



April 17, 2020

Hon. Kevin Murphy

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Hon. Geoff MacLellan

House Leader, Liberal Caucus
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VIA EMAIL

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to you today regarding our province's crucial legislative functions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The current public health situation has resulted in significant changes to our province's operations, and has greatly transformed and accelerated our expectations of both citizen and government responsibilities as we rise to meet this significant challenge.

In this scary and uncertain time, our government is taking unprecedented actions to keep Nova Scotians safe and healthy, as we expect that they would. The government has shown leadership and a willingness to listen, and we, along with all Nova Scotians, are appreciative.

During normal times, our legislature performs the crucial role of delivering accountability, transparency and scrutiny on behalf of the public. This role is equally, if not more so, important during this remarkable time. I believe the public expects an examination and understanding of the decisions and measures that the government is undertaking.

As governments across the country navigate how to deliver the critical service of legislatures safely, Nova Scotia needs to do this work as well. This is why we are asking that the government and our colleagues in the official opposition work with us to resume legislative activity.

We are asking that the Public Accounts Committee and Health Committee be resumed. They can meet safely and virtually, as is being done in other jurisdictions.

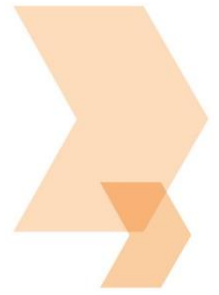
Public Accounts Committee should resume its important agenda considering reports on the province's spending. This is particularly important given the government's plan to move forward with capital projects, including the once in a generation QEII redevelopment project.

Health Committee should resume meeting to consider the wide range of critically important topics related to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.



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As time goes on, the government should convene other standing committees virtually, as well as plan for the possibility that the legislature may need to assemble while respecting public health measures such as physical distancing. The NDP Caucus is eager to work together with our elected colleagues to make this happen.

Democracy is an essential service. I look forward to working with you to resume this crucial activity in the very near future.

Sincerely,

Claudia Chender
House Leader, NDP Caucus
MLA Dartmouth South

Cc: Keith Bain, Chair, Public Accounts Committee
Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, Chair, Health Committee



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