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## **List of Acronyms**

AFMNB: Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick

DELG: Department of Environment and Local Government

EOC: Emergency Operations Centre

ESS: Emergency Social Services

ICS: Incident Command System

LSDs: Local Service Districts

NB EMO: New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization

REMCs: Regional Emergency Management Coordinators

REOC: Regional Emergency Operations Centre

## Summary of Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick specify the powers and responsibilities of municipalities in emergency situations, including the implementation of emergency plans, in the *Emergency Measures Act*.
2. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick amend the *Emergency Measures Act* to specify that municipalities shall appoint a deputy director for their emergency measures organization and that the Government of New Brunswick prescribe the deputy director's duties, which include filling in for the director if need be.
3. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick clarify the existing regulatory and administrative ambiguity and indicate exactly what the EMO's and the REMCs' roles and responsibilities are with respect to the municipalities and LSDs in terms of preparedness and emergency response.
4. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick create the conditions (eliminate obstacles, provide incentives) needed for full municipalization in New Brunswick.
5. It is recommended that a bipartite committee consisting of representatives of municipal associations and the provincial government (DELG, Public Safety) be established to examine the feasibility of extending municipal responsibility for emergency measures to neighbouring LSDs, to assess costs, and to determine tax rates required for equitable sharing of costs.
6. It is recommended that the *Emergency Measures Act* be amended to enable multiple municipalities, and in some cases LSDs, to prepare a joint emergency measures plan and to respond collectively in an emergency situation.
7. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick comply with the *Official Languages Act* and that it provide equivalent emergency measures management training in both official languages.
8. It is recommended that the EMO be given clear direction by the Department of Public Safety to decentralize the delivery of emergency measures management training so that it can be provided in every region of the province.
9. It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety assess the resources allocated to the EMO to discharge its mandate and that it ensure that equivalent training in French is provided, in accordance with the principles of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick*.

- 10. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick make public the work done by the Provincial Roundtable on Emergency Management and Resiliency and that it assess it to determine if the Roundtable should be re-established so it can continue its deliberations.**
- 11. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick give the Department of Social Development the resources it needs to adequately fulfil its mandate to provide emergency social services, as stipulated in the Department's Policy Manual.**
- 12. It is recommended that the Department of Social Development inform the municipalities about the kinds of assistance that it must and can provide in an emergency situation and that it clarify the circumstances and conditions for receiving such assistance.**
- 13. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick revise the memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Red Cross Society and the Department of Social Development's mandate in emergency situations to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities.**
- 14. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick amend the *Emergency Measures Act* to specify that the Department of Social Development and any third parties concerned have a duty to work with the municipalities on developing their emergency measures plans.**
- 15. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick ensure compliance with section 30 of New Brunswick's *Official Languages Act* during the execution of the memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Red Cross Society and that it ensure that the latter is able to provide its services in both official languages.**
- 16. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick give the Department of Social Development responsibility for providing emergency shelters with the human resources required when emergency situations last for more than two days so that municipalities can anticipate and include these resources in their emergency measures plans.**
- 17. It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety increase from 6 to 12 the number of regional emergency management coordinators and that the territory assigned to each coordinator cover a single Regional Service Commission.**
- 18. It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick update its Regional Emergency Response Plan and its Provincial Emergency Response Plan**

**to ensure that municipal EOCs remain involved in emergency decision-making structures, regardless of the size of the area affected or the scope of the disaster.**

- 19. It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety ensure that implementation of the ICS be harmonized with government emergency measures structures in the province, including municipal EOCs, and with training provided by the EMO.**
- 20. It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety give the EMO responsibility for acting as coordinator to identify needs and collect and redistribute assistance and donations during major emergencies affecting more than one municipality or LSD.**
- 21. It is recommended that municipalities include coordination of material assistance in their emergency response plans and that a member of the EOC be given this responsibility.**
- 22. It is recommended that existing disaster assistance programs be improved and overhauled to respond more quickly and efficiently, thus improving and facilitating recovery for municipalities and residents following an emergency.**

## **Introduction**

An ice storm struck New Brunswick in late January 2017, affecting mainly the Acadian Peninsula, the Kent region, and the southeastern part of the province. The storm caused ice to accumulate on hydro transmission lines and wires, resulting in power outages for many households. At the peak of the crisis, more than 133,000 households, or nearly one-third of NB Power's customers, were without power. However, the emergency situation came about as a result of the length of the outages, which lasted nearly 10 days in some regions. Also, the crisis was made worse on the Acadian Peninsula when large areas lost power completely owing to the extent of the damage to hydro infrastructures.

As a result of the severity of the impact of the ice storm, Premier Brian Gallant tasked Judy Wagner, Clerk of the Executive Council, with reviewing the emergency response and presenting a report with recommendations. The report, to be delivered by July 31, 2017, should suggest possible ways of improving prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery following an emergency situation.

The Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (AFMNB) would first like to emphasize and acknowledge the significance of this exercise. In our view, the recommendations to be presented in the report are essential for preparing and planning future emergency responses when similar situations happen again. In the current context of climate change, extreme weather events are likely to happen more frequently and to be of greater magnitude.

