



October 7, 2013

Via email: Halifax@fairvote.ca

Steve Caines
Secretary,
Fair Vote Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Caines,

Thank you very much for your questionnaire regarding voting system reform. We are pleased to have this opportunity to respond to your questions.

Jamie Baillie has proposed a series of reforms to our system in the Modernization of Government Act he has introduced in the House of Assembly, and by committing to take the setting of pay and benefits for MLAs out of their hands and leaving such decisions to a panel of citizens.

Yes, the under-representation of women and minorities needs to be rectified. We have encouraged a great many highly-qualified Nova Scotians who are women or come from minority backgrounds. Several women have taken up the challenge, and we were very pleased to have Irvine Carvery agree to run for us. That said, there is a great deal to be done. I can assure you that the work of improving the reflectiveness of our team for the next election begins right away.

It is clear that that the issue of how our Legislature is elected will be increasingly topical as we seek ways to improve engagement and keep our democracy legitimate.

Your proposals for enhanced disclosure are of interest; we would have to take some time to figure out how we could make that work. Our Leader places a high value on transparency.



The recommendations of the Electoral Boundaries Commission do need to be addressed. The concept of “protected seats” was gutted by the current government. An important court challenge looms. The concept of an extra seat for Aboriginal persons has been on the books but never realized.

Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Rob McCleave

Chief of Staff to Jamie Baillie