



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2020091

DATE: 17 December 2020

RE: Amherst, Cumberland County mayors vent frustration over closure of Highway 104's Exit 1A

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – The mayors of Amherst and Cumberland County are asking Premier Stephen MacNeil to stop the permanent closure of Highway 104's Exit 1A, a move they say is having a serious negative impact on businesses along Highway 2/Laplanche Street and downtown Amherst.

The request was contained in a letter sent to the premier on Dec. 16. 2020.

In it the mayors say they understand the need to have a COVID-19 checkpoint at the border in order to monitor traffic entering Nova Scotia from New Brunswick, and note the initial checkpoint was conducted on the incoming weigh scales, where motorists had the opportunity to head back onto the Trans-Canada Highway or take Route 2/Laplanche Street into the town of Amherst.

However, the mayors say the province's recent decision to move the checkpoint directly onto Highway 104 from its previous location at the incoming weigh scales has left them frustrated.

They said they are frustrated because they offered the department a solution that would have seen Exit 1A reopened and the checkpoint established at the site of a former tourist bureau located on Highway 2 in Fort Lawrence.

Using that site would not only be safe, the mayors said, but would allow motorists to choose if they wish to continue on the Highway 104 or travel along Highway 2/Laplanche Street into downtown Amherst.





“We heard indirectly through our MLA that our idea has been rejected and the exit will unfortunately remain closed,” the mayors wrote the premier. “Obviously, we are unhappy with this decision but we’re also disappointed that we were not informed by the decision makers and given an explanation of the rationale for the decision.”

“We bring this to your attention, one, to express our displeasure on how this whole border checkpoint issue played out and, two, we are hopeful that it is not too late to request another look at this issue to see if there might be a change of heart ... that includes a reopening of Exit 1A into Amherst.”

A copy of the letter is attached.

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Direct enquiries to:
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Corporate Communications Officer
902-694-6265
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December 16, 2020

Honorable Stephen MacNeil
Office of the Premier
7th Floor, One Government Place
1700 Granville Street
Halifax, NS
B3J 1X5

Dear Premier MacNeil:

We are writing to you to express our disappointment in both the process which led to the establishment, and the nature of the border checkpoint at the entrance to Nova Scotia from New Brunswick. The closure of Exit 1A has had and now will continue to have a serious negative impact on businesses along Route 2/LaPlanche Street and in downtown Amherst.

We completely understand the necessity of monitoring traffic entering our province, however, how this evolved leaves us here with some issues. Firstly, there was no consultation with local government when developing the plan to ensure the impact on the local area was even considered. After the problems created with the closure of Exit 1A were brought to the attention of Environment and TIR, a turnaround at the checkpoint was developed. While not perfect, it helped.

Now, as winter approaches, the need to properly monitor commercial traffic through the weigh station has led to the permanent closure of the exit with no turnaround available. A virtual meeting which included our MLA Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, ourselves, the deputy minister of environment Scott Farmer as well as Mark Peachey from TIR allowed us to present once again the serious negative impact of the closure of Exit 1A. At that time, we presented what we believed to be a very viable and safer alternative whereby all non-commercial traffic would exit the TCH at Exit 1A, go through a checkpoint and then proceed either back to the TCH or along Route 2/ LaPlanche St into Amherst. We were told this would be given consideration.

We heard indirectly through our MLA that our idea has been rejected and the exit will unfortunately remain closed. Obviously, we are unhappy with this decision but we're also disappointed that we were not informed by the decision makers and given an explanation of the rationale for the decision.





So, we bring this to your attention, one, to express our displeasure on how this whole border checkpoint issue played out, and two, we are hopeful that it is not too late to request another look at this issue to see if there might be a change of heart leading to the development of a checkpoint that includes a re-opening of Exit 1A into Amherst.

We thank you for your time and consideration in matter. We would be happy to discuss this with you in more detail if you so desire.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "DKogon".

David Kogon, MD, Mayor
Town of Amherst

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Murray Scott".

Murray Scott, Mayor
Municipality of the County of Cumberland

