

FEB 08 2019

COR/2019/00445

Mr. Ed Grant, Chairperson
Eastern Regional Service Board
255 Majors Path, Suite 3
St. John's, NL A1A 0L5
E-mail: info@easternwaste.ca

Dear Mr. Grant:

I write in follow-up to a meeting with yourself and Ken Kelly on November 15, 2018 and subsequently with the Eastern Regional Service Board (ERSB) on December 5, 2018, and further to your press release of February 1, 2019 regarding waste management collection services and fees for cabin owners in unincorporated areas.

As you know, my approach to this issue upon my appointment as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment in November was to seek to find common ground between cabin owners and the ERSB on these issues in a collaborative fashion. I had pursued this through meetings with the ERSB as well as representatives from the Cabin Owners Against Trash Tax (COATT) group. During our meeting in November, I specifically requested that you and Mr. Kelly develop a plan to implement seasonal rates or to remove un-serviced roads from your collection routes, for further consideration and deliberation. This approach was intended to engage the Board in working towards a solution, rather than receiving a directive from the Provincial Government. From the follow-up meeting with the ERSB board members and your subsequent correspondence, it had become clear that the Board was unwilling to take any such action. At that time, the preferred course of action was to pursue an independent review of waste management collection services and associated fees in this region.

In your recent public statement, I took great interest in the indication that the ERSB would take direction from the Provincial Government with respect to waste collection practices in these areas. I note ERSB's position in this regard, and as the Minister responsible for the *Regional Service Boards Act, 2012* (the Act), I am taking this opportunity to clarify our government's position and provide clear direction on waste management in the region.

First, I acknowledge that the Act and its associated regulations include unincorporated areas within the regions in which Regional Service Boards may provide services. I also acknowledge that determining the specific areas to be serviced are operational policy decisions that are within the jurisdiction of the local government representatives who serve on the respective Boards. However, our government firmly believes in the principle that fees should only be charged and collected where the service can be reasonably provided, in keeping with our vision to deliver better services and outcomes through The Way Forward. I would also expect that such service delivery considerations and logistics be considered in the Board's operational decisions.

Therefore, I am hereby directing the ERSB to take the actions outlined below:

- 1) Cease the collection of waste on un-serviced roads, or where the services cannot be reasonably provided on a regular basis, as soon as possible. Based on past discussions, it is my understanding that officials with the ERSB have some idea as to the areas in question but a dialogue amongst our respective teams may assist in finalizing the approach. It is also my position that this action should not result in any increased costs to other clients of waste management services in the region for which you provide these services. I would appreciate an update on plans to discontinue this practice **by February 20, 2019.**
- 2) On a go forward basis, limit all outstanding fees and interest (i.e. or "back fees") charged to individuals on their first invoice to a two-year period.
- 3) Improve the Board's transparency, accountability, and engagement by publicly advertising the time and location of public meetings, posting minutes in a timely fashion, and ensuring that thorough consultations are completed in advance of the setting of an annual budget and fees and/or expanding service areas or other operational changes impacting the public.

In addition to the above, as you know the Province is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Provincial Waste Management Strategy, and direction on other issues pertaining to waste management may be conveyed upon its conclusion.

The ERSB plays an integral role in implementing the Provincial Waste Management Strategy and providing these services to the public in this region of the Province. The Province will continue to work with you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Graham Letto", with a large loop and a horizontal line extending to the right.

GRAHAM LETTO, MHA
District of Labrador West
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment

cc: Honourable Premier Dwight Ball
COATT