



September 13, 2021

Dear Minister Halman,

We are writing to you today with a renewed ask for action on the urban lakes situation. We again saw blue-green algae and bacterial risk advisories at Lake Banook, Penhorn Lake, Albro Lake, and Lake Micmac in Dartmouth this past summer. We know that the situation will continue to deteriorate without leadership from Nova Scotia Environment. Invasive weeds, floating yellow heart, high bacteria levels and more frequent algae blooms are all signs that our lakes' clean, healthy ecosystems are at risk.

As you know, urban lakes provide significant benefits to our city and our province. They act as economic drivers, recreation and event sites, and drivers of tourism.

These past two summers, many gatherings, day camps and other activities were restricted due to COVID-19. During this time, urban lakes took on enhanced importance for many Dartmouth residents who rely on and deeply value these outdoor spaces.

We have spent the last four years listening to residents and advocating for provincial action on this issue. We have written letters and asked questions in the legislature. In the summer of 2019, we hosted a Dartmouth lakes town hall that was attended by over 150 residents who told us, loudly and clearly: governments need to collaborate to solve this issue. In September of 2019, we met with then-Minister Wilson and his staff and brought three asks:

- To immediately convene an Urban Lakes Commission that can work with stakeholders across jurisdictional lines and guide the work to protect our urban lakes.
- To enhance staffing, training, and resourcing of frontline Nova Scotia Environment staff who work with urban lakes.
- To commence a public awareness campaign either independently or in concert with similar HRM initiatives about what residents can do to protect nearby lakes.

To date, we have not been informed of any action that has been taken on these requests. A renewed request was sent in January 2020 with no response. We have since presented a petition to the House asking the province to take action to protect Dartmouth lakes. We also requested a meeting with then-Minister Irving outlining the above, but that never took place.

Will you please confirm your commitment to these initiatives, as well as what if any progress has been made on these specific requests to date? The Dartmouth lakes hold immense importance to many, many



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people. They are economically, ecologically and recreationally vital. We cannot allow them to continue to deteriorate and are looking to you to further this work.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Claudia Chender
MLA Dartmouth South



Susan Leblanc
MLA Dartmouth North



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