From:	Moesha MacArthur
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Subject:	Rural Infrastructure Crisis: The Phasing Out of Provincial Veterinary Services
Date:	March 18, 2026 5:39:15 PM

ATTN: Mayor Beers and Deputy Mayor Karen Campbell

Dear Premier Holt,

I am writing to you today as a concerned resident of Harcourt to address the planned phase-out of the Provincial Veterinary Service (PVS). While your government has spoken often about "access to care close to home," this budget decision removes essential medical infrastructure from rural New Brunswick, leaving livestock owners like myself with a terrifying lack of options.

To be specific, just this past Monday, I had one of my eight horses suffer a colic. Without the Provincial Vet's prompt response and wonderful care, I would not have been able to get the necessary medications or the instruction needed to help my very young horse through that crisis. Knowing the Provincial Vet is there to provide emergency services - and even end-of-life care if a situation isn't manageable - is a huge peace of mind for livestock owners. I would hate for owners to have to resort to "old school" ways of shooting their animals simply because they cannot access the care they need, or because a health issue has become severe with no other option available.

I urge you to consider the following points:

- **Food Safety and Public Health:** How are our dairy and meat farmers supposed to provide safe, high-quality products without consistent access to veterinary oversight? Preventing disease and maintaining herd health is the foundation of our local food chain. Removing provincial vets without a guaranteed, functional replacement is a direct threat to New Brunswick's food security.

- **The Myth of "Private Coverage":** I have personally been in contact with the only private clinic (in Irishtown) currently servicing equines (no other livestock) in my area (Harcourt). They informed me that Harcourt is at the absolute limit of their service area. If I am "just within the limit," what are the livestock owners in Blackville, Miramichi, or the North supposed to do?

- **Selective Client Lists:** Even for those "within limits," the private market is not a guarantee. The clinic I contacted is only taking SELECT new equine clients and prioritizing those who need routine services immediately. Because I don't have animals due for vaccines today, I am not a priority to be taken on as a client. This leaves me with no path for emergency care.

- **Emergency Infrastructure:** Private clinics often lead to specialization. While we have excellent private specialists, they are often not equipped or staffed to handle 24/7 general emergency calls (like a 3 AM colic or a dystocia) across the entire province. Who will answer the phone for a rural farmer in the middle of the night once the PVS is gone?

- **The Financial Barrier for Vets:** Expecting provincial vets to "start their own business" ignores reality. The startup cost for a fully equipped mobile unit can exceed $400,000, plus significant cash reserves. Is it realistic to expect a vet on a government salary to secure nearly a million dollars in financing to service rural "service deserts" where the math simply doesn't work for a private business?

- **The "Rural Retreat":** I know of several owners who transitioned to private practices

only to be told later that the clinic would no longer service their area because it was "too far to travel."

Relying on a few specialized or local private clinics to "pick up the slack" is not a strategy; it is a gamble with animal welfare. If the government’s goal is to transition to a private model, it cannot be a "hand-off" that leaves rural New Brunswickers behind. We need concrete incentives - such as startup grants for rural clinics or travel subsidies - to ensure that a farmer's ability to provide safe food isn't determined by their proximity to a city.

I look forward to hearing how your government plans to protect rural animal welfare and the livelihoods of New Brunswick's livestock owners.

Sincerely,

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