



**Environment and Climate Change
Office of the Minister**

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10700-40-57719

October 14, 2021

Claudia Chender, MLA Dartmouth South
claudischendermla@gmail.com

Susan Leblanc, MLA Dartmouth North
sleblancmla@gmail.com

Dear Claudia Chender & Susan Leblanc :

Thank you for your September 13, 2021 letter and the opportunity to meet on October 8, 2021 to discuss our common concerns relating to urban lakes in the Dartmouth area, and your request for a status update on initiatives currently underway in the department to protect our water resources. Please be assured that I both understand and share your interest in protecting these lakes and I am committed to working within our department's mandate to protect these valued resources.

As discussed, one of our immediate priorities is to introduce new environmental legislation to guide Nova Scotia towards a cleaner and healthier environment in the coming years, while also promoting growth of a sustainable and green economy, along with the sustainability of our traditional industries as well. This legislation can provide a framework for transformational change in how we better protect lakes.

We also plan to change the way we deliver our mandate at Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (ECC) by updating the environmental impact assessment process to consider the cumulative impacts of any development that would potentially affect lakes, rivers, wetlands, and other aquatic environments. Our vision is to make Nova Scotia the most environmentally friendly jurisdiction in North America.

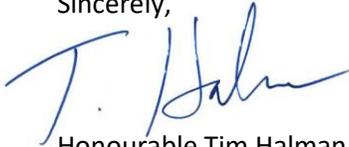
I'm very encouraged by some of the work that is already underway at ECC that helps protect our water resources. As noted in our meeting my staff are collaborating with researchers and working to develop tools and education to manage water quality and the likelihood of blue green algae blooms. Stewardship from the community is necessary for maintaining overall lake health, and my staff are developing tools and resources to empower all lakeside communities in this work. As mentioned, I encourage your efforts to work with stakeholders to protect the Dartmouth urban lakes and my staff regularly support multi-stakeholder watershed groups like this with resources and advice.

Although it may not be possible to prevent blooms during summers with extreme heat and weather like this past summer, we do need everyone to better understand the risks and report blooms when they happen. I shared that over the winter my team will be improving these messages and working to support everyone's understanding. In the mean time, anyone who sees a potential bloom or suspects the release of sediment (or any other harmful substances) into any water resource is encouraged to report this to the local ECC office. ECC ensures that our compliance officers are well equipped and follow up on every

complaint received. Our compliance officers are also supported by our Sustainability & Applied Science Division, where they can access program expertise, when needed.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention, and I look forward to having continued dialogue with you. Should you have questions about any of the initiatives discussed above, please do not hesitate to also contact Elizabeth Kennedy, Water Branch Director, at elizabeth.kennedy@novascotia.ca. To report the release of sediment or other harmful substances, or to report possible blue green algae blooms in any of our Dartmouth lakes, please contact our local ECC office in Bedford by calling either 902-424-7773 or 1-877-936-8476.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Halman".

Honourable Tim Halman, MLA
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

c: Elizabeth Kennedy, ECC