



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

364 York Street, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB
E3B 3P7



16 December 2020

Hon. Daniel Allain
MLA Moncton East, Minister of Local Government and Local Governance Reform
Moncton East 75 Shediac road
Moncton, New Brunswick
E1A 2R6

Dear Minister Allain

Re: Call to Amend Municipal Elections Act to Allow Permanent Residents to Vote

I am writing on behalf of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce to support the Bill introduced by MLA Keith Chiasson on 15 December 2020 that would allow New Brunswick's Permanent Residents to vote in future municipal elections in the province including the May 2021 municipal election. Bill 28 proposes to add the words "or a Permanent Resident of Canada" to the *Municipal Elections Act* - just six words – but six words that carry tremendous meaning for our newcomers and a path to our collective future.

Our organization has worked closely with our newcomer community for more than a decade through programming and advocacy. Most recently, we established an Immigration Advocacy Committee, launched in 2019 as part of the City of Fredericton's five-year immigration strategy - and this is a request that I have heard raised many times by our newest New Brunswickers who are represented on this committee and within our membership.

Many of our permanent residents are anxious to participate in all facets of life – including political life – and would deeply appreciate their adopted province being the first in Canada to show this sign of respect and welcome. It is also important to note that they add tremendous value to our communities by creating jobs, paying taxes and enhancing cultural life. I have no doubt that extending this right would further enhance New Brunswick's reputation as a highly desirable location to immigrants.

This is an opportunity for New Brunswick to be a national leader while also enhancing our efforts to face perhaps our greatest collective challenge – population growth.



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As you are aware, increasing immigration is a priority for jurisdictions across Canada and throughout the world. We are truly competing at a global scale for newcomers. Making this change to the *Municipal Elections Act* to allow voting in municipal elections takes us a step beyond “talking the talk” - this is “walking the walk” and would send a clear message that New Brunswick welcomes newcomers with more than just words – we welcome with action and respect.

We are asking all parties in the province to support this important change and let newcomers know that they truly are New Brunswickers.

Sincerely,

Krista Ross, CEO, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

cc: Hon. Premier Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick

cc: Hon. Arlene Dunn, Minister, Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Responsible: Opportunities
NB; Immigration; Economic Development and Small Business

cc: Hon. Trevor Holder, Minister, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

cc: Roger Melanson, Interim Leader, Liberal Party of New Brunswick

cc: Keith Chiasson, MLA, Tracadie-Sheila

cc: David Coon, Leader, Green Party of New Brunswick

cc: Kris Austin, Leader, People's Alliance of New Brunswick

cc: Fredericton Regional MLA Caucus

cc: Kim Poffenroth, Chief Electoral Officer, Elections NB