

## Sheralee Mitchell-MacEwan

---

**Subject:** FW: Municipal response to Minister Lohr re. resource development  
**Attachments:** Letter to Marco MacLeod, MLA, Feb 13, 2025.pdf

---

**Subject:** Municipal response to Minister Lohr re. resource development

Dear Mayors, Wardens and Councillors,

On Feb. 11, 2025, all Mayors and Wardens received a letter from Municipal Affairs Minister John Lohr asking you to “signal your support for greater resource development in our province by letter or press release.” I am writing to ask you to decline this invitation. Why?

The Minister is asking you to give a sight unseen, blanket endorsement for resource development. What resources? The Minister does not say. What would be the short and long-term impact on your community? What would be the impact on drinking water, air quality, roads, farmland? Would toxic waste be generated? How much, how would it be dealt with, how long would it last? What would be the costs and benefits to your community? At this time, there is no way to know the answers to these questions.

Minister Lohr is asking you to give **uninformed consent to unknown projects**.

I would like to suggest it would be in the best interests of municipalities and your citizens to hold back on this request, take a more cautious approach and maintain your ability to address resource development on the basis of specific facts.

- Municipal voices provide important balance in decision making. Giving blanket support for unknown or previously rejected resource development, as Minister Lohr is requesting, weakens that independent voice.
- Municipalities are best able to protect citizens by retaining your ability and leverage to give informed opinion on individual projects when full details are known.
- There is no need to act in haste. Better to consider both immediate and long-term consequences. There is more than one approach that Nova Scotia can take to address present and coming challenges.

Municipalities have played a valuable role as leaders in protecting the health and safety of their citizens and the livability of their communities. Municipalities took the lead in adopting smoke-free public spaces and limiting cosmetic pesticide use, based on scientific evidence. The UNSM also passed a resolution (2013) calling for an extended moratorium on fracking pending a comprehensive review.

When the Independent Review panel made its report in 2014, they recommended that “Hydraulic fracturing for the purpose of unconventional gas and oil development should not proceed at the present time in Nova Scotia.” They also outlined several conditions that should be met before considering fracking, including independent scientific research and a test of community permission to proceed. These conditions have not been met.

The science of the past 10 years confirms that health and environmental risks relating to fracking are far from being resolved. In many cases those risks are even greater than we knew 10 years ago. Regulations have not, and in many cases cannot, solve these problems. (See attached letter for additional information.)

Meaningful, mature, and evidence-based discussions were the foundation for the present moratoriums on hydraulic fracturing in shale and uranium. **Such discussion, including thorough evidence-based evaluation of short and longer term risks and benefits should come first, before any decision to reverse a ban or moratorium.**

The Independent Review Panel on Fracking also stated, “We strongly suggest that whatever time is needed for each of these steps that it should be taken, without any sense of deadline-setting or impatience by any actor.”

That advice, coming from non-partisan experts, might be helpful for municipalities to consider in deciding how to respond to the Minister.

We all want what is best for Nova Scotia. We all want a truly sustainable province on a sustainable planet. In that spirit, I hope municipalities will keep an independent and thoughtful approach to resource development, as well as other issues, in the interests of their citizens.

Sincerely,

Barb Harris

River John

Author: [\*Out of Control: Nova Scotia's Experience with Fracking for Shale Gas\* \(2013\)](#)

Former Steering Committee member, Nova Scotia Fracking Resource and Action Coalition (NOFRAC)

Attached: Background Information on Fracking in Letter to my MLA, 13 Feb/ 2025

cc: CAOs

Federation of NS Municipalities