A series of public meetings and gatherings with key players were held as part of Ms. Wagner's review. Also, stakeholders were invited to provide written comments. Public meetings with residents were held in early April. Mayors, municipal emergency measures coordinators, and other stakeholders were invited to attend discussion sessions.

This brief examines numerous situations that were either observed by the AFMNB during the emergency response or subsequently brought to the AFMNB's attention by municipal stakeholders. It also contains recommendations for improving emergency responses.

While acknowledging the individual hardships caused by the crisis, the carbon monoxide-related deaths and hospitalizations, the tremendous financial and other challenges experienced by those affected, and so on, the AFMNB wishes mainly to discuss issues related to emergency measures management in this brief.

## **Comments on the Scope of the Mandate Given to the Clerk of the Executive Council**

On March 3, 2017, the office of the Clerk of the Executive Council communicated to the AFMNB the official mandate given by the Premier to review the emergency response to the ice storm (Appendix A). After receiving the document, we sent a letter to the Premier on March 10, 2017 (Appendix B) containing comments and highlighting key aspects that we felt needed to be clarified and added to the mandate. We did not receive an official response from the Premier and, to our knowledge, no changes were made to the mandate. However, the Clerk's office held a conference call with the AFMNB on March 28, 2017, to discuss some of the issues raised in the correspondence sent to the Premier.

## **Emergency Measures Management**

Emergency measures management normally consists of four phases:

1. *mitigation* to reduce risks and/or damage;
2. *preparedness* to deal with a specific risk or series of risks and to plan the response;
3. *response* when an emergency situation arises; and
4. *recovery* once the emergency is over.

This brief, which is predicated on these four recognized phases of emergency measures management, contains the AFMNB's comments and recommendations. Since the phases of emergency measures management can overlap in an emergency situation, some of the topics will be presented in one section, even though they may contain aspects relating to another section.

### **1 - Mitigation**

In the case of the recent ice storm, the infrastructures that were affected do not belong to the municipalities. We will therefore let other stakeholders, including NB Power, comment on mitigation measures that could have limited the damage.

However, in terms of general risks associated with extreme weather events, measures to mitigate climate change—reducing greenhouse gas emissions—are indeed required. Several of our member municipalities have been making efforts along these lines for a few years already.

Other measures to mitigate extreme weather event-related damage will have to be implemented and strengthened. Such measures include land use planning and zoning, and procurement of emergency equipment and alternate heating systems. A number of municipalities are already active in this respect. However, municipalities, municipal associations, and the Government of New Brunswick will have to focus more on this aspect

in the future. To that end, the AFMNB is committed to working with its member municipalities to foster discussion and facilitate the sharing and dissemination of best practices.

## **2 - Preparedness**

In terms of emergency measures preparedness, there were several shortcomings that definitely affected the response to the ice storm, beginning with legislative ambiguities. In addition, deficiencies in training in French and centralization of training in Fredericton are further obstacles to adequate preparation of emergency responders in municipalities.

### **Clarifying municipal powers and responsibilities in emergency situations**

Municipalities play a key role when an emergency situation arises within their territory. This stands to reason, since municipalities are more familiar with their territory and are the level of government closest to the population. Local management of emergency measures, including the preparation of emergency measures plans, is a municipal responsibility as well. In that respect, section 9 of the *Emergency Measures Act* sets out the powers of municipalities as follows:

*Each municipality*

- (a) shall establish and maintain a municipal emergency measures organization,*
- (b) shall appoint a director of the emergency measures organization and prescribe his or her duties, which shall include the preparation and coordination of emergency measures plans for the municipality,*
- (c) shall appoint a committee consisting of members of its council to advise it on the development of emergency measures plans,*
- (d) shall prepare and approve emergency measures plans,*
- (e) may pay the expenses of members of the committee appointed under paragraph (c),*
- (f) may enter into agreements with and make payments to persons and organizations for the provision of services in the development and implementation of emergency measures plans, and*
- (g) may appropriate and expend sums approved by it for the purposes of this section.*

However, even though municipal powers include emergency measures planning, responsibility for managing emergency responses is not expressly one of them and should be clarified in legislation. The legislative ambiguity implies that municipalities must prepare emergency measures plans, but the law is silent on implementation of these plans in an emergency situation. For comparison purposes, Quebec's *Civil Protection Act* clearly states who is responsible for civil security, as can be seen in the definitions section:

3 "civil protection authorities" means *local municipalities, authorities to which local municipalities have delegated their responsibility for civil protection and authorities which by law are responsible for civil protection in all or part of their territory;*

In addition, as was seen with the widespread power outage that followed the ice storm, the emergency response can extend over a long period. It would be appropriate to require that a deputy director of the municipal EMO be appointed and that a procedure be in place so that this individual can step in and allow the director to rest if the response continues.

