

The following statement is being issued on behalf of Ed Grant, Chair of the Eastern Regional Service Board:

“Our Board welcomes the recent announcement by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable Graham Letto, regarding a review of seasonal curbside waste collection rates in the Eastern Region.

“Since 2009, the ERSB has worked diligently to implement the Provincial Government’s Solid Waste Management Strategy. Initially, the implementation of the Strategy involved the closing of all community landfills, establishing various residential bulk drop-off centres (waste recovery facilities), and the construction of a waste transfer station near Clarenville. These were all constructed with capital investment from the Provincial Government on behalf of all residents in the region. The ERSB then subsequently contracted with various municipalities and local service districts to provide curbside waste collection services in individual communities.

“Around 2012, the ERSB was faced with a decision on whether or not to extend curbside waste collection services into unincorporated areas and what is known as “cabin country”. The Board did not make its decision lightly. There was much deliberation and consideration of the various implementation requirements of any decision. At that time the Board sought guidance on the issue from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Board was given clear direction at that time by the Provincial Government and subsequently expanded in a phased approach over the course of five years into all unincorporated areas and cabin country.

“When setting the waste fees, the Board also had much deliberation and discussion. The Board is comprised of elected officials from communities throughout the Eastern Region, representing the interests of 270,000 residents. The conclusion of the Board was that each property should pay an equal amount which equated to \$180.00 per property regardless if the property was a primary residence, secondary residence, cabin or trailer. The Board determined this to be the fairest way to charge fees to cover the cost of the regional service and the ERSB’s position was confirmed by an independent review by the Office of the Citizen’s Representative in recent years.

“Let’s be clear – the ERSB has acknowledged to Minister Letto, and all his predecessors that we are implementing their strategy, and if the Provincial Government wants changes made to the implementation process we respectfully request they give us that direction. If the Provincial Government wants a seasonal rate, we await that direction. To move forward, we will need to know specifically which areas are to be included in the new seasonal rate, as well as how much should be charged and when it should apply. We have pointed out the implications of having a reduced fee for seasonal properties in the past and our rationale for having one equal fee for all properties; however, we take our direction from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

“To that end, we would like to clarify today that ERSB will follow whatever direction the Provincial Government provides, as it is our role to implement the Provincial Solid Waste Management Strategy as determined by them.”