



**NDP 2010 : PRACTICAL,
RESPONSIBLE CHANGE**

**The voice for the middle class
in your Legislature**

www.nbndp.ca

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in your Legislature

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FOREWORD



Foreword by **Roger Duguay**,
*Leader of the New Brunswick
New Democratic Party*

Between now and September 27 New Democrats will remind voters why we need a voice for the NDP in the Legislature. A voice for the NDP is a voice for the struggling middle class, for people who work hard but who are not getting the government they deserve from the Conservative and Liberal parties.

Our message is clear: we have to balance the books to save healthcare and education.

The NDP: Clear in our values

The NDP introduced Medicare to Canada. We fought for universal education, for pensions, and for social services. We know societies have to make choices about where to spend their money, and we have always been clear that we need strong and efficient public services, with the funding to do their job. That's the only way we can create a strong and caring society, where the least powerful have the opportunity to do well in school, at work and in life.

The NDP: Realistic

We can only afford strong front-line public services if we have a strong economy. And you can only have a strong economy if you have strong businesses, a competitive tax system, and a well-educated and healthy population ready to make the private and public sector as effective and efficient as possible.

Hard-working middle class families want a change. They can see the Legislature is not working, and the Conservatives and Liberals have run out of ideas to make things better. It's time for a voice for the middle class. It's time for the NDP.

This guide gives you an idea of the plans that the NDP has for New Brunswick. Many of these ideas are just common sense. Some are exciting and new. They were all carefully designed to make sure that New Brunswick's books are balanced so your core public services can be preserved and strengthened.

The NDP: Positive

New Brunswick faces many challenges. Decades of Conservative and Liberal mismanagement have left us with a crippling debt, a literacy crisis, and a declining economy. In this guide you can see how the NDP will address those challenges. But we want to go further.

The NDP wants to build a rich and dynamic province where every child has the opportunity to excel. We want an expanding population supporting an expanding economy. We want an educated workforce employed by successful businesses, large and small, selling their products to the world and paying fair taxes to support a dynamic public service.

Our vision of New Brunswick is yours.

Our priorities are yours. The NDP, if we are elected as government, or asked to be part of a government, will focus on balancing the books to save health and education.

Until the debt is under control, any new government programs must be offset with cuts elsewhere. The NDP will:

- Introduce the 20/50 bill to **reduce MLA salaries by 20% and pensions by more than 50%**.
- **Hold the line on personal, corporate and sales taxes.** We cannot afford any more cuts.
- Create a Government Efficiency Office to look for savings within government **without any cuts to front-line public services.**
- **Eliminate Business New Brunswick.** Replace it with the **New Jobs Tax Credit** which will create jobs and earn money for the government. Handouts do not work, incentives do.
- Reduce poverty with the **Poverty Reduction Plus program** and **reduce illiteracy by 50%** in four years.
- Help those helping seniors, or others who need help, in their own homes, with the **Helping Hands Tax Credit.**

These are realistic goals.

They are necessary.

Middle class New Brunswick families are worried about the economy. Worried that the health system we need is a health system we can no longer afford. Worried that our children are being left behind by an education system that is not preparing them to compete and win in a globalized world.

The Conservatives and Liberals have shown they don't have any new ideas: this election they are trying to bribe us with hundreds of millions of dollars in promises. They had their chance, and they did not deliver. The only people who benefited were a few rich business people. The NDP speaks for our province's middle class families, for everyone struggling to balance their families' books, everyone worrying about their mortgage or their rent. With an NDP voice back in the Legislature we can work together to build a strong New Brunswick.

Let's get going!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert Duguay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chapter 1: New Brunswick under the Conservatives and Liberals

New Brunswick's Conservatives and Liberals have swapped seats in the Legislature for more than 100 years. We used to be a world centre for ship building and for forestry. We used to be at the centre of the world's economy. Forty years ago Louis Robichaud and then Richard Hatfield worked to integrate our province, to give us bigger dreams.

In the decades since, the Conservatives and Liberals have driven our province to the bottom. On education, health, income - in every way our province has suffered. Conservative and Liberal politicians are not bad people, but they do not have the vision or ability to take our province in a better direction. No matter which team – Conservative or Liberal – was in power, the people of New Brunswick were left behind.

Our unemployment rate stands at 9.6%. An easy number to read but behind the statistic are 38,600 people without work. That is nearly forty thousand families who spend every day worrying about how to pay the mortgage, how to make the car payment, or how to afford food for next week.

By the end of this year our provincial debt will exceed nine billion dollars. Our deficit is edging towards one billion dollars. Every day the interest charges pile up. The Liberals cut taxes for corporations which benefited a few big companies, and gave away millions to Atcon and other corporate failures, while increasing fees that hit small businesses where it hurts.

The Liberals don't realise that making unpopular decisions – like selling NB Power and cancelling Early French Immersion – does not show they are decisive. It shows they are out of touch.

**ALIDA FAGAN, NDP CANDIDATE
IN ROGERSVILLE-KOUCHIBOUGUAC
AND FORMER LIBERAL**



I left the Liberals because of Shawn Graham's irresponsibility. He promised jobs in my riding but they never came. Instead, the Liberals and the Conservatives voted to supersize their own pensions. Middle class families are struggling and he did nothing: the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. The NDP has the courage to be honest about the problems we're facing, and to propose real solutions.

The Liberals' approach to government was summed up when they voted to supersize their own MLA pensions in a vote that happened in the middle of a major flood, a flood that left the Legislature in darkness and the cameras off. The Liberals know their policies don't have public support so, as with the sale of NB Power, they choose to govern in secret.

The Conservatives under David Alward had a responsibility to provide an alternative to the Graham Liberals. They failed. Look at the last few years and see the choices David Alward made. He chose to supersize his own pension, joining the Liberals in a unanimous vote that sums up everything that is wrong with New Brunswick politics. On a plan for New Brunswick, he competes with the Liberals to spend our money, but there is no vision.

Promises to consult the public after the election are not an acceptable alternative. The election campaign is when the parties need to share their plans for New Brunswick. That's what elections are about: a chance for the public to make an informed choice.

David Alward refuses to talk about his plans for NB Power. He refuses to say how he will pay for his pre-election promises. He promises increased spending while cutting taxes, and says he won't cut public services. David Alward's plan does not add up. You can't cut taxes and increase spending, and expect that our province will stay on solid financial ground. You cannot buy a new car when you have just lost your job. But that is the plan David Alward is trying to sell.

After this election, if we elect the Conservatives or the Liberals, who share so many of the same ideas that it is hard to tell them apart, they will have to make a choice. Either to push the economy towards bankruptcy, or to make big cuts in public services.

Can you trust the Alward Conservatives not to cut health and education?

Can you trust the Alward Conservatives not to continue wasteful giveaways to their rich friends through Business New Brunswick? Especially now they have promised to create a completely new government department – InvestNB – to give away even more money?

And can you trust the Alward Conservatives to make sure MLAs' pay and pensions are fully controlled by an independent body, and not by the MLAs themselves?

**JULIE DRUMMOND, NDP CANDIDATE
IN HAMPTON-KINGS
AND FORMER CONSERVATIVE**



I couldn't see our province being driven further into debt by the Conservatives. Rural New Brunswick has been forgotten by the Conservative Party. We need to help middle class and rural communities develop and thrive. The NDP has the new ideas to make that happen.

The Conservatives and Liberals ran up the debt, putting a chain around the necks of our children and grandchildren.

Through Business New Brunswick they gave away millions of your dollars to well-connected friends. Most of it left the province, never to be seen again.

They promised jobs, self-sufficiency, and good services, but we've seen the result. Things are getting slowly, steadily worse. Unemployment is going up.

The Conservatives and Liberals are tired, incompetent, and need a time out. Only an NDP voice in the Legislature, standing up for middle class families, can balance the books and save the public services like health and education that our province needs.

Chapter 2: The NDP, the voice in the Legislature for struggling middle class families

New Brunswick can do better.

We have become used to the idea that we're a 'have not' province that depends on subsidies and handouts from Ottawa. We have become used to losing our young people to Bay Street or to the oil fields of Fort McMurray.

Instead of building on the hard work and sacrifices of earlier generations, working to make our province stronger and fairer, richer and more free, the politicians who run this province have settled for a slow slide into comfortable decline.

We can do better.

Even though our public services and infrastructure are under threat from irresponsible Conservative and Liberal management, we have an opportunity to change direction, and to make this a province that serves as an example to the rest of Canada and to the rest of the world.

This transformation will mean change, and it will mean sacrifice. It will mean making hard choices. But there is no reason to think that the people of this province cannot make this change real.

The NDP is ready with a vision of change for this province.

Ready to show that we can be a successful province that attracts immigrants from around the world.

Ready to build an economy that will lift our province up from illiteracy, poverty, and dependence.

The NDP is a party of regular people. People like you. Middle class New Brunswickers, not professional politicians, but people who understand the challenges of raising a family in tough times and dealing with a government that's out of touch.

