



NOVA SCOTIA
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August 25, 2025

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities
1809 Barrington St
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Via Email: communications@nsfm.ca

Dear Mayor Pam Mood and Ms. Juanita Spencer,

Re: Letter from NSFM - Provincial Policing Review

Thank you for your July 18, 2025, letter regarding the views of Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) members on the outcomes of the comprehensive Policing Review, and for the opportunity to meet with your members on August 14, 2025. Please accept my sincere apologies regarding the scheduling confusion, and any inconvenience it may have caused members as a result. I appreciate your organization's continued commitment to our shared goal: ensuring effective, equitable public safety for all Nova Scotians.

NSFM plays a critical role in fostering strong relationships between municipalities and the province. As we move forward with the six foundational changes outlined in *Shaping the Future: Policing in Nova Scotia*, municipal input remains essential. We recognize the diversity of municipal needs and are committed to meaningful, ongoing engagement.

As I shared during our meeting on August 14, 2025, over the past several weeks I have had the opportunity to meet with many municipal leaders across the province. These conversations have affirmed that we share a common vision for a modern, responsive, and community-centered approach to public safety. These meetings will continue into the Fall to ensure that every municipality has an opportunity to be heard.

We appreciate NSFM's engagement throughout the review process. Many of the issues raised in your letter, such as evolving public safety needs and the complexity of crime, directly align with the priorities identified in the review. While the final report marks an important milestone, it is just the beginning of broader transformation. Implementation will require time, collaboration, and sustained effort.

In response to the comments, questions and concerns outlined in your letter, I would like to provide

further clarity:

- **Province-Wide Records Management System (RMS):** We appreciate your support of our commitment to introduce a single RMS to replace the current patchwork of systems, improving data sharing, investigations, and service consistency across jurisdictions.
- **Community Safety Personnel:** We are introducing new roles to support public safety. Other professionals will be able to work alongside police officers to address issues such as mental health crises, wellness checks, and community outreach. This will allow sworn members to focus on core policing duties. This layered approach reflects best practices and responds directly to longstanding concerns about the appropriateness of police involvement in social and health-related interventions.
- **RCMP Billing Model:** A revised billing mechanism for municipalities policed by the RCMP is currently in development. Its objective is to promote financial sustainability while accounting for the unique needs and contexts of individual communities.
- **Policing Standards and Compliance:** The Department of Justice has consistently communicated that the initial 39 policing standards were the beginning and would be reviewed following the completion of the comprehensive policing review. Additional standards will be developed through stakeholder consultation. I had identified gender-based violence as a priority for consideration and appreciated the questions around that during our August 14 meeting. It is clearly a shared priority. Compliance with standards will be monitored through regular audits and performance evaluations. While advisory services were offered to all agencies during the one-year implementation period, only one agency requested support.
- **Support for municipal police agencies:** Through the implementation of the foundational changes, most notably the development of the Layered Policing Framework and the evolution of police governance through the Community Safety Boards, we remain committed to working collaboratively with municipal partners to ensure the necessary supports are in place for sustainable and effective policing. While Deloitte recommended the expansion of the Provincial Police, the Department of Justice has upheld the principle of municipal choice in the delivery of policing services. We hold deep respect for municipal policing service providers and are committed to ongoing dialogue to explore how we can best support their continued efforts. Furthermore, the Department of Justice has remained transparent on our efforts and commitment to the continuation of the existing funding associated with the Additional Officer Program.
- **Police Staffing:** We are working with federal and municipal partners to address staffing disparities, particularly in RCMP-policed areas, to support officer wellness, visibility, and timely response. In the past, municipalities have had to choose between investments in policing and other community initiatives, such as investments in parks or playgrounds – requiring them to balance municipal affordability with public safety. Our goal is to ensure that this does not continue. We will work to ensure that neither officer safety nor public safety will be compromised due to inadequate resourcing.

- **Community Safety Boards:** These boards will evolve from existing police boards to strengthen localized civilian oversight. They will serve as platforms for community input and coordination among law enforcement and system partners, enabling the setting of local public safety priorities. We recognize delays in appointing ministerial representatives and are actively resolving these as part of broader governance reforms.

Your suggestion that the Department is shifting support services to the RCMP “on a hunch” is incorrect. We are following a structured, evidence-based process. We have been advised that many service agreements are in place between municipalities, however as of August 22, 2025, the Department of Justice has only acknowledged receipt of agreements from four agencies. Existing agreements will be audited, and only those failing to meet standards will be replaced by agreements with the provincial police to ensure consistent, high-quality policing. To clarify, no pay-per-use model is in place. The access and funding model for RCMP support is still being developed and will be based on performance, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with provincial standards.

We recognize the need for significant changes to legislation, service agreements, and policies to meet the needs of urban and rural communities and ensure equitable access to policing services throughout Nova Scotia. As you know, Municipalities were extensively consulted as part of the recent police review, and we are now meeting with Municipalities to discuss the outcomes of the review. Following these discussions and the development of our new billing model, we will be updating legislation to reflect the outcomes. Let me also clarify that supporting all police agencies, municipal and RCMP, does not mean accepting current service inequities. Deloitte’s recommendations call for system-wide reform to ensure all Nova Scotians receive consistent, high-quality policing.

While your letter suggests that the number of municipal police agencies is increasing across Canada, in fact the overall trend (in line with the analysis and recommendations provided by Deloitte) is towards consolidation. In Ontario, for example, the number of police agencies has declined from over 130 in 1991 to 44 today, with the Ontario Provincial Police assuming responsibility in many rural municipalities. A similar consolidation has occurred in Quebec. Most provinces continue to rely on RCMP contract policing. Additionally, while your figures regarding municipal police agencies in Ontario and Quebec are broadly accurate, they omit the critical role of the OPP and Sûreté du Québec.

Our approach is not about choosing between the RCMP and municipal police; it’s about building a modern, accountable, and integrated public safety system that meets the needs of every Nova Scotian.

Thank you again for your letter and your continued advocacy. I look forward to working together in the months ahead.

Sincerely,



Becky Druhan
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

cc: Pam Mood, President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities
Juanita Spencer, CEO, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

Hon. Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia
Hon. John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Paul LaFleche, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs
Hayley Crichton, Executive Director, Public Safety and Security Division
Kim Ramsay, President, AMANS