

December 14, 2009

Mayor Peter Kelly
Halifax Regional Municipality
Office of the Mayor
1841 Argyle Street, P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3A5

Dear Mayor Kelly:

We are writing to express our concern about the impact of potential development of land adjacent to the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes designated Wilderness Area. The addition of this Wilderness Area to the Protected Areas Network by the provincial government earlier this year was a significant milestone.

According to the 2006 HRM Municipal Planning Strategy document, the area HRM is currently considering for development was specifically identified three years ago as land HRM should obtain and develop into a regional park. The lack of progress in securing any land related to this site is discouraging and calls into question HRM's commitment to its own policies and parkland protection measures.

Recent media articles regarding this issue have outlined the importance of a holistic approach to land protection. From a recreational and tourism perspective, the area has significant value and is deserving of protection by HRM.

TIANS urges HRM to consider alternative methods of acquisition, as suggested in the HRM 2006 Planning Strategy. These range from provincial and municipal partnerships, land trades and conservation easements.

In closing, we urge HRM to take action and accelerate efforts in acquiring this land. The value of having a wilderness area so close to our urban centre holds tremendous recreational and tourism potential and is a significant asset for residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

Darlene Grant Fiander
TIANS President

cc: HRM Regional Councillors
The Honourable John MacDonell, Department of Natural Resources
The Honourable Percy Paris, Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage
TIANS Board



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