

THE TOWN OF STEPHENVILLE CROSSING

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July 16, 2026

ATIPPA Statutory Review Committee
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Re: Municipal concerns regarding the impact and cost of ATIPP requests

Dear Committee Member,

On behalf of Council, I am writing to express our concerns with the current operation of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 as it applies to municipalities. Council fully supports openness, accountability, and the public's right to access information. We also understand the importance of protecting personal privacy. However, the current process can place a significant administrative and financial burden on small municipalities with limited staff, limited budgets, and many competing responsibilities.

Municipal staff are often required to spend considerable time searching, reviewing, organizing, and redacting records in order to respond properly to ATIPP requests. This work takes staff away from regular municipal operations and services. In a small office, even one complex request can disrupt daily work, delay other priorities, and create additional pressure on employees who are already managing multiple duties.

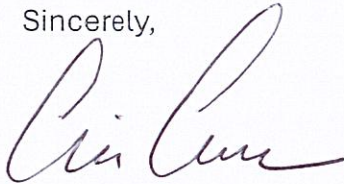
Council is particularly concerned that the cost of responding to requests is often borne by the municipality and, ultimately, by local taxpayers. While access to information is an important public right, there should also be a fair and practical mechanism to recover reasonable costs where requests are broad, repetitive, unusually complex, or require extensive staff time. Without proper cost recovery, municipalities may be left absorbing expenses that are difficult to justify within already limited municipal budgets.

Council respectfully asks the Committee to consider amendments or recommendations that would better recognize the realities of small municipalities. These could include clearer authority to recover reasonable costs, stronger tools to manage overly broad or repetitive requests, improved guidance for municipal staff, standardized templates, and additional training and support from the province.

We believe these changes would help maintain the public's right of access while ensuring the process remains fair, workable, and sustainable for municipalities. Council is not opposed to transparency; rather, Council is asking that the legislation and related procedures balance transparency with the practical costs and staffing realities faced by local governments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the review. Council appreciates the Committee's consideration of these concerns and would welcome any opportunity to discuss the municipal impact of ATIPP further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Lucas', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lisa Lucas

Mayor

On behalf of Council

Town of Stephenville Crossing