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PUBLISHERS LETTER

Dear Mr. Premier and Fellow Nova Scotians,

Over the past weekend, the provincial government shared a range of important messages with Nova Scotians. However, once again, local community newspapers were excluded from this outreach.

This decision is both concerning and disappointing.

Over the past several years, your government has consistently chosen to direct its marketing efforts to media outlets – both online and in-print – that are neither owned by Nova Scotians nor, in many cases, by Canadians. This approach is not only perplexing, but it also stands in direct contradiction to the values your government has publicly affirmed: supporting Canadian products and services and investing in local economies.

While reliance on external providers may be understandable in sectors where no local alternatives exist, that is not the case with media. Nova Scotia is home to a robust and well-established community newspaper network that reaches tens of thousands of readers across the province each week. These are the very citizens your government must engage with – and they continue to rely on us for trusted, community-based information.

Consider your own riding: *The Advocate*, the local community newspaper, receives thousands of online visits each day and delivers a paid print edition to thousands of readers each week. If the goal is truly to reach your constituents, this should be regarded as a primary channel of communication.

From *The Strait Area Reporter* to *The Victoria Reporter* to *The Advocate*, community newspapers play a vital role in sharing government updates, program details, and public announcements. Without these local outlets, many of these messages simply do not reach Nova Scotians – particularly in rural communities, where no comparable alternatives exist.

We are not public relations agencies; we are independent news organizations. Our responsibility is to inform our communities – even when that means publishing stories you may prefer were left untold. To exclude community newspapers from your media strategy on the basis of this impartiality would be not only shortsighted, but deeply concerning.

When the federal government took a principled stand against Meta, ceasing advertising on its platforms due to the harm inflicted on Canadian journalism, Nova Scotia chose a different path. The province continued to invest heavily with that American company. Meanwhile, other provinces committed to directing a significant portion of their media budgets locally – in some cases as much as 25 per cent. Nova Scotia, however, failed to adopt a similar approach.

This is more than a question of media strategy - it is both an economic and an ethical issue. Community newspapers are not faceless corporations; we are local journalists, designers, office staff, delivery drivers, and the many small businesses that depend on us.

Supporting community newspapers means supporting real Nova Scotian jobs, families, and communities.

We urge you, premier, to reconsider your approach. Community newspapers remain an affordable, effective, and trusted way to reach Nova Scotians where they live, work, and read. We are your neighbours, your constituents, and your voice on the ground.

It is time for the province to align its actions with its words: support local and invest in the communities that have always been here to support you – and one another.

Sincerely,

Nicole Fawcett

Publisher

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