The Liberals have failed to govern. The Conservatives have failed to present an alternative.

An NDP voice in the Legislature is the only way to make sure the Conservatives and Liberals don't try to cut health and education.

The NDP recognizes that change is difficult, and that people are cynical about politics. Trust has to be rebuilt, first in the NDP, then in the province.

So we start by being honest about our own history, our own problems, and what we have done to fix them.

We had the courage to change.

Under Roger Duguay's new management the NDP has:

- Modernized our organization, giving power to the party's democratic structures and making us accountable to the people of the province;
- Modernized our policies, bringing our values into line with the needs of New Brunswick in the twenty-first century.

The NDP recognizes the need to balance rights and responsibilities, and to create a fair and inclusive province where everyone, rich and poor, works together.

In this chapter we set out our vision for New Brunswick.

The NDP has always been a voice for people who do not have access to power. From the beginning the NDP has talked about issues the people of New Brunswick care about: health care for our families, good schools, and good roads so our businesses can succeed. We speak in favour of policies that sustain and build the strong communities that have always defined New Brunswick.

In this election, we have to go to the next level. We have to turn our words into actions, and make sure an NDP voice is in the Legislature to speak up for struggling middle class families. For a long time we tried to influence the Conservatives and Liberals, trusting them to do the right thing. But now it is clear that will not happen.

Our province is at risk of complete financial collapse, and if that collapse happens, our health and education programs will be cut to the bone.

We cannot let that happen.

We have to take action, now, to turn New Brunswick around.

“Social justice and economic efficiency are two sides of the same coin. We have to talk about an economy that works for middle class New Brunswickers. An economy that generates the wealth we need to radically reduce poverty. An economy that attracts the best immigrants, that supports a sustainable health care system and the best education system. That is the economy we want.”

– Roger Duguay

THE NDP WILL:

TACKLE UNEMPLOYMENT: There is no issue more important than unemployment. Without good jobs we cannot build the infrastructure and public services we need. Without that infrastructure we cannot support strong businesses. And without strong businesses, who will offer our young people, and new immigrants, jobs?

The NDP's **New Job Tax Credit** will use our tax system to create jobs by reducing taxes for businesses that employ new workers. No more handouts to well-connected friends of the Conservatives and Liberals. No more picking economic winners and losers. The NDP will invest in businesses that are ready to grow.

HOLD THE LINE ON TAXES: New Brunswick needs to have a conversation about taxes. If we want world-class public services, from roads to hospitals, we have to pay for them. We will hold the line on income, corporate, and sales taxes for two years. During that time we will hold province-wide consultations on what we want our government to do and, in light of those consultations, develop our long-term economic strategy.

PROTECT FRONT-LINE PUBLIC SERVICES: Successful societies need strong public services like health, education and good roads. That means maintaining the front-line services we need, supported by a bureaucracy that is as streamlined and efficient as possible. Too often, governments cut front-line services while adding more layers to the bureaucracy. Because of this, the NDP commits to preserving the jobs of all front-line service workers.

DEFEND HEALTH AND EDUCATION: Health care costs are increasing rapidly as our population ages. The cost of our schools increases as enrolment declines. In addition to protecting the jobs of front-line health and education workers, the NDP will work to make our health and education systems more efficient and focused on the needs of patients and students, not well-paid private consultants. **Our Helping Hands Tax Credit** will help people looking after loved ones who are disabled or elderly, increasing their quality of life and reducing the burden on the health care system.

FIGHT POVERTY: The NDP will introduce the **Poverty Reduction Plan Plus**. It will focus on literacy - currently at an unacceptable 56% according to Statistics Canada - and on people not in work, in school, or in other government programs. Without a literate workforce we cannot compete with the rest of the world in a globalized economy. Fighting poverty isn't just the right thing to do: it's an economic necessity.

STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY: The NDP will cut MLA pay by 20% and pensions by over 50%, then give control over setting politicians' benefits to a fully independent commission. We will ban floor-crossing by MLAs, introduce a bill to change the electoral system, and call by-elections immediately upon the death or resignation of an MLA, ending the government's power to time by-elections to suit its political needs.

FIGHT WASTE: Too often, government programs get a bad reputation because they are badly designed and repeat mistakes. The NDP will end government interference in business by dismantling Business

New Brunswick and ending cash handouts to businesses. We will replace handouts with tax credits for businesses that hire new workers. We will establish a provincial Efficiency Office to make our public services as efficient and streamlined as possible, which means a focus on front-line services, not bureaucracy.

WE WILL MAKE NO PROMISES WE CANNOT KEEP: In this election, with our province facing a financial crisis, there are many areas with a real need for new and effective government programs. But, because of Conservative and Liberal recklessness, there is no money to support those programs. The NDP will balance the books to save health and education and, once that goal is achieved, we can talk together about new ideas to make our province better. The NDP has clear priorities for what we want to achieve when resources allow; we hope you'll share those values.

For us, a **provincial pharmacare program** comes first. We are the only province, except PEI, not to have one. It's a disgrace that New Brunswickers die early because they can't afford the medicine they need. Next is a **provincial childcare program**, to make child care affordable and enable thousands of New Brunswickers to enter full-time work, knowing their children will be well cared for. And our third goal is to implement the 2004 government report that recommended a **provincial public auto insurance program**, which will reduce insurance costs for everyone – as has been proven in every province where the idea has been implemented.

Chapter 3: Economy

The NDP recognizes that a strong economy is essential for a strong, just society. We need an efficient public sector creating the environment for businesses to compete and excel in a globalized world. There is no contradiction between successful businesses and well-paid jobs with good benefits.

Skilled, well-educated, well-trained, healthy New Brunswickers are the foundation for our future economic success.

Because of decades of Conservative and Liberal mismanagement our province faces a debt crisis. This makes maintaining a skilled workforce even more important, which means protecting the health and education programs we need. To fund those programs our economy must be as efficient as possible.

Hold the line on taxes

New Brunswick needs to have a conversation about taxes. If we want world-class public services, from roads to hospitals, we have to pay for them. Facing a deficit caused by out-of-control spending by Conservative and Liberal governments, and a provincial debt that threatens the economic independence of our province, we have to take urgent action.

The NDP will not implement the remaining years of the planned Liberal tax cuts, tax cuts the Conservatives have also promised to implement almost all of. By 2012 those cuts would cost the government \$293 million a year in lost income. The Conservatives will not cut by quite as much: their plan would cost New Brunswick \$235 million a year. The province cannot afford the Conservative or Liberal tax cuts. Supporting these cuts means cuts to health care and education, and New Brunswick cannot accept cuts to those front-line public services.

**You don't have to take our word on the financial crisis.
Listen to what policy experts have to say:**

“Let that be the choice that people make - do you want your schools and hospitals or do you want lower taxes? Ultimately, that's the choice.”

– Prof. Craig Brett, Mount Allison University

The Conservatives and Liberals have made their choice: to cut hospitals and schools.

“I see no alternative than raising taxes and introducing far-reaching cuts in public-sector activities.”

– Prof. Donald Savoie, Université de Moncton

Professor Savoie has warned New Brunswick that we face a huge hangover in October, when we wake up and realize that the Conservatives and Liberals were making promises we cannot afford.

Dr. Tony Myatt, an economist at UNB who has co-written an economics textbook with Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman, became so worried about the future of the province's finances that he is running for the NDP in Fredericton-Silverwood!

To deal with the financial crisis, the NDP will hold the line on income, corporate and sales taxes for two years: no increases, no cuts. During that time we will hold province-wide consultations on what we want our government to do and, in light of those consultations, develop a long-term economic vision.

The NDP is clear on its priorities: we want a world-class, fully-public health and education system, run by an efficient public service, supported by strong businesses and a population working in well-paid jobs. We hope the people of the province support these priorities.

The Graham tax cuts, supported by the Conservatives, were supposed to encourage high-income earners to move to New Brunswick. This idea has not worked and will not work.

High-income earners look for excellent health and education systems, good transport infrastructure, and opportunities for their children to do well. The Liberal and Conservative attack on our public finances will erode our health and education services, and that means fewer high-income earners will move to New Brunswick. And, more importantly, fewer New Brunswickers will become high-income earners themselves.

The Conservatives and Liberals know this; they have not provided any analysis of the relationship between tax cuts and economic development. They predict revenue growth of 2.7%, a number most economists believe is wildly optimistic and which is not supported by any research.

They say income will grow faster than spending, but don't say how that will happen. They point to a small population increase, ignoring the fact that many New Brunswickers have moved home after losing their jobs in Ontario and Alberta because of the global recession.

If we want to avoid permanent deficits we have to choose between tax increases, spending reductions, or a combination of the two. The Liberal and Conservative claim that you can cut taxes and increase spending is irresponsible, dangerous, and insults the intelligence of New Brunswick voters.

