



**Environment  
Office of the Minister**

PO Box 442, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2P8 • [www.novascotia.ca/nse](http://www.novascotia.ca/nse)

SEP 07 2018

Our File number:  
10700-40-53568

Stella Bowles  
[earlgrey@eastlink.ca](mailto:earlgrey@eastlink.ca)

Dear Stella Bowles,

Thank you for your letter of August 20, 2018. I greatly appreciate your continued advocacy for clean waterways in Nova Scotia and your dedication to our environment. I also offer my congratulations on your Rising Youth Grant and the publishing of your book, which I look forward to reading.

It's our job at Nova Scotia Environment to enforce the *Environment Act* and the *On-site Sewage Disposal Systems Regulations*. That's a job we take very seriously and that we carry out to the best of our ability.

One of the challenges with this work is barriers that landowners may have in maintaining or installing properly functioning systems. Supporting municipalities to develop wastewater management district bylaws is one way we're able to help overcome this challenge. You were instrumental in initiating this innovative approach in LaHave, and I thank you for your role in that. The Municipality of Richmond County has also shown leadership with this model. We hope to work with other municipalities that are interested in implementing this model to protect water for the benefit of the environment and their community's health and prosperity.

Another challenge is our legal ability to take action. It's important to understand that, without evidence of inadequate sewage treatment, we do not have any legal basis to enter a private property to inspect or take necessary enforcement action. Sometimes we have our own evidence of straight pipes. Often, however, we rely on Nova Scotians to report them. Therefore, raising awareness that straight pipes are illegal and negatively affect water quality is key to resolving this issue. The work you are doing to raise awareness helps us do our job and I thank you for it.

I appreciate your questions about requiring legal septic system installation on properties at the point of sale. We are not currently considering regulation changes to require this, but there is work to do to ensure Nova Scotians are fully aware of their responsibilities as home-owners. We encourage Nova Scotians to replace straight pipes, do recommended well water testing, ensure their oil tanks are in good condition, and address other things that can have adverse effects on the environment and human health.


.../2

Stella Bowles

Page 2

I believe there are other options for achieving our common goal to protect the environment and human health that my team would like to discuss with you. I invite you to contact Elizabeth Kennedy, Director of Industrial Management, Water and Wastewater, to meet and discuss the tools we currently have available to enforce our requirements, and opportunities to improve this program. She can be reached at [elizabeth.kennedy@novascotia.ca](mailto:elizabeth.kennedy@novascotia.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Miller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Margaret Miller, MLA  
Minister of Environment

c: Hon. Stephen McNeil, Premier  
Elizabeth Kennedy, NSE