**(1) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick specify the powers and responsibilities of municipalities in emergency situations, including the implementation of emergency plans, in the *Emergency Measures Act*.**

**(2) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick amend the *Emergency Measures Act* to specify that municipalities shall appoint a deputy director for their emergency measures organization and that the Government of New Brunswick prescribe the deputy director's duties, which include filling in for the director if need be.**

#### **Clarifying roles and responsibilities for Local Service District emergency measures management**

Local Service Districts (LSDs) are non-municipal areas of the province that cover roughly 85% of the territory and are home to nearly 30% of the province's population (in white on map at right). In these communities, all local services (road maintenance and repair, street lighting, policing, etc.) are managed by the Government of New Brunswick and delivered by the departments concerned or through agreements with neighbouring municipalities or other third parties.

Although legislative clarification is needed where municipalities are concerned, the issue of roles, powers, and responsibilities with respect to emergency measures management is more problematic in the LSDs.

New Brunswick's *Emergency Measures Act* simply does not address emergency measures management in LSDs. There is but a single reference to LSDs, and it is in the *Emergency Planning for the Continuity of the Government of New Brunswick Regulation*, which states that DELG must assist the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization and other provincial departments and agencies:

4(1) *In addition to the subsection(2) ...*  
e.1) *The Department*

Green: AFMNB member municipalities  
Yellow: Municipalities not members of the AFMNB

*general duties designated in of Environment and Local*

*Government shall ...  
(ii) support the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization and other provincial departments and agencies in developing plans and procedures to co-ordinate emergency planning and operations in local service districts.*

This section of the Regulation, which states that DELG must “support” the EMO, is the only legislative and regulatory reference to emergency measures management in LSDs. Although it may be assumed that this section indirectly confers responsibility for emergency planning and response in LSDs on the EMO, it does not clearly say so.

However, contrary to what the Regulation suggests, the NB EMO Regional Emergency Response Plan<sup>1</sup> states that DELG Local Service Managers are responsible for emergency responses in LSDs:

*1.12.1 The Department of Environment and Local Government (DELG) Local Service Managers (LSMs) are members of the REAC [Regional Emergency Action Committee]. They will monitor, and if necessary coordinate with the REMC [Regional Emergency Management Coordinator] for all emergency planning and operations for LSDs.*

This legislative, regulatory, and administrative ambiguity has tangible and specific consequences in emergencies. In the response to the ice storm this past January, the legislative and regulatory difference between the municipalities and LSDs was striking.

The municipalities were not necessarily prepared for the scope of the crisis, and the response was definitely not perfect. However, since the municipalities are closer to their residents and have, among other things, emergency measures plans, staff, and the authority to incur expenses, they were nonetheless able to implement measures to assist residents affected by the power outages. In contrast, the LSDs had none of these resources. In addition, responsibility for the emergency response in their territory was unclear. In most cases, even though the municipalities had neither the responsibility nor the obligation to do so, they extended their services to the residents of neighbouring LSDs in order to support the population during the crisis.

In retrospect, it is apparent that the EMO and DELG were unfortunately not prepared for coordinating emergency operations in the LSDs and that they did not have the resources needed to do so. Furthermore, in emergency response situations, proximity and knowledge of the community and the terrain are critical aspects that are difficult for the EMO and

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<sup>1</sup> New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization, *NB EMO Regional Emergency Response Plan*, online: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/regional\\_emergency\\_response\\_plan-2016.pdf](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/regional_emergency_response_plan-2016.pdf) (viewed May 12, 2017).

DELG to replicate across the province for every LSD, even with regional coordinators and managers on site.

There are ways of improving this situation and ensuring that all residents and every area of the province have their own local emergency measures management structure.

The first one, which would resolve this issue and several others at the same time, would be full municipalization. Full municipalization refers to the establishment of a local municipal government for all residents and every area of the province. Municipalization of the territory would ensure that, when the next disaster or emergency occurs, local emergency measures plans would be in place throughout the territory. This would be the ideal option for strengthening the response capacity of local governments across the province.

If this option is not conceivable in the short term, a provision in section 8 of the *Emergency Measures Act* could be used to have LSDs included in municipal emergency measures plans:

*Powers of Minister*

8(2) *The Minister may do the following:*

- (a) *divide the Province into districts and subdistricts for the purposes of this Act;*
- (b) *after consultation with a municipality, designate the boundaries of the municipality to include areas adjacent to it for the purposes of this Act.*

If this option is chosen, needs in the LSDs will have to be identified. Actual costs will also have to be tallied and billed to the LSDs. Appropriate financial resources will therefore have to be provided to the municipalities responsible for emergency measures in one LSD or in several neighbouring LSDs. Agreements similar to those in place for municipalities to provide fire protection services in LSDs could be established.

It should be noted that the new *Local Governance Act*, which was passed in April 2017 and will be coming into force in January 2018, has added emergency measures as a service required to be provided in LSDs:

*Services required to be provided in all local service districts*

161(1) *The Minister shall provide the following services in each local service district:*

- (a) *animal control services;*
- (b) *dangerous or unsightly premises enforcement services;*
- (c) *emergency measures services;*
- (d) *fire protection services;*
- (e) *land use planning services;*
- (f) *rescue services;*
- (g) *police protection services; and*

(h) *solid waste collection and disposal services.*

However, the approach to planning and coordinating local emergency measures in LSDs was not specified, and nor was the formula to be used for invoicing the cost to LSD residents.