The NDP will address the structural problems in our economy honestly, openly, and will involve the people of the province in a structured discussion that will lead to firm decisions on the direction we should take.

The NDP understands that leadership means making tough decisions, but it also means having firm principles, and the courage to stand by them.

The NDP believes in a progressive tax system. A tax system that pays for health, education, infrastructure, and public safety programs that allows us to compete with the best in the world. A tax system that supports a dynamic private sector. That is our bottom line.

Creating jobs: the New Jobs Tax Credit

There is no issue more important than unemployment. Without good jobs we cannot build the infrastructure and public services we need. Without that infrastructure we cannot support strong businesses. And, without strong businesses, who will offer our young people, and new immigrants, the well-paying jobs our province needs?

The NDP will use our tax system to create jobs by reducing taxes for businesses that hire new workers. No more handouts to well-connected friends of the Conservatives and Liberals. The NDP will invest in businesses that show they are ready to grow.

The New Jobs Tax Credit will provide a 15% refundable tax credit to businesses that create new jobs. Since it is refundable it will include all companies, including start-ups, which are not yet profitable.

The New Jobs Tax Credit will reduce the tax rate for all businesses – as long as they create jobs. All businesses will be eligible, whether they are already located in New Brunswick or considering relocating to New Brunswick.

The **New Jobs Tax Credit** will provide wage subsidies in the form of refundable tax credits for new employees. To be eligible, a firm's current full-time employment must exceed its previous year's employment total by at least two percent. The proposed tax credit is 15% of the change in the firm's payroll. As long as permanent full-time jobs are increased, the tax credit will induce increases in payroll – either through adding new jobs or by increasing the hours or wages of current workers. This way everyone, including those working part-time, will benefit.

The New Jobs Tax Credit should create 17,000 new jobs.

The New Jobs Tax Credit will avoid wasting money on mistakes. Under the current Business New Brunswick system, loan officers and investment analysts are asked to pick winners. Inevitably, costly mistakes like Atcon are made.

The New Jobs Tax Credit will avoid nepotism and patronage and take the politics out of economic development. The New Jobs Tax Credit will avoid giving some firms, with good connections to the government, an unfair advantage over their competitors. With this program, politicians will have no input into which businesses get help: anyone who hires enough new workers will be able to take advantage of the New Jobs Tax Credit.

The New Jobs Tax Credit is transparent and easily understood. The regulation and application of the new system will be routine, reducing the need for bureaucracy. The New Jobs Tax Credit recognizes that existing and new firms, rural and urban businesses, big and small businesses, all have a role to play in expanding jobs.

The New Jobs Tax Credit should create approximately 17,000 new jobs in New Brunswick over the next four years; an average of 4,250 more jobs per year. Assuming these jobs – on average – pay an amount equal to our current average income of \$46,000 each, each new job would then qualify for (on average) a one-time refundable tax credit of \$6,900. The cost for the program would be around \$29 million a year.

Each new job created by the New Jobs Tax Credit would cost under \$7,000, compared to \$90,000 for a job created by Business New Brunswick.

And, every new job creates revenue for the province. There is direct revenue from income tax and the indirect revenue from the province's share of other taxes and fees. A 15% tax credit ensures that each new job results in a net benefit to the province's revenues.

In addition to creating 17,000 jobs, the New Jobs Tax Credit will make money for New Brunswick, helping to reduce our deficit and debt.

Business New Brunswick

The New Jobs Tax Credit would eliminate Business New Brunswick, closing most of its units and transferring the others to a unit within the Ministry of Finance. This will end the handouts that have seen hundreds of millions of dollars in tax money wasted on uncompetitive companies that can't survive without government connections and cash.

Eliminating Business New Brunswick and other handouts to business will save approximately \$60 million per year.

The three Business New Brunswick programs we will retain are the NB Growth Program, the Trade Assistance Program and the Employer Wage Subsidy (Workforce Expansion) program. Those programs have the benefit of being well-defined and transparent.

The following programs would be eliminated: Business Loan Guarantees, and Business Loans. The government would get out of the business of lending money to firms.

Every effort would be made to redeploy Business New Brunswick employees whose jobs are eliminated. Giving loans to businesses is a flawed system. Its failure is not due to flawed workers and they should not be penalized.

In addition to giving away your money to businesses that can't cut it in the real world, Business New Brunswick has given some companies, often with good connections to the government, an unfair advantage over their local competitors.

Government should support New Brunswick businesses, but we should support them by providing well-trained workers, excellent infrastructure, and a competitive tax structure that can support the essential public services our citizens need, like health and education.

Balance the books, tackle the debt

We all have to balance our books. As individuals, as families, we cannot spend more than we earn. If you take a loan to buy a car, or a mortgage to buy a house, you have to pay the loan back. You cannot keep on borrowing and borrowing.

We saw what happened to the American economy when George Bush cut taxes and caused a housing bubble: ultimately millions of families lost their homes. They lost everything. We cannot let that happen to New Brunswick. We have to balance our books and get the provincial debt under control.

The Liberals and Conservatives are not telling the truth when they claim the deficit will magically disappear through growth. As of August 16, 2010, New Brunswick's official deficit was \$738 million.

The real deficit is considerably higher. Earlier this year the Auditor General noted that the government altered spending in some areas, such as the higher education operating grant, which artificially reduced the deficit by \$150 million.

Per capita, our deficit is second only to Ontario's. We have a current account deficit and a capital account deficit. Already, we pay 48 cents out of every dollar the province takes in income tax, just to service the interest on ever-growing debt.

Today, 75% of government spending goes to health, education, and making payments on our debt. We are coming close to the edge of a financial cliff. Several factors could push us over the edge, including a reduction in transfer payments by a cash-strapped federal government, a double dip recession, or a return to higher interest rates. All of these are possible, even likely, outcomes.

If Stephen Harper or Michael Ignatieff reduced transfer payments, it would have a devastating impact on New Brunswick. Forty-two cents of every dollar our province takes in comes from Ottawa.

These are huge obstacles in our path. Some we can avoid, if we manage our province honestly, and with a long term vision. Others we cannot: our aging population is a fact that we have to confront no matter how successful we are at attracting new immigrants, or strengthening our economy.

The NDP has a plan that takes control of New Brunswick's finances. The NDP plan asks us to decide what sort of province we want and what we are willing to pay to make it real.

If the NDP is elected on September 27, we will immediately make the cuts defined in this platform. That will reduce the deficit by \$304 million. By early 2011 we will have been able to examine the province's books and recommend further savings, without any changes to the corporate, sales, or income taxes.

In 2012, following broad consultations with the public, we will move ahead with our deficit reduction plans, allowing us to balance the budget by 2014 and to begin paying down the provincial debt.

No cuts to front-line public services

The first step toward resolving our financial crisis is to define what is off limits. For the NDP, front-line public services are off limits. That means no cuts to any program that directly serves the public: from health care to transport to education.

No new spending not covered by cuts to existing spending items

Until the deficit is under control, the NDP will not support increased levels of government spending. Reductions in spending on existing programs must be made to support any new spending, and any new programs should focus on priority areas: front-line services, especially health, education, infrastructure, and public safety.

The Government of New Brunswick Efficiency Officer

The NDP is serious about cutting our deficit and debt, so we can save the frontline public services like health and education that New Brunswickers need. An efficient government is an NDP government.

The NDP will create the position of government Efficiency Officer, who will be responsible for conducting a cost-benefit analysis of every government department to: a) improve access for citizens; b) reduce overhead; c) streamline regulations; d) reduce duplication; e) reduce the use of outside consultants; and f) eliminate the contracting of retired civil servants to perform government functions.

The Efficiency Officer will report directly to the Cabinet, with a report identifying areas for savings and technological advances within each department. The Cabinet will decide whether or not to implement the recommendations in each report. Each report will be made public in its entirety, regardless of which elements were approved or rejected by Cabinet, within two months of the report being submitted.

The Efficiency Office will work to identify and eliminate areas of overlap and duplication between government departments; this means the Department of Public Engagement will be abolished: public engagement should be a core function of every government department.

The Efficiency Officer will clarify laws, regulations and rules to make it simpler and cheaper for citizens and small-and medium-sized businesses to access government services, including registration, tax information and tax filing. The Efficiency Officer will regularly review all regulations to condense, clarify, and, if necessary, eliminate regulations that are out-dated, duplicated, or ineffective.

The Efficiency Officer would replace the office to reduce red tape, housed within Business New Brunswick (BNB). BNB would be closed by the NDP, and its useful functions reassigned to the Department of Finance.

The Efficiency Office would include three program staff and three support staff, hired from within the civil service, in addition to an office budget and support for carrying out their work. The Office's total budget would not exceed \$2 million per year.

A planned 1% reduction in government spending through the elimination of waste will save \$75 million.

End the ‘March Madness’ of unbudgeted spending

Every year government departments that are approaching the end of their fiscal year hurry to spend any money left in their budgets. Conferences, workshops, reports, and consultants are commissioned so department heads cannot be accused of having money lying around that they do not need.

