

15 January 2021

Hon. Daniel Allain  
MLA Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform  
Moncton East 75 Shediac Road  
Moncton, New Brunswick  
E1A 2R6

Dear Minister Allain

**Re: Call to Amend Municipal Elections Act to Allow Permanent Residents to Vote**

We are writing as representatives of the Fredericton business community to support the province-wide movement to allow New Brunswick's Permanent Residents to vote in future municipal elections in the province, including the May 2021 municipal election.

Our organizations are in agreement that:

- a. It is vitally important that New Brunswick attract and retain as many newcomers as possible, particularly permanent residents, over the next decade;
- b. Permanent residents have clearly made their voice heard that the ability to vote in municipal elections is important to them and could be a way to differentiate New Brunswick as a desirable location to immigrate as the global race to attract newcomers intensifies; and
- c. The change would address the four objections of New Brunswick's [Population Growth Action Plan](#):
  - a. Attract a skilled workforce that aligns with our labour market needs;
  - b. Recruit entrepreneurs that encourage sustainable economic growth;
  - c. Create an environment where newcomers and their families can settle and succeed; and
  - d. Engage communities to foster a more diverse and welcoming province.

Fredericton's community and stakeholder groups have intentionally and collaboratively worked closely together to attract, welcome and settle newcomers for more than a decade, culminating with the launch of the City of Fredericton's five-year immigration strategy in 2019. As you are undoubtedly aware, increasing immigration is a priority for jurisdictions across Canada and throughout the world. Newcomers are key to economic growth in our communities by creating jobs, paying taxes, injecting capital, and sharing expertise.

It is important to understand that we are truly competing at a global scale for newcomers. Making this change to the *Municipal Elections Act* to allow voting in municipal elections takes us a step beyond "talking the talk" - this is "walking the walk" and would send a clear message that New Brunswick welcomes newcomers with more than just words – we welcome with action and respect. Municipal voting rights are an opportunity for New Brunswick to be a national leader.

Many of our permanent residents are anxious to participate in all facets of life – including political life – and would deeply appreciate their adopted province being the first in Canada to show this sign of respect and welcome. There is little doubt that extending this right would further enhance New Brunswick's reputation as a highly desirable location to immigrants. We are asking all parties in the province to support this important change and let newcomers know that they truly are New Brunswickers.

Sincerely,

Krista Ross, CEO, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce  
Larry Shaw, CEO, Knowledge Park and Ignite Fredericton  
Bruce McCormack, General Manager, Downtown Fredericton Inc.  
Trina MacDonald, General Manager, Business Fredericton North

cc: Hon. Premier Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick  
cc: Hon. Arlene Dunn, Minister, Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Responsible: Opportunities  
NB; Immigration; Economic Development and Small Business  
cc: Hon. Trevor Holder, Minister, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour  
cc: Roger Melanson, Interim Leader, Liberal Party of New Brunswick  
cc: David Coon, Leader, Green Party of New Brunswick  
cc: Kris Austin, Leader, People's Alliance of New Brunswick  
cc: Fredericton Regional MLA Caucus