

## Appendix A

Letter to Minister Jennex,  
Municipal Relations

Honourable Ramona Jennex  
Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations  
14th Floor North  
Maritime Centre  
1505 Barrington Street  
P.O. Box 216  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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28 October 2009

Dear Minister Jennex:

It was good to hear you speak on behalf of the government in support of local food and agriculture at the Nova Scotia Food Summit on October 18, 2009. As you know, a proposal for a massive gypsum mine, which would remove the heart of our agricultural watershed, is currently under review by your government. West Hants has zoned the entire area for agricultural priority since 1991. We believe this proposal is contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Agricultural Land and sections 196-197 of the Municipal Government Act.

The Avon Peninsula in West Hants is a farming community with some of the best farmland in the province, with a mixture of local dairy, beef, sheep, and organic fruit and vegetable businesses. Our microclimate is a close second to the Grand Pre area for grape production, and our wine industry is growing with a well-established vineyard, a second vineyard, and a new winery. This summer, with the economic downturn, these local businesses provided considerably more employment than the existing mine operation on the eastern end of our peninsula. According to the proponent's recent Focus Report, there is enough gypsum at the existing operation to last another 10 years, and no new employment is expected from the proposed project. It also states that were the project to proceed it would eliminate most of our watershed's headwater streams and wetlands.

The proponent, CGC Inc., proposes a 347-hectare extension to the Miller's Creek gypsum mine in the centre of the Avon Peninsula. The Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Agricultural Land in Schedule "B" of the Municipal Government Act states that "planning documents must identify agricultural lands within the planning area" and "planning documents must address the protection of agricultural land" and give "**priority to uses such as agricultural, agricultural related and uses which do not eliminate the possibility of using the land for agricultural purposes in the future.**" The Land Use Bylaw of the Municipality of West Hants designates the site of the Miller's Creek Mine Extension Project as "Agricultural Priority 2", which does not include mining as a permitted use. Section 196 of the Act states that "**the activities of the Province shall be reasonably consistent with a statement of provincial interest,**" and Section 197 states "a department of the Province,

before carrying out or authorizing any development in a municipality, shall consider the planning documents of the municipality”.

Minister Jennex, government approval of this mining proposal would be wholly inconsistent with these provisions in the Act. In view of this consideration alone, we believe your government should reject this proposal. Our community and our farmers have been struggling for four years to protect our watershed. It is scandalous that the previous government allowed this mining proposal to get as far as it has. At the very least, the impact on our agricultural land, on our farmers and our farming community should be part of the formal review process, i.e., included in the terms of reference for a full Environmental Assessment Report under the Environment Act.

We thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and look forward to seeing you Tuesday, November 3 at 10:30 am.

Sincerely,

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