The NDP will prohibit this unbudgeted spending. In Nova Scotia, this prohibition saved more than \$200 million in a single year. New Brunswick can expect similar savings; our government spends more than Nova Scotia, despite our smaller size and GDP. **Based on the size of our government, we can expect to save \$210 million**, savings that will significantly reduce the deficit.

“The NDP is trying to position itself as the voice of middle class families, as its campaign material suggests, and its take on March Madness helps distance itself from a reputation of being a tax-and-spend party... The two major political parties should take note of the NDP’s position on March Madness and follow suit.”

– Editorial, Telegraph Journal, September 4, 2010

Property tax: end the confusion

Conflict between the provincial government and municipalities has meant endless disputes, creating confusion and unnecessary bureaucracy that costs middle class New Brunswickers money we can’t afford – money that would be better spent on health and education programs.

Nowhere has this conflict caused more division than around the issue of property tax assessments.

The Liberals have proposed a two-year rate freeze and the Conservatives have proposed a three percent rate cap, in addition to a complete freeze for seniors. But these aren’t solutions; the Conservatives and Liberals are passing the costs from the province to the municipalities.

If municipalities don’t get money from the province, how will they maintain the services we need? The answer is clear: those services will be cut, or taxes will be raised.

The current system must be simplified. Inequalities must be addressed.

The property tax assessment must be simpler to perform and to understand, and must address the needs of those on fixed and low incomes.

The province must phase out double-taxation on rental properties. The NDP proposes to implement this reform in the first year the provincial budget is balanced; the province cannot afford to immediately lose the \$62 million in revenue raised by the double tax.

Local government: power to municipalities

We interact with local government every day. They do work that's unglamorous, but essential. It's time municipal governments were given the rights and responsibilities they need to deliver the services you need. Giving control to communities means every municipal government will be able to decide what services are needed, and what it can afford. Let's make it clear who is responsible and then hold them accountable.

The NDP proposes to transfer more power to the municipalities over the course of three years. This will take place in conjunction with a review of municipal government.

Central to the implementation of these reforms will be the implementation of a rationalization process, such as that described in the Finn report, reducing the number of governments in New Brunswick from 421 to below 100, and the transfer of property taxation powers to the local level.

This means property tax assessments will be handled completely at the local level. This power will be transferred over three years.

Rural development

Rural issues are often ignored. The recommendations of the Finn Report should be considered and expanded: New Brunswick has too many local governments with not enough power.

The Graham Liberals' northern development plan failed because it depended on government intervention without consultation. Rural areas of New Brunswick, north and south, have more in common with each other, despite linguistic and cultural differences, than is often acknowledged.

The NDP proposes, as part of a broader restructuring and empowering of municipal governance, to begin discussions on establishing rural governance structures as recommended in the Finn report, in consultation with rural residents.

As the basis for consultations, the NDP will propose Councils of Rural Communities, led by elected mayors and elected rural councillors, supported by municipal civil servants. The rights and responsibilities of the Councils would need to be carefully calibrated to ensure that rural

development is self-sustaining, avoiding the development of resentments between rural and urban communities over the sharing of common resources.

This level of government would have tax-raising powers.

The NDP will begin work on restructuring rural government immediately after the election and will implement reforms within four years.

Private pension insurance

It is unacceptable that workers pay into a pension for their entire working lives only to find that their employer used their pension fund to pay for bad management decisions.

The NDP proposes a self-financing, mandatory insurance system funded by pension plan sponsors. This is standard in the United States. In Canada, only Ontario has such an insurance plan. The insurance payout would only become available if a firm refuses or becomes unable to pay the cost of a worker's pension.

We propose a mandatory provincial plan to insure pension payouts up to \$2,000 per month.

To avoid the creation of separate bureaucratic structures, the NDP will look to match the new private pension insurance program to existing provincially-run insurance programs. Provisions within the Workers' Compensation Act allow for an annuity to be set up for injured workers after they have been on workers compensation for 24 months; housing the private pension insurance plan within Worksafe NB would allow this new program to be easily and efficiently managed.

The amount to be charged for the plan premiums will be established in consultation with the business community, unions, and other stakeholders after the election. The program will begin operation one year after the election.

Currently, in the case of bankruptcies, workplace pension plans may be wound up and converted to low-interest annuities. But often, pensioners would be better served if their pension plans could live on as "going concerns." The NDP proposes creating a facility to adopt pension plans orphaned in employer bankruptcies.

Pay equity

The NDP is committed to pay equity legislation to eliminate wage discrimination between men and women. In 2004, then-NDP Leader Elizabeth Weir introduced Bill 77, legislation drafted by the Coalition for Pay Equity, to establish a Pay Equity Commission and require employers with more than 10 employees to implement and maintain a pay equity program. The Bill prohibits employers from lowering wages to achieve pay equity.

The Conservatives and Liberals chose to phase in voluntary pay equity measures over five years. This approach has not succeeded, and the wage gap has not changed: not one company implemented the voluntary measures. With all parties on record supporting pay equity and the Conservative and Liberal approach having proved unsuccessful, it is time to try the mechanism proposed by the NDP.

The NDP will introduce legislation modelled on successful pay equity legislation already in place in Quebec. The NDP Pay Equity Act would require employers with ten or more employees to implement a pay equity plan within four years. Employers would be prohibited from lowering wages to achieve pay equity. As in Quebec, the law would be monitored and enforced by a Pay Equity Commission, which would also assist small business in complying with the law, reducing the burden imposed on them by the Act.

The Pay Equity Commission would be cost-neutral. The government would not subsidize pay equity increases to the private sector.

The existing voluntary and ineffective pay equity program in place in would be replaced, and its budget redirected to cover the administrative costs of the new Commission. The Pay Equity Act would eventually lead to a modest increase in government income tax revenue as wage increases take effect.

The effect of pay equity legislation on employers is minimal, but it creates significant benefits for underpaid employees. An evaluation of Quebec's Pay Equity Act, ten years after the law took effect, found that 28% of employees in female dominated job classes received raises as a result of the law, and the average raise was 6.5%. The average increase in wage costs to employers was an affordable 1.5%; payroll spending that would be eligible for the **New Job Tax Credit** in New Brunswick if wage cost increase by more than 2% per year. And, the local economy also receive the benefit of increase spending.

Insurance cap

The NDP will adjust the insurance cap for minor automobile accidents from \$2,500 to \$7,500, in line with recent increases in Nova Scotia. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick have kept their caps at \$2,500.

Both the Conservatives and the Liberals are putting insurance companies ahead of middle class families. This is another reason why we need an NDP voice in the Legislature to stand up for middle class families. The Conservatives under Bernard Lord imposed the \$2,500 cap in June 2003. Auto insurance rates, which had been skyrocketing at the time, dropped initially but then returned to high levels. The regulation has not given people relief from high insurance rates, but it has been

a windfall for insurance companies who now do not have to pay fair compensation to accident victims.

The claim by the insurance industry, and Conservative and Liberal politicians, that insurance rates will go up if we raise the cap, is not true. The NDP government in Nova Scotia raised its auto insurance cap from \$2,500 to \$7,500 earlier this year and there has been no hint of an increase to insurance rates. New Brunswick would be no different.

Under the regulation written by the Conservatives, and kept in place by the Liberals, every injury in an auto accident is considered “minor” as long as there is a chance that the victim might recover. So compensation for an injury that debilitates someone for years, but which they might eventually recover from, is capped at \$2,500.

Roads

The NDP commits to ongoing maintenance of the province’s road network until New Brunswick’s finances are returned to order. Beginning construction on new road projects would be suspended for two years.

The NDP commits to a thorough review of the Department of Transportation, including hiring and tendering processes, to ensure high standards of accountability and transparency.

When new road construction is required the NDP will not use the P3 model supported by the Liberals and Conservatives, which has been expensive and wasteful.

Forestry

New Brunswick’s forest industry is central to the wealth and prosperity of our province. Fourteen of our communities rely entirely on forest products, and a further fifty depend on the paper, pulp, or sawmill operations to drive economic growth. Across the province, countless other communities are involved in harvesting the wealth of our forests. We must manage this asset to create wealth, create jobs, maintain biodiversity and provide recreational opportunities for our citizens.

The natural diversity of our Acadian Forest requires a diverse approach to forest management. We need to emphasise sustainable forestry practices and emphasise the economic contribution that private woodlot owners make to our economy. Today more than 13,000 New Brunswickers are employed in the forestry sector, including more than 1000 professionals. In 2008, forestry generated \$1.25 billion for our economy.

The NDP will promote private woodlots as the primary source of timber for the forest industry. We will increase revenue from Crown lands by strictly applying penalties for infractions and late payments and by increasing royalty rates, following consultations with stakeholders.

The NDP proposes an immediate re-assessment of the market price for Crown lands stumpage, in pursuit of a minimum price increase of 1%, pending a complete review of the province's forest management policy to be undertaken immediately after the election. This will generate substantial additional revenues for the provincial treasury, depending on the price of forest products.

