

Thank you.

After watching the first reading of the council meeting and learning more about the proposed bylaw, I wanted to provide some additional input.

Below is a 6:00 a.m. PM2.5 measurement from a burn that occurred this morning in my neighborhood. This type of burning is currently illegal at all times. I woke up with a sore throat, and my house smelled like smoke by 8:00 a.m. The person likely responsible has had the fire department called on them seven or eight times, yet they continue to burn. I could be mistaken, however, because there are so many burn barrels in my neighborhood that it is difficult to determine exactly where the smoke is coming from.

This new bylaw will not eliminate burn barrels. The only way to stop this is to adopt an approach similar to some cities in the UK, where all open burning is prohibited and any evidence of burning—or preparing to burn—is subject to a fine. The individual likely responsible for this morning's burn has two 600-litre oil drums in their backyard for burning. Many burn barrels throughout Glace Bay are filled with garbage. Any burn barrel, fire pit, or oil drum used for burning on a property in an urban area should result in a fine. If that were the case, people would learn quickly, enforcement resources would not be wasted, and residents would no longer have to live with smoky air. Instead, we continue to tolerate the problem by failing to adopt a strong bylaw.

I would also like to comment on a councillor's claim during the first reading that there are no problems with burning in the county. On my last visit to the county, I attended a girls' little league baseball game where someone decided to light a fire at 8:00 p.m., filling the field with smoke while children were playing. According to the Nova Scotia BurnSafe map, I suppose that was legal.

After watching the first reading of the proposed bylaw, I realized that it does little to improve conditions for people living in urban areas. Instead, it opens the door to recreational burning for more than 50,000 people living in urban communities. The enforcement process remains the same. Currently, the fire department responds to complaints, and bylaw officers already have the authority to issue fines. Nothing changes.

I want to be clear that the Glace Bay Fire Department does an excellent job. They respond quickly, and most fires are extinguished promptly. Many people stop burning after being warned, but some continue regardless. I believed this bylaw was being updated to improve enforcement and better protect enforcement staff. However, I do not see anything in the proposed bylaw that cannot already be done under the existing one. I understand the need to modernize the rural burning permit system, but the greatest issues continue to exist in our urban areas.

One councillor stated that the new bylaw is very clear. I would argue that nothing is clearer than a complete prohibition on burning in urban areas. Under the proposed bylaw, enforcement will become much more subjective. As I mentioned in my previous letter, even a small, clean wood fire—which would be legal under the proposed bylaw—produces toxic smoke. Any amount of smoke is a nuisance to nearby residents. The proposed bylaw even states that toxic fumes are prohibited, yet wood smoke contains toxic pollutants. That is simply a fact.

One councillor joked about bringing hot dogs to a fire. In my opinion, CBRM should be working to eliminate these fires, not normalize them. I had a neighbor who burned every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 6:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. I spent approximately \$15,000 installing heat pumps because I could no longer open my windows. Sealing the house then caused indoor CO₂ levels to rise, so I spent another \$7,000 on a heat recovery ventilator to bring in fresh air. I now spend approximately \$130 replacing HEPA filters after only a few weeks because they become clogged following exposure to nearby bonfires, even though they should normally last around six months. At that point, there is little benefit to running the HVAC system.

I would also like to add a few observations based on my work studying PM_{2.5} at Cape Breton University.

Sydney-Ashby experiences some of the worst air quality in North America at times because of residential wood burning. Outdoor wood boilers should be prohibited in urban areas. Even Amherst, Nova Scotia, has regulations that effectively ban them.

CBRM also still has many older coal furnaces, some of which continue to be used for burning garbage, particularly in garages. Burning garbage in furnaces or home incinerators located in garages should be prohibited.

