March 11, 2022

Hon. Daniel Allain, Minister
Local Government and Local Governance Reform
Marysville Place
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H1

Re: Regional Service Commission Reform

Dear Minister Allain,

Municipalities across the province have been working diligently on developing new and sustainable entities as laid out in your government's white paper on municipal reform. Members of the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (UMNB) are no exception. Our members have been collaborating with their neighbouring communities to meet the timelines laid out in the legislation. This process, however, has not been without concern. A repeated concern that has been raised by UMNB members are the time constraints, unknown costs, and future service delivery, particularly with regards to the Regional Service Commissions (RSC). UMNB remains a supportive partner of the reform process and a willing partner in your vision of creating viable and sustainable communities. That is why we are recommending a delay in the implementation of the new RSC model and enhanced service offerings. In doing so, we believe you will enable local decision making and in turn garner more local support for the new commissions. We offer this advice in the spirit of continued collaboration with you and your department.

Municipal leaders have referred to the reform process as two separate reforms, one for municipal entities and another for the regional service commissions. We have been told by our members that there are concerns about the mandates and financial implications of the new RSCs. The focus so far has been on the tight timelines to have the new entities ready for November 2022, and RSCs have not received the attention they need and do not appear to be at the same step in the process. The expanded mandates have also caused concerns on how the proposed new services will co-exist with municipalities that currently offer affordable and effective services. This needs to be clarified before progressing with the changes.

In delaying the proposed reform, you would also be alleviating some of the concerns we have heard from municipal staff. These dedicated people have been working overtime to ensure the new municipal entities are ready for January 1, 2023 deadline established to have new Councils in place. Delaying the RSC reform would ensure that the same oversight and professional experience could be given to this part of the transition. The technical knowledge brought by our administrators along with the experience of our municipal leaders (and new municipal leaders

elected in November 2022) will be needed to ensure that the new RSC model works for all New Brunswickers.

We recognize that decisions must be made regarding the RSCs but would request that those be delayed until such a time where CEO's are in place, new mayors and Councils are elected and that municipal leaders can have greater input in their local structure. UMNB members recognize the need for greater collaboration, however, we feel the new RSC structures must equally have a mandate from the electorate via the elections in the fall. At which time the municipal restructuring will be complete, and then more attention can be given to RSC transition. UMNB remains a strong and willing partner in reform implementation and looks forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Scholten
President, Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick

CC: Mr. Ryan Donaghy, Acting Deputy Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform
UMNB Members
Presidents of the AFMNB, AMANB, and CNBA