- (3) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick clarify the existing regulatory and administrative ambiguity and indicate exactly what the EMO's and the REMCs' roles and responsibilities are with respect to the municipalities and LSDs in terms of preparedness and emergency response.**
- (4) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick create the conditions (eliminate obstacles, provide incentives) needed for full municipalization in New Brunswick.**
- (5) It is recommended that a bipartite committee consisting of representatives of municipal associations and the provincial government (DELG, Public Safety) be established to examine the feasibility of extending municipal responsibility for emergency measures to neighbouring LSDs, to assess costs, and to determine tax rates required for equitable sharing of costs.**

#### **Clarifying legislative provisions to facilitate regional collaboration**

Regional collaboration options will also have to be added to the *Emergency Measures Act*, should several neighbouring municipalities and even possibly LSDs wish to make arrangements for joint management of their emergency measures. This option was raised by some of our municipalities that are trying to find ways to collaborate regionally on the preparation of emergency measures plans and responses.

Since disasters strike locally most often, emergency response management must remain local in nature. However, as a result of climate change, extreme weather event-related emergencies are occurring more frequently. These weather events often impact entire regions, as was the case with the ice storm, which affected the entire Acadian Peninsula, the Kent region, and part of the southeast.

Measures to facilitate regional collaboration should therefore be adopted. These could include, for example, the option of appointing a joint emergency measures coordinator for municipalities that are parties to a cooperation agreement. A deputy emergency measures coordinator for each of the municipalities concerned could also be appointed to maintain local linkages in the community. This would preserve the advantages and effectiveness of local action in terms of emergency measures management, while producing the benefits of regional collaboration and coordination when necessary.

- (6) It is recommended that the *Emergency Measures Act* be amended to enable multiple municipalities, and in some cases LSDs, to prepare a joint emergency measures plan and to respond collectively in emergencies.

### Providing training in French

Training for municipal emergency measures coordinators and municipal teams involved in local emergency plans is an integral part of preparedness. Training in emergency measures management is a provincial responsibility that is part of the EMO's mandate. Without commenting on the quality of the training provided, some training-related aspects that affect stakeholder preparedness are worthy of note. If we consider the available training as illustrated in the table below taken from the EMO website, we can see that there is far less training in French than in English and that some courses are offered in English only.

### Training Available Through the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization in 2017

2017				
Date	Nom du cours	Endroit	Langue	Niveau
le 17 janv. 2017-le 18 janv. 2017	► Information publique en cas d'urgence série 1701 12 postes vacants disponible	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Anglais	Avancé
le 19 janv. 2017-le 20 janv. 2017	► OMU NB formation interne - Système Sentinel formation du personnel supplémentaire.- date a déterminé	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Anglais	Préalable
le 23 janv. 2017-le 26 janv. 2017	► Centre des opérations d'urgence série 11701 - 14 postes vacants disponible	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Anglais	Avancé
le 22 févr. 2017-le 23 févr. 2017	► ICS 400 closed attendance	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Anglais	Avancé
le 15 mai 2017-le 18 mai 2017	► Centre des opérations d'urgence série 1703 - plein	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Anglais	Avancé
le 23 mai 2017-le 24 mai 2017	► Information publique en cas d'urgence série 1702 9 postes vacants disponible	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Anglais	Avancé
le 18 sept. 2017-le 21 sept. 2017	► Centre des opérations d'urgence série 1704 - 14 postes vacants disponible	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Français	Avancé
le 24 oct. 2017-le 25 oct. 2017	► Information publique en cas d'urgence série 1703 12 postes vacants disponible	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Français	Avancé
le 23 nov. 2017-le 26 nov. 2017	► Centre des opérations d'urgence série 1705 - 14 postes vacants disponible	65 Brunswick St, Fredericton, NB	Anglais	Avancé

Source: Taken from the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization website: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/jps/public\\_safety/content/emo/training\\_calendar.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/jps/public_safety/content/emo/training_calendar.html) (viewed May 8, 2017).

Yet in an officially bilingual province that recognizes the equality of the two linguistic communities, municipal emergency measures coordinators are entitled to receive training from the Government of New Brunswick in the official language of their choice. It is therefore inconceivable that this situation should continue.

- (7) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick comply with the *Official Languages Act* and that it provide equivalent emergency measures management training in both official languages.**

**Centralization of training in Fredericton**

Furthermore, the courses are offered only in Fredericton. For municipalities in northern New Brunswick, the centralization of training in Fredericton gives rise to additional travel costs that municipalities near the capital simply do not have to bear. Travel for training involves vehicle rental/mileage reimbursement costs and meal and hotel charges, for example. These costs add up quickly and can amount to more than \$1,000 per person for a single training session. These costs multiply if several people from the same municipality need to take the training, as in the case of the emergency measures management applied courses.

To avoid travel and other related costs, municipalities and regional service commissions in northern New Brunswick have in recent months and years approached the EMO about having some of the training sessions given in their regions. To our knowledge, the EMO has never agreed to travel to provide training. One of the reasons given for not offering training in other locations is that the Fredericton training centre gives participants the opportunity to see an ideal emergency operations centre (EOC) so they can reproduce it locally. While this may justify the delivery of training in the provincial capital, it cannot be the argument put forward to justify the systematic centralization of all of the training sessions. What is more, in most emergencies, municipal teams will not be working in an ideal EOC, like the one at EMO headquarters.

