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September 6, 2011

His Worship Naheed Nenshi
Mayor, City of Calgary
Office of the Mayor
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB, T2P 2M5
themayor@calgary.ca

Dear Mayor Nenshi:

Thank you for forwarding the "*Cities Matter*" leadership survey, along with the comprehensive report "*A Case of Fiscal Imbalance: The Calgary Experience*" and background materials on Calgary's "*Cultural Campus*."

The "*Cities Matter*" survey raises many important issues regarding provincial-municipal funding, local infrastructure requirements, regional planning, program and service responsibilities, governance, and accountability. These are issues I take very seriously and I look forward to working closely with you to address the issues facing Calgarians should I be given the honour of serving as the next Premier of Alberta.

As I shared with you in our meeting this past spring, one of the guiding principles of my leadership campaign is a belief that the best decisions are made at the local level, closest to the people. That is why I was the first leadership candidate to propose a comprehensive municipal funding policy (www.garymar.ca/policy/muni) to enhance the sustainability of municipalities, including the City of Calgary, and to establish the foundation for a true and lasting partnership between the province and local governments.

In developing the foundation for this partnership, I propose three major objectives:

- Creating more predictability and stability for local governments to meet ongoing program and service responsibilities to their citizens by giving municipalities, including the City of Calgary, full access to the education property tax by the 2014 municipal budget year. The objective is to ensure that municipalities have stable funding for programs and services and won't be negatively impacted by the new funding system.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities, and reduce program and service entanglement between the province and local governments by streamlining and eliminating unstable and unpredictable municipal grants, and reducing administration costs.
- Improving overall accountability to Albertans by establishing specific accountability mechanisms for each level of government.

To achieve these objectives, I committed to establishing a Premier's Council on Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Arrangements and Service Delivery within 30 days of taking office. This Council will be comprised of local government stakeholders, including the City of Calgary, who will work out the finer details of this policy initiative, including identifying any changes required under the Municipal Government Act. All changes proposed in my municipal funding policy will only be finalized once they have undergone a full consultation process with stakeholders through the Premier's Council.

It is my intent to establish a new partnership with municipalities that will improve the responsiveness of locally-based programs and services being provided within Calgary. This policy will also ensure that you are able to direct available dollars to front-line programs and services, while allowing the City of Calgary to keep the dollars raised in your city, to meet priorities established by Calgarians rather than having those priorities imposed by the provincial government.

In closing, I believe the issues raised in the "Cities Matter" survey are closely aligned with the overall objective of our municipal funding policy to establish a new and lasting partnership with the City of Calgary based on the principles of mutual respect, consultation and collaboration. My commitment to you, should I be elected as Alberta's next Premier, is that I will listen and act on the critical issues you have raised.

Sincerely,



Gary Mar