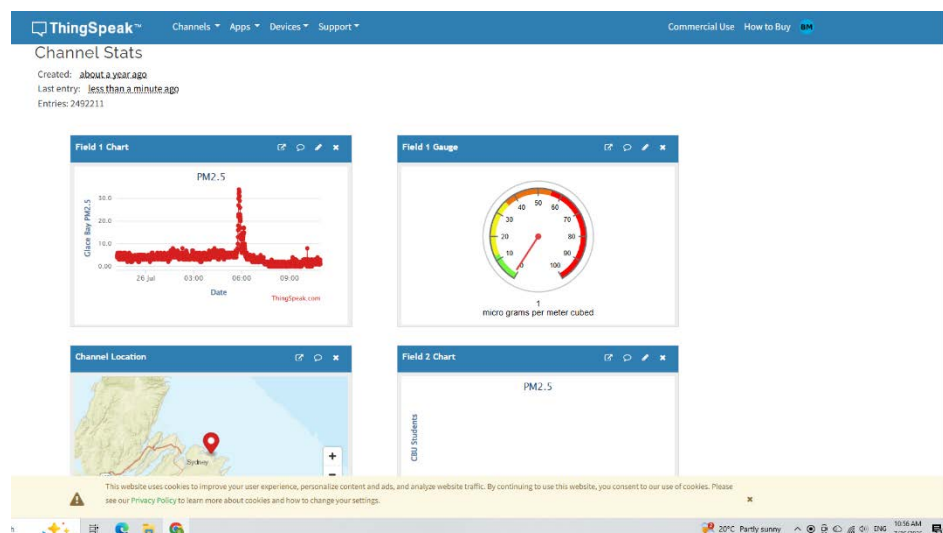
Many people who heat with wood do not burn it properly. Firewood is often left uncovered, and wet wood can produce five to eleven times more PM_{2.5} than properly seasoned dry wood. CBRM should educate residents on proper wood storage and drying practices while also helping households transition away from wood heating where practical.

Living next to a bonfire can expose a person to particulate pollution comparable to smoking two to ten cigarettes during a single event. I would also point out that while the proposed bylaw prohibits toxic fumes, it does not explicitly prohibit burning treated wood, something that unfortunately still occurs in our community.

A single household burning garbage can release a similar amount of toxic pollutants as a large municipal incinerator serving approximately 20,000 people. Yet this bylaw does not eliminate burn barrels.

I believe this should be called a Clean Air Bylaw, with the primary goal of protecting public health and ensuring a healthy environment. The federal government has recognized that every Canadian has a right to a healthy environment. I believe municipalities also have a responsibility to support that goal through effective local policies.

Pandering to people who continue to engage in illegal burning is not the solution.



Windsor

The spark that didn't catch: Windsor city council turns down fire pit pilot

Safety and environmental concerns held councillors back from agreeing to the proposal

CBC News · Posted: Jul 14, 2020 7:30 AM ADT | Last Updated: July 14, 2020

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] whom it may concern ,

I am contacting you about the burn bylaw. I believe that we as Cape Bretoners should be allowed to have back yard fires . As I grew up the Glace Bay we all had fires . I enjoy on a weekend having a controlled fire . It's not fair that one side can and the other side can't. As long as we don't have bon fires . It is nice to sit by a fire after a long hard work week . Roast marshmallows and hotdogs . What did people do when everyone burned coal and wood. Please take it in consideration for the people .thank you

[REDACTED] Glace Bay ns

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing regarding the proposed Section 6 , Article 6.1 - Setback requirements for brush burning.

We own a small farm located [REDACTED]. For many years, we have conducted small brush burns to dispose of brush and fallen trees that accumulate along our fence lines and within our pastures. In the past, we obtained a permit from the Department of Natural Resources. The permit was issued for a week duration at a cost of 5 dollars and required us to notify the department before burning so they were aware of the date and time. This system worked well and allowed burns to be carried out safely and responsibly. Since that program was discontinued, we have continued to follow all provincial burn restrictions. Over the past few years we have undertaken significant cleanup of our property following Hurricane Fiona in an effort to reduce the risk of forest fires around our farm.

Under the proposed regulations, however, it would be extremely difficult, if not Impossible, for many rural property owners to meet the new setback requirements. Requiring a 30 meter diameter opening (100 feet) in which to burn brush is simply not practical or realistic for many farms and wooded properties.

