



105B Walker St., Truro, NS, B2N 4B1

October 16, 2023

Kim Masland, Minister
Department of Public Works
2nd Floor, Johnston Building
1672 Granville Street
P.O. Box 186
Halifax, NS
B3J 2N2

Re: Traffic and Business Disruption due to lengthy Salmon River Bridge Repairs

Dear Minister Kim Masland,

We want to first thank you and your department for efforts to invest and maintain the province's roads and infrastructure which are vital to tourism, trade and the economy of the province. One such investment has seen the bridge over the Salmon River on Hwy 102 in Lower Truro receive substantive upgrades over the past two years.

The restoration has required a lane reduction which has resulted in unprecedented traffic queues on the highway. It has also spilled over into the traffic of neighbouring town streets and county roads causing great congestion as drivers attempt to avoid the delay. While traffic disruption is understandable during construction, we feel the need to communicate the impact these disruptions are having on business in an effort to learn from this experience and better prepare for the next round of improvements.

A recent survey of our members showed a strong majority experienced impacts to their business. Businesses located on Robie Street, which is immediately adjacent to the construction zone, reported significant losses on Friday and Saturdays. These days had previously been high-yield days for business, but also coincide with the highest level of traffic disruption. Local commuters have also changed their travel patterns, preferring to avoid this area of Colchester at certain times of the day or week.

The bridge undergoing repairs on Hwy 102 is one of six such structures on the corridor through Lower Truro between Exits 13 and 14A. We can expect that the remaining five structures are most likely a similar age as the one presently under construction, and will require scheduled maintenance in the near future.



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We value the investment made to our province's infrastructure and also acknowledge and accept the inconvenience that these activities create. However, we must note that there is a cost to business associated with these maintenance activities. Efforts to balance the impact of these improvements on business should be given greater consideration and value.

We would ask the department to consult with the business community in the future to advise of these pending disruptions and seek input on potential solutions to minimize impact. We would further encourage your department to work with the Department of Business to do an impact assessment on this construction activity to quantify the value of the disruption to business. Further, we would encourage the Department to consider to employing "alternate tendering practices" that place a cost/value on construction disruption by including a lane rental cost in the bid analysis. This action encourages and rewards efficiencies in construction.

As the recognized voice of business in our region, our Chamber welcomes dialog with all government departments. We would welcome an opportunity to connect with you, or your staff, to receive an update on the progress of the current work on Highway 102 on the bridge spanning Salmon River, as well as any plans to undertake further work in the near future.

Our office may be contacted by phone at 902-895-6328 or via email at ed@tcchamber.ca We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Sherry Martell".

Sherry Martell
Executive Director
Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce

CC: David Ritcey, MLA Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River

Tom Taggart, MLA Colchester North

Larry Harrison, MLA South Colchester

Dr. Stephen Ellis, MP Cumberland-Colchester

Bill Mills, Mayor of Town of Truro

Christine Blair, Mayor of the Municipality of the County of Colchester

George Lloy, Mayor of Town of Stewiacke