and would like to thank you for your patience while we determine the most appropriate path forward to complete this work in a collaborative and thoughtful manner. I look forward to reviewing the proposed recommendations from the CCWG and associated consultation feedback.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John A. Lohr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

Minister
Honourable John A. Lohr

c. Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities
Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia
Association of Nova Scotia Villages

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