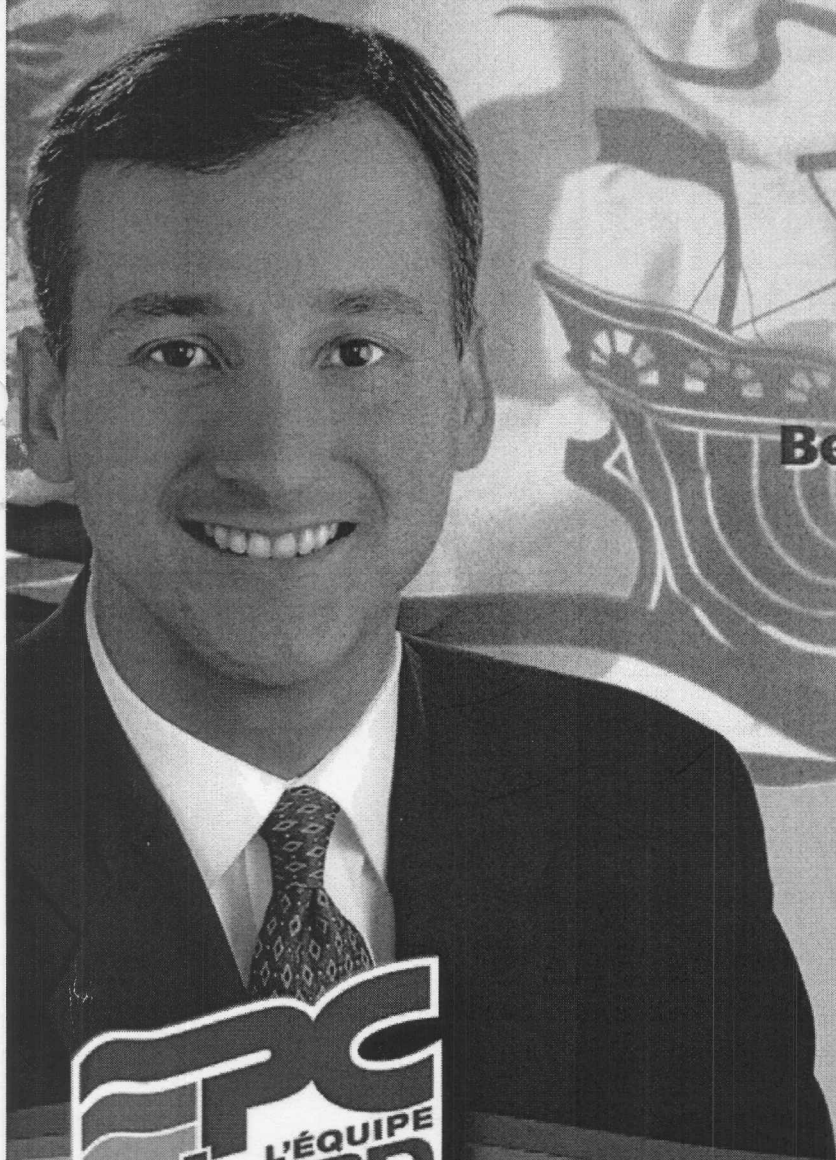


NEW BRUNSWICK REACHING HIGHER. GOING FURTHER.

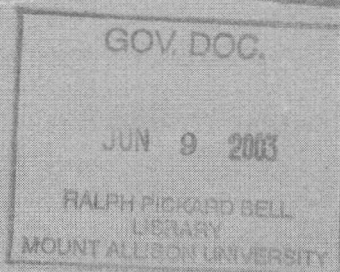
2003 - 2007



Bernard Lord's Plan
for a **STRONGER**
New Brunswick



Bernard Lord



www.pcnb.org

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Aims and Principles of the PC Party of New Brunswick

The Will of the People

We believe that government is an extension of the will of the people; therefore, we must answer to the people for the responsibilities which we accept. We will consult with New Brunswickers on public policy matters before implementing solutions.

New Brunswick and Canada

We strive to build and preserve a prosperous, united New Brunswick within a prosperous, united Canada.

