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January 27, 2021

Members of the Municipal Modernization Committee
District of Muskoka
70 Pine Street
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1N3

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Review of District Council Composition

GBA supports and endorses the submissions and the proposals made in:

- the letter from the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) and the Friends of Muskoka (and many other local associations) dated January 15, 2021;
- The attached letter from Dr. Robert Williams to the Muskoka Lakes Association and Friends of Muskoka dated January 14, 2021; and
- The resolution of the TGB adopted by a unanimous vote of TGB Council on January 11, 2021.

The Georgian Bay Association (GBA) is an umbrella organization for 19 community associations along the east and north shores of Georgian Bay, representing around 3,000 families. We have been advocating on behalf of our land-owning members for over 100 years and estimate that we reach and influence around 18,000 residents of the Georgian Bay. Our mandate is to work with our water-based communities and other stakeholders to ensure the careful stewardship of the greater Georgian Bay environment.

We are making this submission in support of the five GBA member associations in the Township of Georgian Bay (TGB): Twelve Mile Bay, Wah Wah Taysee, Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay, Cognashene Cottagers, and Honey Harbour.

GBA supports the proposal for 18 members of District Council, 3 from each municipality in the District. We are particularly concerned that the initial proposals being considered would remove one of the District Councillors for TGB. That would effectively eliminate representation of coastal residents at District Council. GBA members in TGB are coastal residents, who already only have a marginal voice in the District, but whose interests are different from those of inland residents.

Our GBA members in TGB are passionate about maintaining the environment and unique features and ecology of the Georgian Bay archipelago. In common with all district residents, they are also very much engaged in how their tax dollars are applied. Accordingly, having a councillor who can address their concerns, represent their interests, and serves as their voice on the Bay is very important. That is why we support a Council of 18 members, as proposed in the MLA letter.

We also believe that basic fairness and reasonable representation for all residents and taxpayers in the District of Muskoka requires that all Councillors have one vote at Council. We do not understand how giving representatives of townships, including TGB, less than a full vote is fair or equitable, especially since seasonal residents are in the majority in the District. Therefore, we strongly endorse the proposal in the MLA's submission for a Council with an equal number of seats for towns and townships, with all Councillors having equal votes. We urge you to adopt that proposal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rupert Kindersley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rupert Kindersley
Executive Director

Copied to: District of Muskoka District Councillors
Amy Back, Clerk, District of Muskoka
TGB Councillors
Presidents and directors of TGB associations who are members of GBA