

This feedback was submitted by e-mail from Gary MacNeil, Dartmouth (May 27/10) and Michael Rosson, Halifax (June 1/10)

The Honourable Peter Kelly, Mayor of Halifax Regional Municipality And Members of HRM City Council

CC.
Honourable Darrel Dexter,
Premier of Nova Scotia

Dear Mayor Kelly and Members of City Council,

As you will soon begin discussions about the size of HRM's city council, I would like to share my opinion with you as a resident of HRM and/or a constituent in your district.

I'm in support of a smaller council that can govern the municipality more efficiently and effectively. By 'efficiently', I'm referring to a council size that facilitates quick decision making while reducing the costs of arriving at those decisions. By 'effectively', I'm referring to the need for an adequate governance structure that recognizes the difference between rural and urban priorities and can equitably serve both.

I would like to see council discuss the recommendation for an alternate council size that can better serve the needs of HRM and its residents. In this discussion, I -as a constituent- request that you speak on my behalf and ask your fellow members of council to provide the public with the following:

- A clear explanation of how the recommended member size of 20 will help council make better decisions in a more timely and cost-effective fashion than the current council size of 23 councilors.
- A clear explanation of how the recommended size adjustment will improve the way council handles urban priorities when they conflict with rural priorities, or vice-versa.

I believe that a decision on a new size for council should not proceed if it does not address the points above. Therefore, I urge you to seek clarity on the rationale behind the current recommendation of reducing council size by 3 members. If you are not satisfied that the recommendation will result in a more effective and efficient council (as described in this letter), then I urge you to send the issue back to committee for a more thorough examination.

After all, if the recommended reduction does not result in a clear improvement to the status quo, then why are we doing it?

Yours sincerely,