



July 11, 2019

Hon. Bernadette Jordan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Rural Economic Development
P.O. Box 8777, Postal Station T
Ottawa, ON K1G 1C0

Dear Minister:

We wish to express our deep concern regarding the RCMP's decision to transfer its Truro Operational Communications Centre to the Halifax Regional Municipality by February 2021, along with more than 50 jobs.

The Truro-Colchester and Atlantic Chambers have been expressing concern to the federal government and the RCMP since 2016 when the relocation of the Centre became known through the media. Our most recent effort, a March 2019 letter to Hon. Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety, (attached) remains unanswered.

The location of federal offices in small communities helps ensure important programs are delivered effectively and provide an important economic stimulus throughout the country. When a federal department closes a facility, there are substantial direct impacts.

In a letter to the Truro-Colchester Chamber of Commerce, the RCMP's Acting Commissioner of H Division stated the relocation was being undertaken because the building currently housing the Centre was nearing the end of its lifespan. We understand the need for the force to consider the health and safety of employees, operational requirements and fiscal responsibility.

However, given the Millbrook First Nation, located adjacent to the Town of Truro, has offered to build the RCMP a new building on its territory to house the Centre and is willing to meet specifications set out by the RCMP in an effort to retain these precious jobs in its small community, we feel the decision to move is unwarranted. Millbrook First Nation also had offered to lease an existing building, a former call centre, to the RCMP if that was preferable to their needs. RCMP officials toured the facility twice. They have not communicated with the First Nation since.

We are left with the impression of a lack of transparency in – and plausible rationale for – the decision to move the Centre and ask you, as Nova Scotia's representative in Cabinet and the Minister of Rural Economic Development, to provide a credible explanation of why this decision is being made. In this election year, small communities throughout Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada and the entire country will be looking for proof that your government is true to the words in all Ministers' mandate letters, i.e., "Canadians need to have faith in their government's honesty and willingness to listen." They will also be asking, "It's Truro this time, are we next?"

If this move proceeds, it will disrupt and displace workers in a specialized field. In light of the importance that your government places on displaced workers and the establishment of a Future Skills Centre, can you outline what steps will be taken to upskill/reskill them?



Without a credible rationale for this move and the disruption it will cause, the decision violates your government's 2015 platform commitment to "strengthen our communities by investing in the things that make them good places to live," as well as contradicts regulations demanding geographic separation of emergency call centres.

We are calling on you to demonstrate that a complete analysis that includes the impact of this move on Truro's economy has been undertaken. Failing that, we ask the government to halt plans to move the Centre until one is completed along with a meaningful effort to engage with community partners to examine solutions to retain these jobs in Truro.

Sincerely,

Hon. Perrin Beatty, P.C., O.C.
President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Bob Gloade
Chief, Millbrook First Nation

Sherry Martell
Executive Director, Truro-Colchester Chamber of Commerce

Sheri Somerville
Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Chamber of Commerce

c.c.: Hon. Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety
Bill Casey, M.P., Cumberland-Colchester

Attachment