The Government of New Brunswick should therefore make changes to the training it provides and arrange to have it alternate between the regions. This would reduce costs to municipalities, increase access, and enable as many stakeholders as possible to gain the knowledge needed to respond in emergencies.

- (8) It is recommended that the EMO be given clear direction by the Department of Public Safety to decentralize the delivery of emergency measures management training so that it can be provided in every region of the province.**
- (9) It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety assess the resources allocated to the EMO to discharge its mandate and that it ensure that equivalent training in French is provided, in accordance with the principles of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick*.**

### **Provincial Roundtable on Emergency Management and Resiliency**

The Provincial Roundtable on Emergency Management and Resiliency was established in 2015. The Roundtable was partly a response to a recommendation in the report published after post-tropical storm Arthur (2014), which recommended that the government consider establishing a roundtable to foster dialogue on risk reduction and resiliency, facilitate increased cooperation, and promote public preparedness.

Our association and a number of municipal elected officials and employees were invited to the inaugural meeting of the Roundtable. It is our understanding that a committee was supposed to have been set up to continue this work. However, no communication concerning the committee or the Roundtable was subsequently received.

- (10) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick make public the work done by the Provincial Roundtable on Emergency Management and Resiliency and that it assess it to determine if the Roundtable should be re-established so it can continue its deliberations.**

### **3 - Response**

Several aspects of the response to the ice storm have been identified as deficient, such that improvements are needed. Among other things, the participation of the Canadian Red Cross Society and the Department of Social Development in the municipal emergency measures plan raised a number of issues, including the delivery of services in French by volunteers dispatched by the Red Cross to the Acadian Peninsula. Exhaustion and mental and physical health issues among volunteers, who are often directly affected themselves as seen during the ice storm crisis, also need to be assessed and considered for the future. The same holds true for the entire aspect of coordination of material assistance and donations, which seemed disorganized and very much improvised at times.

With regard to the Government of New Brunswick and the EMO, the size of the territories for which the Regional Emergency Management Coordinators (REMCs) are responsible and integration of the Incident Command System (ICS) in municipal management are two other aspects that we feel are worthy of note.

#### **Inclusion of emergency social services in municipal emergency plans**

In emergencies, people who are not usually vulnerable may find themselves in need if they have to evacuate their dwellings or if some of their food is no longer fit for consumption as a result of an extended power outage. Such was the case for many people following the ice storm.

The Department of Social Development's policy manual, available on its website, states that, in an emergency declared by a municipality, the "responsibility of the Department in a

declared emergency is to provide Emergency Social Services (ESS).” These services are “food, clothing, lodging, personal social services, registration, and enquiry.”<sup>2</sup> However, during the response this past January, a significant portion of this type of emergency assistance was provided mainly by municipalities and volunteers through a mobilization effort and donations collected in every region of the province. The Department was not up to the task and was unable to fulfil its mandate, owing to insufficient capacity or lack of preparedness for a crisis of this magnitude. Monetary and food donations, as well as loans of generators and other equipment from other regions were plentiful. There is cause for concern if we imagine the same emergency happening without the assistance that was made available and provided by municipalities and dedicated volunteers.

It should be noted that six municipalities declared a state of emergency during the crisis. It should therefore be clarified whether this kind of assistance, which the Department is in theory required to provide, is made available only if a municipality declares a state of emergency, as stipulated in the Policy Manual. Such a policy should normally play a role in influencing a municipality’s decision as to whether to declare a state of emergency.

- (11) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick give the Department of Social Development the resources needed for it to adequately fulfil its mandate to provide emergency social services, as stipulated in the Department’s Policy Manual.**
- (12) It is recommended that the Department of Social Development inform the municipalities about the kinds of assistance that it must and can provide in an emergency situation and that it clarify the circumstances and conditions for receiving such assistance.**

In addition to the Department of Social Development’s responsibilities, the Government of New Brunswick signed a memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Red Cross Society in November 2009. This delegation of responsibilities mainly concerns the delivery of public humanitarian programs and services, including support of emergency management agencies, helping to support preparedness and capacity-building for health-related emergencies, support for education initiatives, and support to community programs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Government of New Brunswick, *Department of Social Development – Policy Manual*, online: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social\\_development/policy\\_manual/applicant\\_and\\_clienttypes/content/emergencies.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development/policy_manual/applicant_and_clienttypes/content/emergencies.html) (viewed May 10, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Government of New Brunswick, online: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2009.11.1848.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2009.11.1848.html) (viewed May 10, 2017).

We were told by municipal stakeholders that there is confusion surrounding the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Social Development and the Canadian Red Cross Society. Some stakeholders reported having tried in the past, i.e., before the crisis, to engage with the Canadian Red Cross Society in order to gain a better understanding of its role and responsibilities in an emergency situation. This prior engagement and information sharing exercise is essential for the development of comprehensive and effective emergency plans. However, the steps taken by municipal stakeholders were in vain.