Public participation should be increased, with stakeholders, including First Nations communities, to establish principles for the management of Crown lands.

To more efficiently allocate woodland resources the NDP will support the creation of community forests. Following consultations and with the support of communities linked to the industry, and after discussions with other stakeholders, the NDP will present a Community Forests Act.

Forest management must consider adequate habitat for wildlife, protection for streams and rivers, and forest diversity in terms of age and species.

The NDP will support sustainable silviculture programs on Crown lands and on private woodlots through a four year silviculture plan supported with stable funding; this will replace the often unstable and short-term programs that have existed to this date.

The NDP will draft biodiversity guidelines to ensure no overall loss of biodiversity, before authorizing biomass extraction programs. Bio-gasification programs should be examined to determine their viability, with government support offered to university-based research and development departments working in partnership with community groups.

The NDP will phase out aerial spraying of herbicides on public land over four years, to be replaced with a ground-based herbicide program that will reduce environmental damage and increase employment.

Wood construction

The NDP supports the revision to building regulations to allow the safe construction of taller buildings constructed from wood.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a critical component of the New Brunswick economy, and our proposals to support all businesses, including farms will have a positive effect on New Brunswick's farming communities.

The NDP will, as the province's finances allow, support cooperatives as a model for the producing, processing and marketing of agricultural products.

The NDP will ban the sale of terminator seeds, protecting the viability of our farming industry and communities.

Fisheries

The NDP is committed to reforming fishery regulation to protect small fish harvesters through co-management and community consultation, to preserve stocks and ensure fairness in the allocation of federal licenses.

New Brunswick can continue to support dynamic freshwater and saltwater recreational fisheries, but must ensure environmental protections are in place to protect critical fish stocks.

The NDP proposes to update the Fish and Wildlife Act to impose severe penalties for the introduction of non-native fish species; non-native species will be eliminated where possible. The government will take action to protect all native fish species, including salmon, in consultation with First Nations communities, various watershed management groups, the NB Wildlife Federation, the NB Salmon Council, the Atlantic Salmon Federation and others.

The NDP proposes to expand public access to waters throughout the province.

When provincial funds allow, the NDP proposes to re-establish the provincial Fish Hatchery for the production of coldwater fish to supply put-grow-and-take fisheries (e.g. landlocked salmon) and to support unique wild stocks of brook trout or lake trout as well as inner Bay of Fundy salmon and other at-risk populations.

The NDP will, as the province's finances allow, support cooperatives as a model for the producing, processing and marketing of fish products.

Cooperatives and Community Economic Development Investment Funds (CEDIF)

Cooperatives have a long tradition in the Maritimes, and offer a means for small communities and groups to pool their resources and create profitable businesses. Cooperatives have been under-resourced in New Brunswick, suffering from a poor regulatory framework compared to Nova Scotia and other provinces.

CEDIFs offer a tax credit to individuals who put their investment capital into funds that support new or developing locally-owned corporations and cooperatives. Developed and implemented in Nova Scotia since 1999, the program has supported nearly one hundred businesses with more than \$32 million in assets. The failure rate has been impressively low and the projects have been cost-effective and sustainable.

The NDP will update the *Cooperative Associations Act*.

The NDP will establish a four million dollar (one million per year) fund to pilot small cooperatives and CEDIF projects, with expansions in the third and fourth year if the province's financial situations allows.

Gambling

The NDP recognizes the serious damage that gambling causes to the lives of many people and for that reason will not expand the number of VLT machines or legalize online gaming. The government will not expand the number of casinos in the province and will, once the province's finances allow, examine the social cost versus the economic benefit of the casino in Moncton.

Chapter 4: Society

Healthcare

Medicare was first introduced by the NDP government of Saskatchewan, by Premier Tommy Douglas, after he had tackled his province's enormous debt and deficit. Medicare is the program that reminds the NDP what can be done when we get our books in order. The NDP in New Brunswick looks to Tommy Douglas and the Saskatchewan experience for inspiration; our financial and social policies are two sides of the same coin.

Promises of any significant new programs must be made in light of the province's financial situation. Otherwise, they are not credible promises.

Conservative and Liberal governments have driven New Brunswick towards a debt and deficit crisis so severe that our public health care system is threatened. Our \$8.3 billion debt will grow by over \$900 million this year. If proposed Conservative and Liberals tax cuts are implemented, the deficit will reach over \$1.2 billion per year.

Our credit rating was downgraded in 2009, which reduces the government's ability to sustain its existing debt, and we are facing further credit downgrades if the Conservatives and Liberals are allowed to continue with their reckless, self-serving agendas. If urgent action is not taken to balance the budget, the debt will reach crisis levels in just a few years, and the Conservatives and Liberals will make massive cuts to front-line services like health care.

Community collaborative clinics and healthcare innovations

As part of our public health system the NDP will support the creation of more Community Care Collaborative Clinics throughout the province, through the conversion of existing but under-resourced facilities into Collaborative Clinics offering multi-disciplinary primary healthcare outside the emergency room.

The NDP will study the recommendations of the Canadian Health Coalition, which suggests ways to reduce hospital waiting times and other problems in the health system while increasing efficiency and, where possible, lowering costs.

The NDP will expand the role of nurse practitioners and other health professionals such as paramedics, midwives and Licensed Practical Nurses to provide primary care in all communities. Flexibility in healthcare delivery models would allow the province to take the Canadian lead in updating the roles of healthcare professionals.

The NDP supports the recent court decision that gives New Brunswickers the right to receive healthcare services in the official language of their choice.

Pharmacare

The NDP believes Pharmacare should be a core component of universal health care, and strongly agrees with the call for catastrophic drug coverage for all New Brunswickers. Successive Conservative and Liberal governments have mismanaged New Brunswick's finances so badly that New Brunswick is one of only two provinces without this program. Once finances allow, the NDP will establish a catastrophic drug coverage program for all New Brunswickers.

Tobacco taxes

Health groups including the Canadian Cancer Society say that higher tobacco prices are one of the most, if not the most, effective means to cut smoking.

This is why the tobacco industry puts so much effort into falsely claiming that raising tobacco taxes increases smuggling. Tobacco smuggling is an issue that the NDP takes seriously, which is why we are also proposing a smuggling reduction strategy, but it is not a reason to delay badly needed tobacco tax increases in New Brunswick.

The NDP proposes to bring New Brunswick's tobacco taxes into line with those in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. We propose to raise tobacco taxes by ten cents per cigarette over four years, at a rate of 2.5 cents per year.

In addition, the NDP proposes to close the tax loophole for roll-your-own cigarettes, so that 0.5 grams of roll-your-own tobacco, enough for one cigarette, is taxed at the same rate as one prefabricated cigarette.

The higher prices will reduce tobacco consumption in New Brunswick by approximately 10%, reducing human suffering and raising approximately \$55 million in annual revenue by the fourth year. After four years, this ten-cents-per-cigarette increase will put New Brunswick's tobacco taxes just below Nova Scotia's and just above Prince Edward Island's current rates.

Tobacco control

New Brunswick needs a comprehensive tobacco control program to help people stop smoking. While dealing with the record deficits caused by Conservative and Liberal governments, the NDP proposes to phase in a comprehensive tobacco control program beginning with cost-neutral measures such as requiring plain packaging, improvements to smoke-free places legislation - with a focus on places where children gather - tobacco retail reform, and a smuggling reduction strategy.

Tanning salons

The NDP will reintroduce the ban on young people under the age of 18 using tanning beds. This issue shows the gap between Conservative and Liberal rhetoric about health and health promotion, and the reality.

From 1992 to 2009 New Brunswick was the only province in Canada that banned young people under the age of 18 from using tanning beds, which are classed as a Class A carcinogen by the World Health Organization. Then the Graham Liberals revoked the law. The Conservatives did nothing to stand up for children's health. Under pressure, the Liberals flip-flopped and brought in a voluntary code for the tanning industry. This is not an effective replacement for the repealed legislation. The NDP will immediately re-establish the ban on artificial tanning by minors and restore New Brunswick's leadership on this issue.

Angioplasty treatment for MS

The NDP supports further investigation of the angioplasty or 'Liberation' treatment for sufferers of Multiple Sclerosis.

Autism

There has been little progress in developing facilities for adult group homes and other support networks for autism sufferers. The NDP supports an expansion of support for such homes, allowing many autism sufferers to contribute more fully to their community. These programs will begin once funds allow, based on balancing the provincial budget and securing health and education programs necessary to provide primary care to autistic New Brunswickers.

Education and youth

The preservation of a fully public health and education system is at the centre of our election campaign. In the face of reckless Conservative and Liberal spending on failed business projects like ATCON, and the erosion of our tax base, our province faces a growing deficit and debt. The NDP is concerned that unless fiscal responsibility is restored, cuts to health and education will be inevitable. The NDP is promising to stand firm against any cuts to front-line public services, including teachers and other education workers.

