September 15, 2020

The Honourable Derrick Bragg  
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Minister Responsible for the Public Procurement Agency

Dear Minister Bragg:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and Minister Responsible for the Public Procurement Agency. As you advance activities on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I am confident that you will meet the transportation, public works and infrastructure needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Your department provides critical services that allow for people to safely traverse our province, while building infrastructure that will meet the needs of our people for generations.

This year has been marked by economic and social turmoil not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but around the world. But with great challenges come great opportunities. Through focused efforts I know that we will overcome these challenges and emerge as a stronger, more caring, more compassionate, and more diverse province. Future generations will judge us not based on the size of the challenges we faced but on how we have solidified the financial, social, and economic foundation of our province. Our Government has a responsibility to respond swiftly, decisively, and effectively. The time for action is now.

The economic status quo is no longer acceptable. We need to move away from the well-worn economic cycles of boom and bust and foster an economy that is diversified and sustainable. We need to reinvigorate our economy to harness the great potential that lies in our technology sector, our world-class arts sector, and every other sector from oil and gas to tourism, from fisheries and aquaculture to forestry and agrifoods. I know that the people of our province work hard in these and other sectors and the Government must work equally as hard for the people.

Our work to create a robust, stable economy will provide a firm foundation to ensure the delivery of vital social and other services to residents of the province. Our Government must always be mindful of the needs of the most vulnerable in our society and must ensure that quality social services are available and accessible to Newfoundlanders and
Labradorians. To ensure our Government is meeting this need, a Gender-Based Plus Analysis must be integrated into all policies and proposals.

The business of government must also advance from the status quo. We need to reimagine how government works so that it works for the people. This change is long overdue and it will be transformational.

In particular, I am tasking you to work with your colleagues in Cabinet, with all members of the House of Assembly, and with your departmental officials to advance the following priorities.

You will lead our Government’s transportation policy, featuring our approach to multi-year roads planning, including issuing tenders early in the year for road work. Ensure that widening and hard-surfacing of the Trans Labrador Highway continues, and upon completion, partner with the Government of Canada to explore options and feasibility of a road connecting the north coast of Labrador, in collaboration with the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs. Safety must remain a priority on our highways. I encourage you to increase the use of modern technology, such as highway cameras, at well-travelled routes like the Argentia access road and Heart's Content barrens to ensure the travelling public can make informed decisions before driving. Continue to collaborate with the Government of Canada toward exploring a fixed link between Labrador and the Island of Newfoundland.

Continue to implement the five-year infrastructure plan that outlines commitments to education, health care, justice, roads, and municipal infrastructure. In collaboration with the Minister of Health and Community Services, partner with the private sector to design, build, finance, and maintain new health care facilities in an effort to increase access to critical health care services while maximizing value for taxpayers.

In collaboration with the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, move towards building a new correctional facility to replace Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's. I ask that you invest in new infrastructure, provide better access to clean drinking water, protect our environment, and advance regional collaboration through our provincial capital works programs. We will work with the Government of Canada and communities across Newfoundland and Labrador to advance projects under the Investing in Canada Plan and the federal Gas Tax Fund, and continue to improve flexibility under these programs, in collaboration with the Government of Canada.

You will oversee the continued implementation of our five-year marine infrastructure plan to provide better services at ferry ports and increase capacity, improve reliability, and invite economic opportunities through the new ferry service to the Strait of Belle Isle and the north coast of Labrador.

As Minister Responsible for the Public Procurement Agency, you will advance the implementation of the new Public Procurement Act to modernize the procurement framework applicable to public bodies and supporting alternative approaches to procurement where they are consistent with ensuring best value, transparency, and accountability.
I trust that you will be collaborative, honest, respectful, and transparent in your role as a minister. I also expect that you will hold yourself to the highest standards of ethical conduct and act at all times with integrity. Individually and collectively, we have a responsibility to seek out the best advice and the best ideas and to implement actions only in the interests of the people of our great province. We must be guided by evidence and research and take into account diverse perspectives as we make our decisions.

We cannot change our past but we can shape our future. It is our job to build the bright future that our province and its people deserve.

Yours truly,

DR. ANDREW FUREY
Premier