To avoid confusion, improve preparedness, and allow for a more coordinated response, the Department of Social Development and the Canadian Red Cross Society must be required to work with the municipalities on developing their emergency measures plans. This obligation must be included in the *Emergency Measures Act* and spelled out in the Department's policies.

We were told as well by a number of stakeholders that the Canadian Red Cross volunteers, particularly on the Acadian Peninsula, spoke English only and could not communicate with the persons affected. Pursuant to the *Official Languages Act*, the Government of New Brunswick has a duty to ensure that third parties providing services on its behalf meet the requirements of the Act.

A revision of the Government of New Brunswick's memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Red Cross Society should also include the obligation to provide programs and services in both official languages, in accordance with section 30 of the New Brunswick *Official Languages Act*:

30 The Province and its institutions are responsible for ensuring that all services offered to the public by third parties on their behalf are delivered in both official languages.

- (13) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick revise the memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Red Cross Society and the Department of Social Development's mandate in emergency situations to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities.**
- (14) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick amend the *Emergency Measures Act* to specify that the Department of Social Development and any third parties concerned have a duty to work with the municipalities on developing their emergency measures plans.**
- (15) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick ensure compliance with section 30 of New Brunswick's *Official Languages Act* during the execution of the memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Red Cross Society and that it ensure that the latter is able to provide its services in both official languages.**

### **Exhaustion and mental and physical health issues among volunteers**

An impressive number of volunteers were mobilized throughout the power outage following the ice storm on the Acadian Peninsula and in the Kent region. In many instances, these volunteers were also affected and had to bear all of the stress and unknowns associated with the power outage and the potential impacts on their dwellings.

For many people, the feeling of contributing to their communities in an emergency can allow them to endure such hardship more calmly. Nonetheless, measures to support volunteers' physical and mental health must be put into place. A number of municipal stakeholders told us that additional human resources to take over at shelters during the night would have been needed to prevent exhaustion among volunteers.

- (16) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick give the Department of Social Development responsibility for providing emergency shelters with the human resources required when emergency situations last for more than two days so that municipalities can anticipate and include these resources in their emergency measures plans.**

### **Territory covered by the Regional Emergency Management Coordinators (REMCs)**

Currently, there are six Regional Emergency Management Coordinators (REMCs). They are EMO employees who work out of regional offices. Depending on the situation, they are each responsible for a territory that can cover up to three Regional Service Commissions. For example, the coordinator in Bathurst is responsible for the Restigouche, Chaleur, and Acadian Peninsula regions. In this particular case, the region to be covered by the coordinator is huge in terms of area. Had the ice storm also struck the Chaleur and Restigouche regions at the same time and with as much force, it is unrealistic to think that the coordinator would have been able to serve all three regions adequately. An increase in the number of REMCs, so that each of them would be responsible for serving the territory of a single Regional Service Commission (as is the case for the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission) would seem to be a logical solution that would enable the REMCs to play their roles more effectively in terms of preparedness and response.

- (17) It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety increase from 6 to 12 the number of regional emergency management coordinators and that the territory assigned to each coordinator cover a single Regional Service Commission.**

### **Compatibility and integration of emergency measures management systems**

In a municipal emergency, a group is responsible for coordinating the response. A centre is therefore set up for group and support staff operations. Such a facility is called an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). "The EOC is a physical facility designated for the gathering and dissemination of information plus disaster analysis. It is also the facility in

which decisions and policies governing the emergency response are planned and implemented.”<sup>4</sup>

To manage emergency sites, the Incident Command System (ICS) is currently being used in New Brunswick as “a standardized, on scene, all hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure...”<sup>5</sup> This system, whose principles, guidelines, and training are managed by ICS Canada,<sup>6</sup> was first implemented on a large scale in Canada by British Columbia in the mid-1990s. It is also used by the provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Ontario. The ICS is an on-site disaster management system and must be incorporated into municipal emergency measures management systems.

During the ice storm crisis on the Acadian Peninsula, integration of the ICS into the municipal and regional emergency measures management system was chaotic and caused confusion in response management on the ground. A Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) was set up in Paquetville, and Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) were established in the municipalities affected. Another centre, set up by the Government of New Brunswick at the School of Fisheries in Caraquet, based its response on the ICS. As a result, it performed an on-site disaster management role, which was extended to the entire Acadian Peninsula, given the scope of the disaster. This centre took charge of certain activities to assist citizens who had decided to remain in their homes and to coordinate part of the logistical assistance required for recovery. However, according to feedback that was received, there was poor communication between the provincial centre and the EOCs (and the REOC), hindering optimum use of resources and making the response less effective. Clearly, the scope of the situation required that the provincial government set up such a centre. However, it should have done a better job of coordinating its work with that of the other municipal (and regional) centres already in place.

Although establishing a standardized system such as the ICS, predicated on an integrated terminology and organizational structure, is a good approach for ensuring more effective coordination of a large-scale emergency response, municipalities must be consulted and must be involved in decision making.

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<sup>4</sup> Government of New Brunswick, *Planning Guide for the Emergency Operations Centre*, online: [www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/opscentre-e.pdf](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/opscentre-e.pdf) (viewed May 10, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Government of New Brunswick, *Incident Command System*, online: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/jps/public\\_safety/content/emo/ICS.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/jps/public_safety/content/emo/ICS.html) (viewed May 10, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> ICS Canada, online: <http://www.icscanada.ca/en/home.html>.

