

August 11, 2015

Honorable Zach Churchill  
Department of Municipal Affairs  
1505 Barrington Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 216  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 2M4

Dear Minister Churchill,

Re: Permanent Resident Voting in Halifax Municipal Elections.

The Chamber fully supports Halifax Regional Council's request to allow permanent residents to vote in municipal elections. We believe that since permanent residents are often long-term inhabitants of our communities and pay taxes they deserve to have their voices heard by their representatives. If approved, this would make Halifax the first city in Canada to allow permanent residents to vote and it would send a strong signal that our community is welcoming and values the ideas of new residents.

In the letter your predecessor Minister Furey sent to Halifax Regional Council, he stated his concerns that it would be unfair to allow permanent residents to vote but deny them the right to run for elections and nominate candidates. In other countries, such as New Zealand and Australia, it is normal for permanent residents to be able to vote but not be allowed to stand as a candidate. Both of these countries have similar political traditions to Canada and neither considers this a breach of democratic principles.

We strongly recommend following the lead of other countries and considering who is eligible to vote, who is eligible to stand for election, and who is eligible to nominate candidates as completely separate issues. Promoting immigration is a key issue for the Chamber under our 2013-2018 Strategic Plan and we encourage you to approve Halifax Regional Council's request as presented.

Respectfully Yours,



Valerie Payn, President and CEO  
Halifax Chamber of Commerce