The NDP is concerned that pressure to cut the deficit will be used by the Conservatives and Liberals to justify deep education cuts after the election; in light of this the NDP will not support any minority government that does not commit to maintaining front-line public services.

The NDP recognizes the potential of our young people and will work to include youth representation in government bodies.

The NDP recognizes that the Conservative and Liberal model of public-private partnerships has resulted in excessive hidden costs for the public. The NDP will not enter into any new P3 contracts for school construction.

Child care

The NDP has advocated for a comprehensive publicly-funded child care program for many decades. Successive Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to enact promised programs. Following the implementation of a pharmacare program, the NDP's next major program priority is the implementation of a fully-accessible child care program with parents' contributions based on the ability to pay.

The NDP endorses the call of the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition for a universal child care program, and will implement this commitment as soon as funds become available.

Teachers and the classroom

The NDP in this election is committed to maintaining front-line public services, and this includes maintaining the current number of teaching positions.

With the anticipated decline in enrolment contrasted with a stable number of teaching positions there will be a decrease in the number of students working with each teacher. The NDP proposes to develop a long-term vision for the education system, combined with the restoration of a balanced approach to the province's finances, to ensure class sizes are optimal for students' success.

The NDP supports the recommendations of the MacKay report, based on the model of inclusion developed by the NDP government in Manitoba. The recommendations should be implemented as New Brunswick's finances allow.

In the face of exceptionally high illiteracy rates and other challenges, the NDP supports the use of standardized tests as one of a battery of means to ensure that New Brunswick students can excel in a competitive global market. The NDP looks forward to working with the New Brunswick Teachers' Association and other stakeholders to develop appropriate measures in support of teacher accountability.

Post-secondary education

New Brunswick's universities and community colleges are magnets for investment, new ideas, and new businesses. The NDP will maintain funding for post-secondary education at current levels despite the province's financial crisis and, where possible, expand research and development funding.

Student debt loads have continued to increase. The average debt upon graduation is now more than \$32,000 per student. The NDP will maintain the freeze on tuition for two years, in parallel with a review of post-secondary education to determine how to increase education quality and improve access for students with sufficient academic qualifications.

The NDP will remove the mandatory summer income contribution for recipients of student loans. This will allow students to take opportunities that may not offer financial compensation but which further their education and/or contribute to society.

The NDP will adjust the study clawback, which effectively limits the number of hours many students can work per week during the school year. The clawback is currently set at \$50.00 per week, less than the amount earned in a single shift at most workplaces. The NDP will increase this to \$150.00 per week, which will allow for 15 hours of work at a \$10.00 per hour minimum wage.

The NDP will review fees for residence rooms charged by the province's universities; too many students pay money they cannot afford for residence rooms that cost many times more than market rates.

Child welfare

New Brunswick's child welfare regulations are imperfect and in many cases outdated. The NDP commits to a review of all child welfare programs, based on international best practices in medical and social sciences. There is a consensus on the importance of parental relationships for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to their subsequent healthy psychological development and intact cognitive development. Similarly, there is clear evidence of the negative impact of all forms of abuse.

The NDP will evaluate the current state of child welfare agencies, and the consistency of service provision. The NDP will establish clear policies and procedures for the conduct of protection assessments for children and adolescents, and will define when parenting capacity assessments are mandatory.

The NDP will implement intervention programs that monitor and support parents at risk of maltreating their children that target parents' understanding of their children's development and help parents to overcome challenges that interfere with their abilities to manage their children's behaviour.

The NDP will ensure that these programs are also implemented and supported in the province's First Nations, through cooperation with the leadership of the First Nations. The NDP will support interventions such as the Positive Parenting Program, or 'Triple P', an internationally

renowned intervention that has demonstrated success in reducing the maltreatment of children.

The majority of services targeting child and adolescent mental health, and that promote mental health, are delivered via community mental health centres. To ensure quality of services, these centres should be reviewed through formal program evaluations that collect baseline data, and measure outcomes.

First Nations

The NDP is committed to working with our province's First Nations as they continue discussions and negotiations with Ottawa to resolve outstanding issues.

The NDP is committed to working with First Nations to secure agreements on the use of natural resources.

The NDP proposes to continue and expand cooperation between First Nations and other New Brunswick communities on logging and construction initiatives modelled on the experience of the Elsipogtog First Nation and local English-speaking and Acadian communities.

Poverty reduction plan+

Seven out of the ten poorest postal codes in Canada, with a median income in 2006 of under \$14,000, are in New Brunswick: Adamsville, Burnt Church, Eel Ground, Esgenooetitj, Elsipogtog, Kingsclear, and Tobique. Reducing poverty must be among the government's highest priorities.

The Poverty Reduction Plan agreed to by the Conservatives and Liberals included positive programs but has been burdened with excessive bureaucracy that has reduced its impact.

The NDP will cut the administrative costs of the Department of Social Development's income support programs by 1% and use the \$2.3 million in annual savings to increase income support benefits for the permanently disabled by 55%, from \$618 per month to \$956 per month.

The NDP will eliminate the duplication of having a province-wide network of adult literacy programs (run by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour) and another province-wide network of job skill programs for people on social assistance (run by the Department of Social Development) by consolidating all adult education and training under the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. The estimated \$1.1 million in annual savings will be directed into expanding the Career Development Opportunities Program to help single parents on social assistance find good jobs.

The NDP will audit the bureaucratic and top-heavy Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, and other agencies involved in program delivery, to eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic spending and duplication. The estimated \$7.5 million in total savings will be used to create a financial incentive program for people on social assistance to enrol in literacy programs or other career development programs.

Mental health

With approximately two percent of the population requiring mental health services, service delivery has been uneven and poorly resourced. Mental health issues are often seen as the poor cousin of the health services, lacking strong public advocates.

The NDP proposes to develop a provincial Mental Health Strategy, with the goal of defining clear structures to support mental health programs. This strategy will be completed within 18 months.

Living with intellectual disabilities

More than 22,000 New Brunswickers live with intellectual disabilities. The NDP commits to developing stronger government programs in the areas of employment, education, housing, and access to support. Strengthening government programs in these areas will allow those living with intellectual disabilities to live better and more independent lives.

Diabetes

The NDP will implement the recommendations of the Action Plan for Diabetes in New Brunswick, once the province's finances allow.

Living with vision loss

The NDP will work with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to implement recommendations to assist those living with vision loss.

Non-profit organizations

The Non-Profit Secretariat should be provided with stable four-year funding to ensure continuity of programs and services.

End illiteracy

New Brunswick's literacy levels are a disgrace, and are a significant cause of our province's economic underperformance. We cannot compete in a global marketplace with literacy levels that do not equip our workers with the necessary skills. The literacy plan outlined below will cut illiteracy in half in four years.

Fifty-six percent of New Brunswickers, and 66% of francophone New Brunswickers, read at or below Level Two, according to Statistics Canada.

People with Level One literacy can only read familiar words that they recognize. They have trouble using any printed material to make decisions, such as a medication label or printed directions. Many use memorization to cope with life situations like passing a driver's test.

People with Level Two literacy can only understand plain-language reading material. They have trouble filling out forms and tend to try to avoid reading whenever possible.

Level Three literacy means a person has the ability to read, understand and use printed information in their daily activities. Only 44% of New Brunswickers have at least this level of literacy. The 56% who are functionally illiterate are at Level One or Two.

Literacy lifts people out of poverty. The average income of a person with Level One literacy is \$20,692.00, while the average income of a person with Level Three literacy is \$42,239.00.

According to Statistics Canada, a 1% increase in literacy increases overall labour productivity by 2.5%. That means an additional \$18 billion added to Canada's GDP. In New Brunswick, our share of that total figure would equal our spending on education.

The NDP proposes to expand the recently created "Working Together for Adult Literacy" program, which contains twelve short-term programs, by \$5 million over four years.

We further propose to expand the government's partnership with Laubach Literacy New Brunswick (LLNB) and la Fédération d'alphabétisation du Nouveau-Brunswick (FANB) to extend one-on-one teaching programs through an investment of up to \$10 million over four years, based on the organizations' demonstrating verifiable results.

We will also develop a new NB Reads program that will allow up to 500 university students per year to receive a one-term tuition rebate from any New Brunswick university. Students would take two months of training and then do two months of full-time work with people in need of literacy training in rural and remote communities. This program would cost \$6 million per year.

Finally, the NDP will expand the volunteer-driven Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick after-school literacy programs for students in Grades 1 through 5 with an additional \$2 million in support over four years.

The NDP proposal to cut illiteracy by half in four years is realistic with the focused effort proposed in this plan. Many developing countries with a lot less wealth than New Brunswick have achieved impressive results with similarly focused efforts. For instance, India, with many more people, more languages and much less wealth than New Brunswick increased its

literacy level from 52% to 64% from 1998 to 2008. Cambodia went from a 57% literacy level in 1990 to 68% in 1997 with a focused effort as it emerged from genocide and dictatorship. Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest and most corrupt countries, increased its literacy rate from 35% to 57% between 1991 and 1998.

