

December 9, 2019

Mr. Don Darling
Mayor, City of Saint John
P.O Box 1971
Saint John, NB E2L 4L1

Mr. Mayor:

Thank you for your letter dated October 22, 2019 detailing Council's three requests to the province.

Before I address your specific requests, I would like to acknowledge the hard work your council and staff are doing to ensure Saint John tackles its projected 2021 deficit and puts the city on a path to greater success and sustainability moving forward.

I also want to highlight recent developments on the provincial items within the Sustaining Saint John – Three Part Plan. We have introduced legislative amendments to the *Greater Saint John Regional Facilities Commission Act*, as well as to the *Industrial Relations Act* and those Bills will make their way through the legislative process, hopefully culminating with successful passage with the help of the Opposition parties.

I also continue to follow the progress of the Saint John Regional Taskforce and the management audit with great interest. The success of both of those initiatives will benefit the city, region and province in the end.

Regarding the three requests of Council, your request to allow frontline service impacts without impacting the 2018 agreement can be accommodated. As well, your second request to not impact the 2020 financial arrangement due to restructuring costs can also be accommodated. Each of these will be subject to an amendment to the agreement which you can arrange with Mr. Ryan Donaghy, Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment and Local Government, who will work with the Office of the Attorney General on the document and wording.

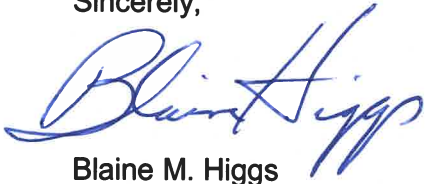


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Your third request cannot be contemplated at this time. As agreed to in the Action Plan, we will review the operational status of the City in March 2020; it would thus be premature to make any additional financial commitments beyond December 31, 2020.

Government will re-assess the situation and determine whether any further action is required, including any further policy, operational, or financial measures are necessary at that time.

Sincerely,



Blaine M. Higgs

C.c. Mr. Ryan Donaghy, Assistant Deputy Minister, ELG