- (18) It is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick update its Regional Emergency Response Plan and its Provincial Emergency Response Plan to ensure that municipal EOCs remain involved in emergency decision-making structures, regardless of the size of the area affected or the scope of the disaster.**

The Government of New Brunswick could easily take inspiration from the work done in other provinces such as Ontario, which has implemented ICS principles and concepts by adapting them “to suit Ontario’s unique governmental structures and emergency legislation/regulations.”<sup>7</sup>

Currently in New Brunswick, none of the EMO documents designed to assist with emergency measures management refers to the ICS.<sup>8</sup> The Government of New Brunswick seems to be of two minds and needs to update its protocols and references if it hopes to officially adopt the ICS. For example, in its Municipal Emergency Management Guide,<sup>9</sup> Prince Edward Island explains how the Incident Commander, who assumes command and control at the incident site in accordance with the ICS, must report to the municipal EOC during the response.

- (19) It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety ensure that implementation of the ICS be harmonized with government emergency measures structures in the province, including municipal EOCs, and with training provided by the EMO.**

#### **Coordination of material assistance, equipment, and monetary donations**

The solidarity that was shown to the communities affected by the ice storm was definitely one of the positive aspects of the crisis. Municipalities, businesses, and individuals looked for ways to assist the affected communities by providing material and monetary assistance. However, the flood of material and financial assistance became difficult to manage for the affected communities, which had to identify and communicate not only collective needs

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<sup>7</sup> Government of Ontario, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, online: [https://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca/english/emcommunity/ProvincialPrograms/IMS/Resources/CommunicationProducts/IMS\\_Presentation.html](https://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca/english/emcommunity/ProvincialPrograms/IMS/Resources/CommunicationProducts/IMS_Presentation.html) (viewed May 10, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> The following documents on the EMO website serve to support the preparation of emergency measures and do not refer to the ICS: *A Concept of Operations for Emergency Site Management* (<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/sitemanag-e.pdf>); *Planning Guide for the Emergency Operations Centre* (<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/opscentre-e.pdf>); *Planning Guide for Municipal Officials* (<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/officials-e.pdf>); *Municipal Emergency Response Plan* (<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/municipal-e.pdf>) (viewed May 30, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Government of Prince Edward Island, online: [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/EMO\\_MUN\\_EMG.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/EMO_MUN_EMG.pdf) (viewed May 30, 2017).

(generators and food for warming centres and shelters, etc.) but also individual needs of the affected persons and families (wood for heating, prepaid gas cards, food, etc.).

For people outside the region wishing to contribute, it was difficult for them to know how best to provide financial and material assistance. Several of our member municipalities that were spared the ice storm contacted us to inquire about the most pressing needs and to find out how and where to send assistance. In that regard, by default, the AFMNB played a role in coordinating part of the assistance from municipalities, businesses, and the public. A lack of clear direction, including a clearinghouse for assessing needs and coordinating the receipt and redistribution of assistance, was a major shortcoming. Although there was no real structure in charge that had a regional overview of needs, assistance was cobbled together and provided to the persons affected. However, we wonder if this was done as quickly and as effectively as it could have been.

In an emergency of this scope, in which material and financial assistance and equipment loans are needed, one or more persons should be assigned to, and have a plan for, handling all of this information locally or regionally, as the case may be.

**(20) It is recommended that the Department of Public Safety give the EMO responsibility for acting as coordinator to identify needs and collect and redistribute assistance and donations during major emergencies affecting more than one municipality or LSD.**

**(21) It is recommended that municipalities include coordination of material assistance in their emergency response plans and that a member of the EOC be given this responsibility.**

#### **4 - Recovery**

With respect to post-disaster recovery, we will not be addressing repairs and restoration of non-municipal infrastructures such as hydro transmission lines, etc. We will leave that to other stakeholders. However, one of the keys to recovery is quicker and more effective implementation of financial assistance programs for expenses that are incurred. For example, almost three years later, some municipalities are still waiting for compensation under the Disaster Financial Assistance Program for expenses related to post-tropical storm Arthur, which hit New Brunswick in July 2014. Such long delays are totally unacceptable.

Experts in the field are almost unanimous: extreme weather events such as ice storms, floods, forest fires, and droughts will continue to increase in scope and frequency in the future as a result of climate change. Financial assistance programs in the event of natural

disasters will have to be adapted to these increased needs in order to help municipalities and residents recover after major disasters.