We respectfully ask that consideration be given to including a provision that would allow the local Fire Chief, or a designated official, to grant exemptions to the setback requirements on a case by case basis where conditions are deemed safe.

For example, exemptions could be considered during periods of low fire risk, such as late fall, winter when snow cover is present, or early spring. This approach would provide flexibility while maintaining public safety and would allow responsible property owners to continue managing brush and reducing wildfire hazards.

Such amendments would benefit many rural property owners, farmers and small business owners who manage wooded properties, while still ensuring that burning is conducted under appropriate supervision and safe conditions.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our comments and recommendations. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on these proposed regulations.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Greetings All,

For consideration at the upcoming reading of the Open Air Burning Bylaw:

I have several concerns and questions regarding this proposed Open Air Burning Bylaw. If CBRM intends to proceed, it is important to implement it properly from the outset rather than revising it after issues arise. Council has repeatedly emphasized that enforcement is key, and there is little value in adopting a bylaw that cannot be effectively enforced.

At present, the bylaw lacks clear ownership and does not specify who is responsible for enforcement.

Typically, bylaws define this early on, including the responsible department and designated enforcement agents.

CBRM has an ongoing issue with unclear responsibility—"who's problem is it?"—which is evident in several existing bylaws. Council has likely heard responses from Heads such as "that's not us" or "no one enforces it." This should be addressed directly.

A clear enforcement clause should be included, similar to other well-written bylaws, identifying a responsible authority such as the Manager of Fire Services, along with designates such as Fire Prevention Officers, Chiefs, Deputies, or other appointed individuals and peace officers. This would ensure there is clear authority to attend complaints, take immediate action, and coordinate resources as needed. Authorities and powers should be clearly defined and properly scoped, rather than left to vague understanding or assumption.

Police and fire departments should not be relied upon as the primary enforcement response. This would place unnecessary strain on volunteer fire departments, especially during daytime hours when volunteers are typically working and still dependent on community support. Assigning them as the first point of contact for enforcement could negatively affect that relationship. Enforcement should instead fall to designated fire prevention or municipal staff, who can then escalate matters appropriately.

There are also concerns regarding coverage. If this bylaw is intended to apply 24 hours a day, who is responsible for enforcement during evenings and overnight periods? CBRM does not currently have bylaw, building, or fire prevention staff operating on a 24-hour basis. From reviewing their contracts online, it appears these roles generally operate on Monday to Friday office hours. This could lead to increased after-hours calls and significant overtime demands.

Safety is another key issue. Would CBRM staff be expected to respond alone, without use-of-force training or non-lethal options? Sending a single staff member to a potentially

volatile situation, such as a large gathering with an uncontrolled fire, raises serious safety concerns. Even a routine request for compliance could escalate.

Finally, the bylaw should include a clear offence section with summary offence provisions that allow enforcement officers to issue tickets on site. Requiring staff to initiate formal court proceedings after the fact is inefficient and undermines effective enforcement. Any peace officer can explain the difference between advancing a matter by long-form process and issuing a summary offence ticket at the time of the offence, and how onerous the former can be.

These issues should be addressed to ensure the bylaw is practical, enforceable, and safe for those tasked with carrying it out. I urge Council to review these concerns carefully before pushing forward with a rushed bylaw. Ask was Planning/Bylaws consulted ? While I understand this falls under the purview of Fire Services, it would be beneficial to consult a group that has recently written, amended, applied, and enforced bylaws.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Proud CBRM Citizen

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Hello,

I have some serious concerns to raise regarding changes to the Open Air Burning Bylaw being discussed in the upcoming second reading of the by-law. I have watched various CBRM councils discuss this issue over the past few years and very much appreciate that a more cohesive, fair, and enforceable by-law needs to be instituted. I do not think this by-law fits the bill.

During the first reading of the by-law, Councillors express concerns about ensuring equitable access to summer enjoyment. Discussion in Council on June 23 focused on what was being taken away from children and families who want fires with no consideration for people who have genuine concerns relating to fires in urban settings.

