

For Immediate Release

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UPSE President applauds announcement

Union of Public Sector Employees President, Shelley Ward, is pleased with the decision to utilize public funds to replace our provincial manors. Although President Ward does have major concerns about funding arrangements for other government initiatives.

“As a union member and a taxpayer I am pleased to hear that our new manors will be Government built...Government owned...and Government operated. It is comforting to know that our seniors will have access to quality care in an environment that is open to public scrutiny,” says Ward. Minister Sheridan said he considered the merits of a Public Private Partnership for the purpose of manor replacements and they were found to be not in the best interests of Islanders. “It is reassuring to hear the government recognizes these dollars will be spent as an investment in their ongoing commitment to public health care,” says Ward.

Many regional examples exist to prove how P3s are not in the best interests of the public. The Cobequid Pass Highway in Nova Scotia was considered to be an excellent model for a P3. The *Privatization International Infrastructure Yearbook* wrote, "the first Canadian public-private partnership to meaningfully balance risks and rewards between government, the contractor/operator and the lenders." “There is no mention of the taxpaying, traveling public - a common omission when private business becomes involved in public services. The 45 km Cobequid Pass was built with no call boxes, no rest areas and no service plazas. The 1500 drivers who found themselves stranded on this highway recently would probably agree that safety and convenience of the traveling public was not considered in the balance of risks and rewards,” says Ward.

The 2008 Capital Budget provided no details about the upgrades to Route#1 or construction of the Cornwall Bypass. Minister Sheridan’s address mentions these projects would be developed with the Federal Government under the Gateway initiative. The Atlantic Gateway agreement includes a reference to the need for engaging private stakeholders. “If a P3 arrangement is being considered, Islanders have a right to know. It is time for this government to live up to its promise of openness and transparency,” concluded Ward.