

To our valued Council Membership,

As you may know, Thursday was Budget Day for the Nova Scotia government. As part of the budget, cuts were announced across government and this included a number of government employee layoffs. Included in this were two administrative positions at the Antigonish office of Gaelic Affairs. Catriona Parsons and Pauline MacDonald were given notice Thursday that their positions were eliminated. A government directive, this comes as a complete surprise and shock to all.

The Gaelic Council has been informed by the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage that these layoffs were in part of the government's initiative to hold the line on spending and achieve administrative efficiencies. Gaelic Affairs will now utilize shared administrative services within the department. Gaelic Affairs remains committed to the current budgeted amount of \$83,000 in Gaelic Programming through the Gaelic Language in Community (GLIC) program, the Bun is Bàrr mentorship program and the annual Gaelic Bursary (Scotland). The Department of Communities Culture and Heritage continues to support the Gaelic community with over \$1,000,000 invested through other departmental funding such as support for Highland Village Museum, the Gaelic College and organizational Funding for other Gaelic related organizations.

The Gaelic Council will continue to offer its assistance to the staff of Gaelic Affairs in whatever capacity it can and encourages Gaelic Community members where and when possible to reach out to Pauline and Catriona to extend appreciation for their many contributions to Gaelic development in the province while employed at Gaelic Affairs. It is also important to reach out to existing Gaelic Affairs' staff as well to demonstrate support and

solidarity. It is the Council's view that as Gaels, it is critical to support each other during these challenging times.

The Council will support and work with Gaelic Affairs as it transitions through this challenging period. In this process, the Council requests your needed support as well as we collectively go forward, advancing Gaelic language and cultural development in the province.