I live in Sydney. Some of my neighbors currently burn despite the existing by-law. During the hottest days of summer I have to close all of the windows in my house and either suffer in heat above 26 degrees in my bedroom (which Health Canada indicates puts people at risk for heat-related illness and death), or pay additional costs associated with air conditioning. I usually resort to the latter because, for the moment, I can afford to, and exposure to wood smoke (and other pollutants) leads to migraines and moderately severe allergic reactions. Given that Cape Breton's child poverty rate is 27.6% and 9 out of the 10 communities experience highest levels of energy poverty in Nova Scotia are here on Cape Breton (the majority of them in CBRM), it can be presumed that not everyone will be able to afford either installation or operation of air conditioning. It is also worth noting that people living with chronic health concerns, seniors, and people living with disability tend to have less disposable income and that not everyone has a safe home to retreat to. Opening burning across the municipality increases financial and health costs for everyone, especially for people who are most vulnerable, so that a few people with means can have a fire.

It also seems short sighted, after having experienced wildfires and droughts in recent years and knowing that risks of those events are projected to increase, to institute a by-law that allows burning in densely packed and populated areas. Aging CBRM homes in urban areas of the municipality are typically constructed of wood and often have cellulose insulation that has long since dried out - they're akin to kindling. Homes in urban areas also tend to be less than Firesmart. More fires will inevitably increase the risk and incidence of structure fires. This increases potential stress on both water resources and fire services. It may also increase area home insurance costs which have already skyrocketed due to fires and

floods on the mainland. Insurance companies use a plethora of data to determine fire risk. Municipal by-laws that increase or reduce overall risk would certainly be part of that calculation. At a time when the municipality faces potential downgrading of CBRM's standing with Fire Underwriters Survey unless \$19-20 Million in equipment updates are enacted in coming years, choosing to implement a by-law that increases fire risk, and potentially increases base insurance and taxation costs for residents in the process, seems ill-advised.

I understand that people are frustrated that there are area based restrictions on back yard fires, especially since the difference between former county properties and properties in the former towns and Sydney has been diluted. Suburban developments, urban sprawl, service extensions, and other construction in the municipality have caused some formerly rural areas to become particularly urbanized while some of the former towns and city are now very sparsely developed. The urban/county divide is no longer a useful one. The answer to this challenge is not to extend burning throughout the municipality. It is to remove burning rights in areas that are high density, with high value infrastructure and dense housing that are increasingly vulnerable to fire. CBRM already has by-laws in place that determine what is allowed and not allowed based on geography, density, and service area. Fire by-laws should be no different. Where it makes sense and where there is reduced risk, and minimal nuisance, fire should be permitted. Where the fire risk is high and likelihood of nuisance and health risk for the neighborhood is also high, it should not.

People will still burn illegally, irrelevant of the by-law in place, but the people who are interested in following the law will refrain from adding to the problem instead of being empowered to participate. Clear neighborhood based bans will also support more efficient enforcement without forcing neighbors to investigate whether a fire is appropriately distant from a structure or consuming approved materials or otherwise in line with by-law requirements before reporting. I have heard and can appreciate the concerns of Council and staff regarding the safety of staff when responding to complaints and the desire to streamline regulations and enforcement to support staff to do their jobs. In my opinion, the new by-law will shift the burden of investigation onto residents who have to peep on their neighbors to confirm whether a fire is by-law compliant or not, putting more neighbors into conflict in the process and exposing residents to the same vitriol municipal staff have faced in enforcing existing rules.

This by-law, on the surface, appears to address a long-standing municipal challenge but it does not. Instead, it offloads the cost - socially, financially, and in terms of health - onto

individual community members. It increases chances of neighbor conflict with the potential for violent altercations. I ask that Councillors consider the risks they are accepting and the cost they are offloading onto residents before passing this draft into law. Costs associated with increased energy costs, potentially increased insurance costs, and direct and indirect health costs that will be borne by everyone so that a small number of people can get a small amount of enjoyment.

Thanks for your time.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]