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Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
Office of the Minister

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JUN 23 2008

Ms. Valerie A. Payn
President & CEO
Halifax Chamber of Commerce
656 Windmill Road, Suite 200
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1B8

Dear Ms. ~~Payn~~ Valerie:

I am writing in response to your recent letter concerning the Halifax Charter and Halifax by Design legislation.

I am pleased that the Halifax Chamber of Commerce supports the principles of the Charter. We believe that the legislation is a positive step in recognizing Halifax Regional Municipality as the largest municipality in Eastern Canada and the capital of Nova Scotia. HRM makes the most requests for amendments to existing municipal legislation and the Charter will also allow its concerns to be more quickly addressed.

Your disappointment regarding the delay in moving ahead with the HRM legislation is recognized. However, it was a very busy session from a municipal legislative point of view with significant amendments made to the *Municipal Government Act*, amendments to the *Municipal Elections Act* regarding electronic voting, and enshrining in legislation provincial financial commitments under the Provincial/Municipal Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, a number of private members bills were introduced respecting municipal government, two of which were passed by the Legislature.

Unfortunately there was not time to fully debate these two complex pieces of legislation. However, the fact that they have been introduced and received second reading is, in itself, great progress and government intends to move forward on both Bills in the fall sitting of the House of Assembly. Discussion will also continue regarding the district council concept over the summer and I thank you for your input on this provision.

Yours truly,

Jamie Muir
c Mayor and Council, HRM

VP