



## MEDIA RELEASE

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**RE: Amherst mayor welcomes federal-provincial funding for study that will examine the effect climate change and rising sea levels will have on transportation links crossing the Isthmus of Chignecto**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – A \$700,000 federal-provincial study that will examine the effects climate change and rising sea levels will have on transportation links crossing the Isthmus of Chignecto and offer solutions to protect them was warmly welcomed by Amherst Mayor David Kogon on May 14.

“This is great news,” Kogon said, moments after hearing Cumberland-Colchester MP Bill Casey announce the funding. “We’ve got to thank the provinces for making the application and the federal government for approving it.”

Kogon, Sackville Mayor John Higham and Cumberland County Warden Al Gillis have been calling on the two higher levels of government to act to protect the transportation links that connect Nova Scotia with the rest of the country from rising sea levels for several months.



**Cumberland-Colchester MP Bill Casey and Amherst Mayor David Kogon said the May 14 announcement of federal and provincial funding for a study that will examine the effects climate change and rising sea levels will have on the Isthmus of Chignecto is welcomed news. (Town of Amherst photo)**



The mayor praised Casey for working on the issue since 2009.

Casey said the study will analyze and identify exactly what effect climate change and rising sea levels will have on the isthmus, identify where the vulnerable areas are and recommend fixes.

The Nova Scotia and New Brunswick governments will be responsible for issuing the tenders for the study, he said. Casey could not say when those tenders will be issued or how long the study will take.

Transport Canada's Trade and Transportation Initiative, a \$2-billion, 11-year program aimed at making Canada's trade corridors more efficient and reliable, will contribute \$350,000 towards the study, he said. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick will provide \$175,000 each.

In making the announcement, Casey noted a 2007 study conducted by the U.N. identified only two places in North America that were at risk from global warming and rising sea levels. They were New Orleans and the Isthmus of Chignecto – the link between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Casey said the threat to the isthmus, which sees more than 480,000 rail containers per year and \$50 million in goods per day cross it, is real. He noted New Orleans was flooded in 2005 and again in 2015 and credited CN rail as the only reason why it hasn't happened here.

"Their rail line holds back the whole ocean," Casey said. "It was never made to be a dike or breakwater, but that is what is holding it back from flooding the area."

If the rail line was breached, it would be catastrophic for the Port of Halifax as well as the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland because they would be cut off from trading with the rest of the country, he said.

"There is no margin for error," he said. "If that rail line is washed out Halifax will shut down and the province of Nova Scotia will shut down because we'll be completely isolated. It will take a long time to repair, so it is really important that we get this dealt with."

Casey admitted the fix to prevent a breach "wouldn't be cheap," but said one had to be found.

He and Kogon said the fact federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau ensured the study was one of the first to receive funding via the federal corridor initiative was an indication of how important the federal government thinks the issue is.

"Minister Garneau realizes how important this trade corridor is to everything we do here in Atlantic Canada," Casey said. "He and his officials have been most co-operative. They have listened to the mayors of Amherst and Sackville, the warden of Cumberland County and the two provinces."

Kogon agreed the announcement showed the federal, the two provincial governments and three municipal units "know this problem is extremely real and extremely threatening."



Finding a solution is important to the Town of Amherst and Sackville, N.B., because studies have shown that 25 to 30 per cent of both towns would be in the flood plain if the dike was breached.

“Our point to the Nova Scotia transportation people has been whatever plan comes into play for the fix it just can’t just be about transportation. It has to protect the towns of Amherst and Sackville and I’ve been told absolutely it will with respect to that,” Kogon said.

The mayor believes the May 14 announcement is a strong indication the federal government will be willing to find the funding to implement whatever fixes the study indicates need to be done.

Kogon and Casey said the effort study shows what can be done when three levels of government work on a project.

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