

February 9, 2015

To: Clerk of the Board

NSUARB

P.O. Box 1692, Unit M

Halifax, NS

B3J 3S3

Re: Halifax Water Rate Increase

The Halifax Chamber of Commerce would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Halifax Regional Water Commission's (HRWC) application to amend its Schedule of Rates and Charges and Schedule of Rules and Regulations for the provision of water, public and private fire protection, wastewater and stormwater services. This application would result in significant water rate increases for all customer classes in 2015 and 2016 (an average of 6.5% and 7.1% respectively).

We understand that HRWC is dealing with a sizable infrastructure deficit due to underinvestment in years past. Nevertheless we must remind the Board of the significant negative effect an increase of this size will have on the business community. Furthermore, continued increases in water rates do not help Halifax's reputation as a city with a high cost of living for residents. These increases will be especially difficult to manage as businesses and residents have already had to deal with large increases in water rates in recent years.

While we acknowledge that HRWC has taken steps to manage expenditures, we strongly encourage them to do more to keep costs under control. Ratepayers are being asked to shoulder a significant burden and the public needs to be confident that HRWC is doing all that it can to control costs.

We are asking the Board to carefully consider the impact this rate increase will have on the business sector, especially the small business sector which is most vulnerable to sudden changes in business costs.

Sincerely,

Valerie Payn, President & CEO
Halifax Chamber of Commerce