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March 3, 2026

Premier Tim Houston  
PO Box 726  
Halifax, NS B3J 2T3

Dear Premier Houston,

We are writing regarding the recent budget announcement by the Government of Nova Scotia and the deeply concerning decision to close several museums and visitor information centres across the province, including the Ross-Thomson House & Store Museum in Shelburne and the Barrington Woolen Mill Museum in Barrington, both located in Shelburne County.

We must respectfully but unequivocally urge you to immediately reconsider these closures.

These sites are not discretionary amenities; they are foundational to the cultural, educational, and economic fabric of our rural communities. They safeguard and interpret the stories of our settlers, industries, resilience, and identity. Once these institutions are shuttered, collections dispersed, and expertise lost, the damage is not temporary — it is lasting. Heritage infrastructure cannot simply be restored at a later date without significant cost, if it can be restored at all.

The economic implications alone warrant urgent reassessment. Nova Scotia actively promotes itself as a destination defined by culture, heritage, and authentic local experience. Visitors come not only for scenery, but to engage directly with our history by touring restored homes, witnessing historic mills in operation, and learning from knowledgeable interpreters. Eliminating these sites weakens the very tourism ecosystem the province relies upon. The consequences will extend well beyond museum walls, impacting restaurants, retailers, accommodations, tour operators, and seasonal workers. Each closure represents a measurable loss of revenue and economic opportunity for already vulnerable rural communities.

There is also an immediate human cost. These decisions mean lost employment for full-time and seasonal staff, students, artisans, and local contractors. In rural Nova Scotia, every job matters. Short-term fiscal restraint that results in long-term economic contraction and diminished community vitality is not a sustainable solution.

Public response has been swift and deeply concerned. Residents have voiced heartbreak and frustration, emphasizing that once heritage institutions are dismantled, rebuilding them is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible. These sites play a critical role in educating young people, fostering civic pride, and strengthening local identity. Their value cannot be measured solely in annual operating budgets.

At a time when government speaks of strengthening rural communities, supporting tourism, and preserving Nova Scotia's cultural identity, these closures send a contradictory and troubling message. Fiscal responsibility is essential; however, it must be balanced with strategic foresight. The savings realized today risk being eclipsed many times over by lost tourism revenue, weakened local economies, and irreversible cultural loss.

Our heritage is not expendable. It is one of Nova Scotia's most enduring and valuable assets. Once lost, it cannot be recreated.

We respectfully request that you demonstrate decisive leadership by revisiting this decision without delay and engaging directly with affected communities to identify viable alternatives that protect both fiscal stability and our shared history.


We are aware of countless social media posts, as well as surveys and petitions that are currently circulating in our communities requesting retraction of these decisions. Given the urgency and far-reaching consequences of this matter, we look forward to your timely response.

It is our hope and expectation that our MLA will confirm his support for our position on this matter. Thank you for your serious consideration.

Warden Penny Smith  
Municipality of Shelburne



Mayor Stan Jacklin  
Town of Shelburne



Mayor Clay Kenney  
Town of Clark's Harbour



Mayor Derek Amalfa  
Town of Lockeport



CC: Honourable Dave Ritcey, Minister of Communities, Cultures, Tourism and Heritage  
Honourable Nolan Young, MLA – Shelburne  
Ross-Thomson House & Store Museum  
Barrington Woolen Mill Museum