



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR – DECEMBER 2007

On behalf of the Association of Suburban Municipalities (ASM), Karin Marks (mayor of Westmount), Bill McMurchie (mayor of Pointe Claire), Campbell Stuart (mayor of Montreal West) and I presented the 15 demerged cities' proposals for a functional agglomeration for the island of Montreal. You will find below highlights from the press release that was issued on Thursday, November 15th just prior to our presentation in Quebec City.

The complete brief, along with a summary, can be found on our website www.baie-durfe.qc.ca.

We should know by year-end if we have been successful in getting the provincial government to make the necessary changes to the governance and structure of the current agglomeration ... a governance and structure that has a built-in conflict of interest ... a governance and structure synonymous with "democratic deficit" ... a governance and structure that allows taxation without representation.

Let's hope that 2008 will finally bring the much-needed changes to the agglomeration so that we can all move forward and work in harmony in the best interests of all the citizens on the island of Montreal.

In closing, I would like to wish you and your extended families a happy and healthy holiday season.

And do not forget to mark January 1st on your calendar to join me and members of your Council and Administration at our New Year's Levee at the Fritz Farm from 2pm to 4pm.

Maria Tutino
Mayor

Adapted from the ASM's press release issued November 15th, 2007

Mayors for the 15 reconstituted suburban cities of the Island of Montreal submitted a brief to the National Assembly's "Commission de l'aménagement et du territoire" studying Bill 22, entitled "Loi modifiant diverses dispositions législatives concernant l'agglomération de Montréal", presenting a number of recommendations including one that a renewed, distinct, legally constituted agglomeration be formed.

In terms of the legislative process undertaken by the government, the 15 mayors of the reconstituted suburban cities unanimously:

- say "yes" to a renewed agglomeration governance. The simple fact of tabling Bill 22 before the National Assembly demonstrates the necessity to review certain rules of governance for democratic life on the Island of Montreal as a whole;
- say "yes" to the fair and appropriate management of services and assets "of collective interest" by the agglomeration administration. The mayors believe the creation of an arbitration committee is appropriate and hope to see its mandate expanded;



- say “**yes**” to regional financing for services and assets jointly defined and recognized as being of a regional nature;
- say “**yes**” to granting the City of Montreal new sources of funding whether it be through new taxation powers within its territory as foreseen in the Bill or through other means.

Finally, the 15 mayors of the reconstituted municipalities recommend the implementation of a “quote part” (a percentage taxation formula) based on the fiscal potential of each city. In this context, each municipality would issue a single tax bill to its citizens.

In terms of the composition of the Agglomeration Council, the mayors state that the government’s proposal to increase the number of members to 80 runs the risk of creating an unwieldy decision-making body. They favour a council of 34 members composed of the mayor of Montreal, the borough mayors and the mayors of reconstituted cities.

Despite the vigorous criticism the concept received when the Bill was tabled, the mayors believe a Secretariat for the Agglomeration of the Island of Montreal is essential, although their recommendation on its status differs from that of the government. In fact, the mayors recommend that the government integrate this secretariat into the agglomeration, since it is this latter entity that should have a distinct legal status. The Association of Suburban Municipalities sees this secretariat as a light administrative structure, avoiding any unnecessary bureaucracy. It would include a director or secretary-general and would have its own clerk and researcher.

Elements of collective interest

The mayors also ask the government to repeal Appendix A of Decree 1229-2005, emphasizing that between Bill 9, Bill 75 and Appendix A of Decree 1229-2005, it is impossible to find any coherence in the definition and recognition of these “*elements of collective interest*” to the agglomeration. In this regard, the ASM welcomes the government’s proposal to create an Arbitration Committee.

For the ASM, the decision to classify equipment, infrastructure or activities “*of collective interest*” is only justified in cases where elements truly have an impact on the agglomeration’s population as a whole, both in the City of Montreal and in reconstituted cities.

Other subjects covered in the brief include the sharing of responsibilities, financing, taxation, management of drinking water, and wastewater treatment.

Maria Tutino
Mayor