

April 14, 2026

Dear Members of the Amalgamation Steering Committee,

Thank you for your response dated April 9, 2026.

1. Governance vs. Research Projects Your response describes the Committee's work as an "information-gathering and exploratory phase" to determine whether amalgamation is a "viable option." Respectfully, initiating an exploration of a major structural overhaul without first identifying a specific, concrete problem it is intended to solve is not a governance strategy - it is a research exercise.

Elected councils are mandated to address defined issues and steward public resources responsibly. Launching an open-ended investigation into merging three municipal units before stating what, precisely, is "broken" suggests a solution in search of a problem. Residents expect their tax dollars to address known challenges, not to underwrite exploratory studies into hypothetical structural changes.

2. Evasive Language and Shared Pressures Your response cites "rising service delivery costs" and "aging infrastructure" as "shared pressures" prompting this exploration. These pressures are universal across Canadian municipalities and do not, on their own, constitute a rationale for amalgamation.

Using broad terms such as "coordinated approach" and "long-term sustainability" avoids answering the central question: *What specific, documented problem exists that amalgamation can solve?* Relying on generic municipal challenges to justify this process is evasive and does not provide the clear, unambiguous answers residents have repeatedly requested.

3. Omission of Governance and Agenda Questions I note that my previous letter included four specific questions regarding the April 1 agenda item on the Antigonish consolidation. Specifically, I asked who introduced the item and what the process is for the public to submit items for consideration.

The Committee's response completely ignored these questions. Transparency is not merely about sharing finished reports; it is about the public's right to understand how decisions are made and how the agenda is set. By failing to clarify the process for public input on the committee's agenda, you reinforce the perception of a "democratic deficit" similar to the one that stalled the process in Antigonish.

4. Performance vs. Reality in the FAQ I would like to draw your attention to Question 17 of the Committee's own FAQ, which states the importance of a "clear and honest FAQ".

There is a stark contradiction between this stated value and the Committee's actions. The FAQ currently posted on your website did not originate from resident inquiries; it appears to be a list of internally generated questions. Posting a "FAQ" that does not reflect actual frequently asked questions from the public is the opposite of an honest dialogue. It is a curated messaging tool designed to project the appearance of engagement while actually bypassing the genuine concerns raised by the community.

5. "Kicking the Can" and Public Exclusion The Committee's recurring stance is that residents must wait until "later in the process" for substantive data and answers. This "kicking the can down the road" approach is a fundamental barrier to meaningful engagement. By withholding information until the "exploratory phase" is complete, you are effectively shutting out public input during the exact window where the community's values and concerns should be shaping the project's direction. True engagement is not a post-script to a finished study; it requires involving the public at the earliest stages, before momentum makes the outcome a *fait accompli*.

6. Public Disclosure and the "Kill Switch" Finally, while the response mentions that amalgamation would not proceed if there is "insufficient support," it fails to define what that means. Without a clear, quantitative metric for "support" (such as a plebiscite or a specific polling threshold), this "kill switch" remains entirely at the discretion of the Committee, offering the public no real assurance that their voices carry weight.

Furthermore, I reiterate my request for the Committee to publish an unedited, anonymized list of the questions submitted by the public. Referring to your own internal FAQ as an improvement does not address the concern that public inquiries are being filtered or curated before they reach the broader community.

I look forward to a response that addresses these specific governance concerns directly, rather than through further "exploratory" generalities.

Regards,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.