



House of Assembly    Assemblée législative  
Nova Scotia    Nouvelle-Écosse

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October 5, 2010

The Honourable Bill Estabrooks, Minister  
Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal  
PO Box 186  
Halifax NS B3J 2T3

The Hon. Marilyn More, Minister  
Nova Scotia Department of Education  
P.O. Box 578  
2021 Brunswick Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9

*Bill and Marilyn*

Dear Ministers Estabrooks and More:

I wish to draw your attention to a situation that is causing concern in my riding.

A new high school to replace Charles P. Allen High School was announced in April 2009. A site selection committee was struck and worked diligently to select three potential sites - one on Innovation Drive (near Research In Motion), a second on Gary Martin Drive and a third at Jack's Lake. Innovation Drive has been the favoured site. Halifax Regional School Board endorsed their choice last fall.

Since the spring of this year, we have heard repeatedly from officials at both Education and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal that an offer to the landowner is forthcoming - in fact, I have been told repeatedly that the offer "is just days away". In July, a TIR official assured Clayton in an email that an offer was forthcoming. It is now October.

I heard this weekend that government officials are examining a site well down Hammonds Plains road - a site that is clearly not in the middle of the catchment area (a criterion the site selection committee was asked to consider). Nor is this a site HRM has indicated it would consider enhancing.

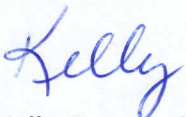
That the government is considering locating the school away from the largest concentration of population in the catchment area on an already overcrowded road is disappointing. Losing the enhancements being considered by HRM would be a tremendous loss to a rapidly-expanding community that has suffered without facilities. (HRM cannot even move forward in its deliberations on this issue without a site purchase; if a decision is not taken soon, we may lose these facilities simply because of the length of time that has elapsed.)

I understand there is concern about the cost of this land and I know you share my concern that we get good value for taxpayers. I applaud staff who have investigated all possible alternative sites; they are to be commended. But since none of the alternatives have proved satisfactory, surely it is time to move forward.

There has been no attempt to negotiate with the landowner to even see if there is room to move - even as the landowner was assured an offer was forthcoming. What would be the cost of a lawsuit, should there be no offer in the end? What will be the costs of redoing work already begun, since the design team has already begun its work? And what will be the lifetime costs of transporting students from the most populated area out to a far-off school at a time when we are supposed to be focussing on energy efficiency?

I urge you to direct your officials at least try to negotiate for the preferred site. This project is important to the people of Bedford-Birch Cove and the delay is hurting our community.

Sincerely,



Kelly Regan, MLA  
Bedford-Birch Cove