

Date:

Mr. Glenn van Dijken
MLA for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock
Box 4250
5106 50 Street
Barrhead, AB T7N 1A3
Athabasca.Barrhead.Westlock@assembly.ab.ca

Dear Mr. Glenn van Dijken

RE: County of St. Paul Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection Systems Upgrades and Funding Requirements

I am a resident of your constituency in the hamlet of Mallaig in the County of St. Paul.

I am writing to you to express my concerns and request your attention to the water distribution and wastewater collection systems in Mallaig. These systems have reached the end of their useful lifecycle, causing various issues such as pipe main breaks which impact the service reliability.

The most effective and sustainable way for the County of St. Paul to provide reliable and clean water in Mallaig is to replace the water distribution and wastewater collection systems, as the older these systems get the more they are prone to similar or worse breaks that will be costlier to fix. As recent as 2023, the County spent more than \$30,000 to fix a water main break in Mallaig. The year before that, the County spent roughly \$15,000 to diagnose and repair a lift station issue.

The County of St. Paul Council commissioned a *Feasibility and Implementation Study* in 2021 to estimate the cost of replacing the water distribution and wastewater collection systems in the affected hamlets of Ashmont, Mallaig, and Lottie Lake, with a phasing and implementation strategy that outlines financial and investment requirements for the County. The total cost of this project was estimated at \$23 million based on 2021 prices.

If this project was entirely funded by the County of St Paul, it would cause a serious financial burden on me as a resident and taxpayer in Mallaig. Starting in 2024, the County is implementing a Capital Replacement Contribution charge to residents' utility bills, reflected in Bylaw 2023-20, for a project reserve. While a \$25/month charge seems small, this is in addition to the rising monthly costs of gas, power, insurance, and groceries affecting the current cost of

living. These incremental increases are adding up and I worry that, without provincial support, a small utility increase will not be enough to offset a \$23 million bill.

The projected phasing and implementation cost highlights the extent of the project and the urgent need for provincial support to fund this project. Without government funding, the County will not be able to implement this project and will face many difficulties in providing reliable water and wastewater services sustainably to us, the residents of Mallaig, today and in the future.

As your constituent, I ask you to support the County of St. Paul's efforts in any way you can to urge the Government of Alberta to reinstate funding programs for water distribution and wastewater collection systems that will make this project feasible.

Thank you for your time and support with this matter. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

Email: