

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR#

DATE: 21 January 2010

RE: **Mayors and Warden Meeting with Premier Dexter**

Prior to their meeting with the Premier, the mayors and warden met, and Warden Hunter suggested that Mayor Small speak on behalf of the municipalities.

Springhill Mayor Alan Dill, Oxford Mayor Lloyd Jenkins, Amherst Mayor Rob Small and Warden Keith Hunter met with Premier Darrell Dexter and Justice Minister Ross Landry at the Premier's Office on Tuesday, January 20, 2010 at 5:15 PM. Parrsboro Mayor Lois Smith was unable to attend and sent her regrets and support.

The meeting was approximately 45 – 60 minutes in length; the Premier opened the meeting by allowing the municipalities to present concerns and issues with respect to the proposed move of the Cumberland County Correctional Facility out of Cumberland County, while not considering Cumberland County for the proposed replacement facility.

The concerns included everything from:

- The loss of good paying jobs in Cumberland County
- The long term erosion of the justice system in Cumberland
- The out migration of our population and the long term impact this will have on our economic conditions of the County
- The indirect impact that this loss will have on other jobs and businesses in our county
- The social impact that moving this jail will have on families of clients, the impact on family and moving jobs.

And the list went on.

We explained that we are developing facts and data on the economic impact that the current decision will have on Cumberland County in terms of jobs, business and industry, social impact, lost opportunity, etc. Our request was to have the Provincial government delay any further decision until the municipalities complete our economic impact study through CREDA, which we anticipate being complete by the end of February.

Each Mayor and the Warden had an opportunity to provide input from the viewpoint of each of their communities if we lose the facility, and they all expressed concerns.

Premier Dexter and Minister Landry contributed to the response in terms of explaining the process that the Provincial government has undertaken to justify the decision to build a jail and the size intended. The Premier indicated that the decision was made, taking into consideration the key elements of any decision. These included: what the needs are of the justice system/department; what is fiscally responsible given the Province's current financial deficit position; why Cumberland is not the location of the new facility in terms of servicing the catchment area for services needed.

The Premier stated the projected savings as a result of the decision to build one facility. He indicated that the government does understand the issue related to moving the facility and reiterated the decision based on cost benefit to the Province. However, releasing the information would impact on their forward discussion and obtaining competitive information for the project going forward.

Many other related issues were discussed as part of the meeting.

The Premier did say that, with the savings being projected, it will allow other investment to occur in the various areas of rural Nova Scotia and reiterated their goal of supporting rural Nova Scotia.

In terms of a timeline, March is the month that will see further decisions on location, construction for determining costs for budget process.

The Premier presented all the reasons why the government has taken the decision and as municipal leaders, it was very difficult for us to argue fiscal responsibility, cost benefit justification, catchment area issues. From the Provincial government's standpoint, the decision is made and will not be changed.

The five units of Cumberland County will continue to pursue the results of the economic impact study for further assessment. We want to thank all the citizens of Cumberland County for their continued support.

- 30 -

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