Seniors

Our priority is to protect the ability of our provincial government to create social programs for New Brunswick. This means getting our debt and deficit under control, before they are used by the Conservatives and Liberals to justify cuts to existing health care programs that will arguably hurt seniors the most. A return to a balanced and growing economy will allow more resources to be dedicated to the increasing population of elderly people who live in our province, to support both their quality of life and their direct medical needs.

Increasing the hours of care is necessary, and once our books are balanced and health and education programs are protected, this area must receive urgent attention.

Providing services to allow senior citizens to live at home is good for seniors, good for the health care system, and therefore good for the economy. The NDP will introduce the Helping Hands Tax Credit to help those making the sacrifice to look after elderly or infirm loved ones. The tax credit will be developed to provide an annual lump sum to those meeting the selection criteria, and will cost no more than \$10 million in the first year, with increases to follow on an annual basis as the province's finances allow.

The NDP will create an Ombudsman for seniors to ensure that seniors are treated equally in society and before the law. Elder abuse must be treated with the same seriousness, and victims offered the same supports, as victims of child abuse.

The NDP is committed to a well-being and health promotion strategy for seniors because of its immediate benefits to seniors' health and quality of life and for the benefits it provides in reducing costs to the health care system.

The NDP supports the recent increases in social assistance implemented by the Ministry of Social Development, supports the Poverty Reduction Plan approved by the Liberals and Conservatives, and will introduce enhancements to that program.

The right of seniors to receive care in either official language should extend to nursing homes. This is not only a question of cultural protection but of medical communication. If a senior is unable to clearly express themselves to the workers in care facilities their health could be endangered.

Culture

The NDP will maintain support for arts organizations at current levels until provincial finances allow for the possibility of expansion.

Tourism

New Brunswick has yet to establish a clear tourism brand, despite various efforts over the years. The NDP is committed to maintaining support for tourism initiatives, pending a review of provincial tourism programs.

The NDP is prepared to work with the province's First Nations to include their history and heritage, and First Nations territory and businesses, in any tourism strategy.

The NDP is prepared to include the province's hotels, bed and breakfasts, inns and other tourism businesses in the provincial tourism strategy.

Immigration

New Brunswick needs immigrants. The NDP will, within one year, table an immigration strategy to encourage immigration from a range of countries based on criteria including familiarity with the English and French languages, and existing trade or cultural connections. Existing criteria regarding proportionality of English and French immigration should be maintained as we move to aggressively expand our population with the best and brightest from around the world, ready to make New Brunswick their new home.

New Brunswick must set ambitious immigration goals and ensure that they are met. Otherwise we will have great difficulty supporting our rapidly aging population. Our province should be growing by 4,000 people a year; the NDP will commit \$5 million to meet this goal, through targeted immigration drives and other means.

Sports

The NDP will maintain support for SportsNB and, as the province's finances allow, expand funding for childhood and adult physical education programs.

Mandatory physical education needs to be in place for every year of schooling, from kindergarten to Grade 12.

The NDP will support non-profit groups that provide new and used sports equipment to kids whose families lack the money to afford their own. A small investment of \$1 million over four years could radically change the health outcomes of children from less-privileged backgrounds.

Bullying

The NDP will develop anti-bullying policies to protect our children from bullying at school and in cyberspace. Penalties for bullies should not include suspensions or expulsions from school: turning young bullies into adult criminals does not make sense.

Moose hunting

The NDP proposes to double the number of moose licenses offered every year, and to double the license cost for out-of-province hunters. Lottery tickets will increase in price to \$20.

Chapter 5: Energy

The NDP's primary goal in setting energy policy is to ensure that our citizens have access to the cleanest energy at the best possible price.

Energy Financing Districts

Energy Financing Districts (EFDs) allow municipalities to raise money by issuing bonds to fund clean energy. The money is repaid through the property taxes of participants in the program, who increase the value of their properties by installing energy efficiency improvements and/or renewable electricity generation for their facilities.

Because the financing is secured with a lien on the property, there is little or no up-front cost to the property owner. If the property is sold before the end of the repayment period, the new owner inherits both the repayment obligation and the financed improvements.

The NDP will grant municipalities the power to create EFDs through the passage of the appropriate legislation. ENB and the municipalities would then develop and issue the bonds and initiate the program.

Types of electrical generators eligible to be financed under the program would include wind turbines, solar panels, micro-hydro, biogas, and biomass generators. Financed generators of different types would be linked together, increasing redundancy.

In addition, projects such as the one proposed by the village of Memramcook, which guarantee producers a fixed price for locally-produced electricity, can also be considered as the province's finances allow.

Efficiency New Brunswick

Efficiency New Brunswick has quickly established a global reputation as a leader in the promotion of retrofitting and energy saving programs. The NDP proposes to guarantee the budget for Efficiency NB and to classify it as a front-line public service, exempt from cuts under the NDP's deficit reduction programs.

Natural gas and mining

The discovery of natural gas reserves in southern New Brunswick offers hope for an economically depressed region. It also carries significant risks, if exploration and exploitation are not managed in the interests of New Brunswickers and our environment.

The gas fields offer potential for economic development but exploration must respect the property rights of landowners, the interests of local residents, and the economic interests of the province.

The NDP supports oil exploration under the above conditions but agrees with the Conservation Council of New Brunswick that the materials used in the mining process must be subject to strict controls.

The NDP supports mining operations in the province as long as they meet the conditions described above, for the extraction of natural gas.

The NDP will seek to renegotiate the contract between Enbridge and the province for the provision of natural gas. The NDP will, within the confines of the law, end the monopoly agreement in pursuit of a more equitable arrangement for the people of the province.

New Brunswick Power

The NDP is committed to an efficient and cost-effective energy utility that puts struggling middle class New Brunswick families first. Energy competition has been introduced into the supply of approximately 10% of NB Power's generating capacity but so far has favoured large businesses over individual, small-scale, cooperative and other community power generating schemes.

The NDP will maintain the assets of the New Brunswick Power Distribution and Customer Service Corporation (known as Disco) and the assets of New Brunswick Power Transmission Corporation (known as Transco) under the control of NB Power and the government, in perpetuity, and will assert a monopoly over the transmission and distribution of electricity, except for any arrangements in place as of January 2010, including those between NB Power and Saint John Energy, City of Edmundston Electric and the Perth-Andover Electric Light Commission.

The NDP will institute a comprehensive feed-in tariff system to reduce the negative effects of monopoly on the operations of NB Power, to foster competition in the pricing of electricity while maintaining provincial control over transmission and distribution, and to increase the percentage of electricity generated in New Brunswick through clean and sustainable technologies.

The viability of a feed-in tariff regime will not be impeded in any way, including through power purchase agreements with independent or government-controlled generators or the arrangements in place between Saint John Energy, City of Edmundston Electric and the Perth-Andover Electric Light Commission and their customers.

The NDP will work to meet the New Brunswick Renewable Portfolio Standards, which state that within ten years the government must provide 25% of New Brunswick's energy needs through sustainable energy and that no less than 2% be provided by individual households, community-owned generating facilities, and/or cooperatives.

The NDP will maintain the assets of the New Brunswick Power Generation Corporation (Genco), phase out coal-fired facilities, and seek cost-effective and competitive solutions based on exploration of alternative indigenous energy resources including wind, hydro, tidal, natural gas, biological fuels like wood, and other resources available within the region, including Quebec and the other Atlantic provinces.

The government will grant a five-year 100% corporate tax exemption to corporations registered in New Brunswick engaged primarily in the construction, renovation, or refurbishment of any new, or existing small- and medium-sized, green generating facility (with a generating capacity of 60MW or less) in New Brunswick, or any technology deemed by the government to support such facilities, including small producers working under the feed-in tariff regime.

The government will immediately review the corporate structure of NB Power to identify and correct inefficiencies and weaknesses, including issues of personnel and hiring, and to build on the successes that led to the utility being named one of Canada's 'Top 100 Employers' (Mediacorp Canada), and, in 2009, to receive a 'Healthy Workplace Award' from the National Quality Institute, the first utility to be so recognized.

The New Brunswick NDP will, if part of any government, use this policy as the basis on which to proceed in regards to the future of NB Power. The party will not, under any circumstance, support the sale of the Transco and Disco assets of NB Power to any party, private or public, within or without the province of New Brunswick.

Nuclear power

The NDP will seek legal damages from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited for cost overruns on the refurbishing of the Lepreau nuclear power station and will oppose the construction of any second reactor in New Brunswick. One expensive nuclear reactor that does not work is enough.

Energy and Utilities Board

In 1994 the McKenna Liberals changed the rules so that the EUB is only mandated to review rate increases above 3%. Since then NB Power has introduced ten rate increases of between 2% and 3% each.