**(22) It is recommended that existing disaster assistance programs be improved and overhauled to respond more quickly and efficiently, thus improving and facilitating recovery for municipalities and residents following an emergency**

## **Appendix A – Mandate to review the response to the ice storm, as communicated by the office of the Clerk of the Executive Council**

Given the magnitude of the event, the serious impact on the lives of so many New Brunswickers, the complexity of the response efforts and the potential to apply learnings to bring future improvements, I am requesting that you conduct a holistic review of this event. Your overall mandate is to conduct a fact finding review into the following areas and if applicable, to provide recommendations:

- 1 The state of readiness to mitigate the impacts of weather-related events generally, and specifically those associated with freezing rain.
- 2 The state of readiness in relation to emergency response at the provincial and local levels, and by NB Power and other communications suppliers: Were there vulnerabilities that should have been addressed before the storm? To what extent were learnings from previous events incorporated into the readiness planning?
- 3 The effectiveness of early risk assessments and decision-making processes, and the impact that those had on longer term response success.
- 4 The effectiveness of the manner in which the response was coordinated and managed: Were roles and responsibilities clear and properly executed? Did pre-existing plans and procedures get executed and have the intended effect? What will be the process to bring improvement in this regard?
- 5 The extent to which responders were prepared to do their work efficiently: Did responders have access to the necessary information, equipment and tools? Were responders properly trained to effectively carry out their work?
- 6 The effectiveness of the outreach to the affected New Brunswickers: Were vulnerable populations attended to appropriately? To what extent were efforts to reduce the anxiety and maximize the comfort of impacted residents successful? What more could have been done?
- 7 The effectiveness of volunteer and government programs to appropriately address the needs of impacted individuals: What programming gaps, if any, existed? Are there areas that residents felt could have been addressed that were not? Have residents been able to access the Disaster Financial Assistance program with ease? Has the Disaster Financial Assistance program provided appropriate relief? Where can improvements be made?
- 8 The effectiveness of communications:
  - a) Operational communications: Were there any impediments to operational communications, with respect to either equipment or information-sharing processes?
  - b) Media and public communications: How did the media communications unfold? What role did social media play? Did critical messages get through to the public in a timely manner? Is there room for improvement?
- 9 The extent of secondary impacts on the affected communities: What were the medium and long term impacts on the infrastructure, economy, educational programs, health care system, etc. associated with the storm? Have there been unanticipated impacts? How can or will these be mitigated?

10 The treatment of responders and volunteers during and after the event: Were employees and volunteers treated properly and with due respect by their respective employers and those in receipt of services?

You will be required to present a report with recommendations no later than July 31, 2017.

## Appendix B – Letter sent to the Premier concerning Ms. Wagner’s mandate to review the response to the ice storm



Le 10 mars 2017

L’Hon. Brian Gallant  
Premier ministre du Nouveau-Brunswick  
Édifice du Centenaire  
C. P. 6000  
Fredericton, N.-B. E3B 5H1

### **Objet : Mandat confié à la greffière du Conseil exécutif pour l’examen de l’intervention à la suite de la tempête de verglas**

Monsieur le Premier ministre,

À titre de président de l’Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (AFMNB), je tiens en tout d’abord à souligner et reconnaître l’importance de l’examen sur l’intervention à la suite de la tempête de verglas que vous avez confié à Mme Judy Wagner, greffière du Conseil exécutif. Cet exercice, et les recommandations qui seront présentés dans le rapport, sont à nos yeux essentiels pour préparer et planifier les interventions d’urgences futures lorsqu’une situation similaire se reproduira.

Notre association ainsi que nos municipalités membres sommes certes prêtes et disposées à collaborer pleinement à cet exercice. C’est dans cette optique que nous souhaitons souligner certains éléments-clés qui mériteraient, selon nous, des clarifications et des ajouts au mandat confié à la greffière, Mme Wagner.

En premier lieu, pour ce qui est de l’élément du mandat portant sur l’état de préparation en ce qui a trait à l’intervention d’urgence à l’échelle locale et provinciale, nous croyons qu’il est essentiel, pour obtenir un portrait juste de la situation et formuler des recommandations, d’effectuer spécifiquement une analyse contrastée de l’état de préparation, du déploiement des mesures d’urgences et des impacts de la planification en milieu organisé (municipal) et en milieu non-organisé (districts de services locaux).

De plus, au niveau de la planification et de l’intervention d’urgence, nous croyons qu’il est nécessaire que l’examen évalue les besoins des gouvernements locaux en matière de collaboration sur une base régionale et que des recommandations en ce sens soient formulées.

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Pour ce qui est des intervenants dont les rôles et l'efficacité seront examinés, nous croyons qu'il serait approprié qu'une liste claire des intervenants-clés soit incluse au mandat afin que ceux-ci soient interpellés systématiquement. D'autres pourraient certainement aussi être examinés par Mme la greffière, mais nous croyons qu'une liste des intervenants-clé permettrait de contribuer à un examen complet, rigoureux et systématique.

Pour terminer, nous croyons que la question du décret de l'état d'urgence devrait être ajoutée au mandat de la greffière, afin que les circonstances, les besoins et les conséquences d'un tel décret soient clarifiées.

En vous assurant de notre collaboration et coopération à cet important exercice d'examen de l'intervention suite à la tempête du verglas, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Premier ministre, l'expression de nos sentiments distingués.

Le président,



Luc Desjardins

*P. j. Mandat confié à la greffière, tel que partagé par le bureau du Conseil exécutif*

Cc. : Mme Judy Wagner, Greffière du Conseil exécutif  
L'Hon. Serge Rousselle, Ministre de l'Environnement et des Gouvernements locaux  
L'Hon. Denis Landry, Ministre de la Sécurité publique