Then-Conservative Premier Bernard Lord fired the head of the EUB in 2006 when it became clear the EUB was going to recommend against a proposed 13% increase. Conservative interference in the functioning of the EUB means the regulator is afraid to do its job, even when it has a mandate.

When the Conservatives broke NB Power into five smaller companies, in preparation for their attempted sale, it became impossible for the EUB to properly evaluate rate increases.

The NDP proposes to make the EUB truly independent of NB Power and the Cabinet by authorizing it to refuse or amend rate increases that are not justified.

The NDP proposes to reverse the limitation that stops the EUB from automatically investigating rate increases of less than three percent.

The NDP proposes to empower the EUB to review every aspect of NB Power's operations, but not including the three municipal utilities, when investigating rate increases.

The NDP believes that struggling middle class families are entitled to fair power rates. Giving the EUB the mandate and authority to fully investigate NB Power, and to disallow rate increases, will force NB Power to clean up its act and be more efficient rather than continue shifting the cost of Conservative and Liberal mismanagement onto New Brunswick families.

Chapter 6: Democracy

Proportional representation

The NDP will introduce a regional, mixed-member, proportional representation electoral system for public approval.

The NDP, reviewing the recommendations developed by the New Brunswick government over the last ten years, will hold public consultations on electoral reform, and understands that public engagement is the key to movement on this important issue. The resulting model will have to be developed strategically, with emphasis on simplicity, likelihood of success through referendum, and adherence to the principle of proportionality, using lessons learned from other provinces over the last decade where support for the principles of proportional representation was considerable, but did not translate into electoral support for actual measures proposed in referendums.

Floor crossing

MLAs are elected as part of a team. If an MLA wants to leave their party before an election they should have two choices: to sit as an independent until the next election, or to resign and run for their new party in a by-election.

MLAs who leave their party would be prevented from sitting in Cabinet until they have been re-elected, either as members of a party or as independents.

By-elections

At present, the government has six months, following the death or resignation of an MLA, to announce the date for a by-election. The by-election can then be held six months after that. This means a constituency could be without a representative for up to a year, if the government feels keeping one or more seats vacant is in its interests. This is not democratic.

The NDP will move to adopt a system where by-elections will be called automatically following the death or resignation of an MLA. The date for the by-election will be the sixth Monday after the MLA resigns or dies. This system is used in the United Kingdom, and guarantees representation for every citizen.

Contributions to political parties

The NDP will end all contributions to political parties by businesses and unions. Business owners and elected union leaders will have the same rights as other citizens to contribute to the political party of their choice, as individuals.

The limit for personal contributions will be lowered to \$1100 per year from \$6000, in line with existing federal legislation, to encourage parties to diversify their donor bases. The new \$1100 limit would increase with inflation.

Empower municipalities

The NDP will consult with citizens and stakeholders with the goal of, within three years, expanding the powers and responsibilities of municipal governments, as well as strengthening mechanisms that ensure efficient and effective municipal service delivery.

Public engagement

Each member of the NDP caucus will hold one or more monthly public meetings on subjects of importance to the province, community, and party.

Open government

The NDP will apply the following principle to every government document and meeting: unless there is a reason specified in legislation for it not to be public, the document or information about the meeting will be made public.

Through face-to-face meetings and the print and digital media, the NDP will ask New Brunswickers to share their concerns about barriers to transparency and collaboration and their ideas about how to ameliorate those concerns.

The NDP will amend the Right to Information and Privacy Act to order the release of government documents to the public. When finances allow, the charge for filing Access to Information requests with the government will be removed.

Ethics Commissioner

The NDP will establish an office of the Ethics Commissioner.

The NDP will adapt the national “Clean up Canada’s Lobbying and Ethics Enforcement System” to New Brunswick, and implement applicable provisions. For over 30 years, the NDP has advocated for rules to prevent MLAs from using their office for personal gain, and we will continue to do so.

Civil service bonuses

New Brunswick pays out millions of dollars a year in bonuses to civil servants. Most of them are high-ranking. It is not clear on what grounds these bonuses are paid, and it is not possible from looking at the provincial budget to find out how much was paid.

The NDP proposes to end all bonus pay for civil servants: public servants should be well-paid, and receive good pensions and benefits, but bonuses are inappropriate.

MLA pay and pensions

In April 2008, in the middle of a flood, every Liberal and Conservative MLA in the Legislature voted themselves a supersized pay and pension increase. Overnight, MLA pensions became the most generous in the province's public service, accumulating benefits 125% faster than teacher pensions. A report recommended that the MLAs review their pensions, but they didn't.

Not for two years. Not until the NDP pushed them.

In August 2010 the NDP released the '20/50' bill, which sets out exactly how the NDP will reduce MLA pay and pensions. The bill will reduce MLA salaries by 20%, eliminate MLA supplementary pension allowances, eliminate the bonus pensions paid to Cabinet ministers and party leaders, and reduce severance pay by over 83% when MLAs quit or are not re-elected. In total, the bill will reduce MLA pensions by over 50%.

Under the bill, MLAs will still receive \$68,000, which is \$11,000 more than the median income of a New Brunswick family. A decent wage. The pension is still generous; we have to pay MLAs a decent wage and offer decent benefits. Everyone deserves a decent wage and a decent pension.

In Nova Scotia, an MLA with 20 years of service has their pension capped at \$55,000. In New Brunswick, today, the same MLA could receive \$76,000.

After the NDP campaign began, the Conservative and Liberals got together late on a Friday evening and quickly announced that a committee had been formed to look at the pension issue: it will report in 2011, long after the election.

The Conservatives and Liberals only created this committee because of NDP pressure. Now we need an NDP voice in the Legislature to make sure that MLAs never again get away with supersizing their own pensions. After the initial cuts are made, a key part of the NDP 20/50 plan is passing control of MLA pay and benefits to an independent committee that will decide those benefits not based on other Canadian provinces, but on the cost of living here in New Brunswick.

Supremacy of the Legislature and the mandate to govern

While recognizing the importance of ongoing consultation the NDP recognizes the supremacy of the Legislature, and will endeavour to implement our electoral program as rapidly as possible, to prevent the

party from campaigning in four years on the same platform used in previous elections. Commitments made in this platform will contribute to any electoral success the party may achieve. Therefore the election of the party will be seen as a mandate to pass the platform commitments using the appropriate legislative methods.

NDP 2010: Practical, Responsible Change

Savings, Cuts and New Revenue	Year One	Year Two
Eliminating unbudgeted expenditures (“March Madness”)	\$210m	\$210m
Savings from Government Efficiency Officer ¹	\$73m	\$140.5m
Phasing out Business New Brunswick and other business handouts	\$35m	\$45m
Eliminating new road construction	\$21.7m	\$21.7m
Revenue created by New Jobs Tax Credit	\$16m	\$29m
Increase tobacco taxes 2.5 cents per year	\$15m	\$29m
1% increase in forestry stumpage fees	\$7.5m	\$7.5m
Eliminating bonuses for senior civil servants	\$3m	\$3m
Cut MLA salaries by 20% and MLA pensions by over 50%	\$1m	\$1m
Increase number of moose licenses and double moose license fees for non-residents	\$0.25m	\$0.25m
Total Savings, Cuts and New Revenue	\$382.45m	\$486.95m
Spending Commitments	Year One	Year Two
New Jobs Tax Credit	\$29m	\$29m
Poverty Reduction Plus	\$11m	\$11m
Helping Hands Tax Credit	\$10m	\$10m
Literacy strategy	\$8.25m	\$8.25m
Child Abuse Prevention Program	\$3m	\$3m
Open Government reforms	\$3m	\$3m
Additional support for people with intellectual disabilities	\$2m	\$2m
Silviculture Program	\$2m	\$2m
Transitional costs for additional Community Collaborative Clinics	\$2m	\$2m
Immigration Expansion Program	\$1.25m	\$2.5m
Administrative costs for private pension insurance	\$1m	\$1m
Ethics Commissioner	\$1m	\$1m
Pilot program for CEDIFs	\$1m	\$1m
Reinstating grade one medical assessments	\$1m	\$1m
Senior Citizens' Well-Being and Health Promotion Strategy	\$1m	\$1m
Sports programs for children from low-income families	\$1m	\$1m
Transition from aerial pesticide spraying of Crown forests to ground-based spraying	\$0.5m	\$0.5m
Total Spending Commitments	\$78m	\$79.25m
NET EFFECT ON DEFICIT	-\$304.45m	-\$407.7m

¹ Figure reflects savings minus \$2 million/year cost of Government Efficiency Officer's office

Further information

For more information on any of these policies, or if you have any questions about the New Brunswick NDP, please contact us at:

www.nbndp.ca

New Brunswick NDP
924 Prospect Street, Suite 2
Fredericton, New Brunswick
E3B 2T9 CANADA

Tel. 506-458-5828

Fax. 506-459-2299

Email **info@nbndp.ca**