Equality of the Two Linguistic Communities

We believe the diversity of our two linguistic communities is a unique strength of our province. We believe in official bilingualism, and that we must protect and promote our cultures and heritage, while treating each community with fairness and justice.

The Individual

We respect the rights of the individual, but are mindful of the responsibilities which those rights demand. It is by accepting their responsibility and acting on their own initiatives that individuals will achieve their full potential.

Free Enterprise

The creation of prosperity can best be achieved by a free enterprise economy.

Living Within Our Means

As managers of the public accounts, we must fulfill our fiscal and economic objectives: a diversified economy which will maximize employment in all regions, and a fiscal plan which will enhance essential programs while minimizing taxation.

Access to Education and Health Care

The strength of our province is derived from our ability to educate our citizens and to encourage a healthy lifestyle so that they may fulfill their potential, and by our ability to provide care for New Brunswickers when they are in need.

Social Policies Which Promote Individual Responsibility

Our social programs should ensure dignified and meaningful lives for those who need assistance, but also recognize the importance of providing the support and resources necessary for an environment in which New Brunswickers can work together, be self-reliant and take responsibility for their own lives.

Protection of the Environment

We must ensure that economic growth and resource development take place in an environmentally sustainable manner and that decisions taken reflect the shared role of government, business, and individuals as stewards of the environment for the current and future generations.

An Open, Accessible Party

We are a Party for all New Brunswickers. We welcome their thoughts, their efforts and their support for the aims and principles of the Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick.

Message from the Premier

Four years ago, I made a commitment to New Brunswickers that a new Progressive Conservative government would focus on the most important priorities of people. We said we would invest more in health care and education, manage smarter and lower taxes for people and businesses, empower people and communities, and change the way government works for people.

We have kept our commitments.

We did so through a balanced approach of strong financial discipline in our budgets, which allowed us to focus new investments on the most important priorities of New Brunswickers: health care, education, and jobs.

Today, thousands more New Brunswickers are working than before. Record amounts have been invested in health care and education. We have more doctors and full-time nurses than ever before. Taxes are lower. Personal income is rising. Investment, exports, and trade are all increasing.

We are on the right track.

These successes belong to all New Brunswickers, because New Brunswickers helped make them happen.

Now, by working together and building on the solid foundations already in place, we can achieve even more.

We can build a stronger New Brunswick together.

New Brunswick is just reaching its full potential. A potential of greater opportunity for each person and stronger prosperity for us all.

I want New Brunswick to be even stronger.

I want New Brunswick to reach higher and go further.

I want us to reach higher and go further in creating even more new jobs in all regions of New Brunswick. I want us to reach higher and go further in providing even better health care for families and seniors. I want us to reach higher and go further in ensuring a quality education for our children.

I want us to reach higher and go further in making New Brunswick the best place in Canada to live, work, and raise a family.

Together, we can build a stronger New Brunswick with prosperity for all. Prosperity that keeps our young people here at home with new job opportunities. Prosperity that means lower taxes and more income for working families. Prosperity that builds strong, thriving communities with new investments and economic diversification. Prosperity that closes the economic gaps with the rest of Canada and makes us more competitive and innovative in today's global, knowledge-based economy.

Prosperity. Opportunity. People.

This will be our focus for the next four years. To create greater opportunity that leads to more prosperity for people.

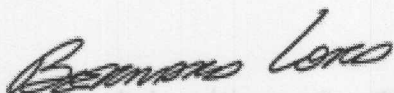
Once again, I make this commitment to you: a new Progressive Conservative government will follow through on our platform. We will implement the commitments we are making in this election. We will keep our word to the people of New Brunswick.

Working with you.

I want to work with you – with all New Brunswickers - to Build a Stronger New Brunswick Together.

I ask you for your support on June 9th.

Join with me and our Progressive Conservative Team, as we keep Reaching Higher and Going Further for New Brunswick.



Bernard Lord

Premier and Leader

of the Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick

Strong Leadership – Strong Results: Our Record So Far

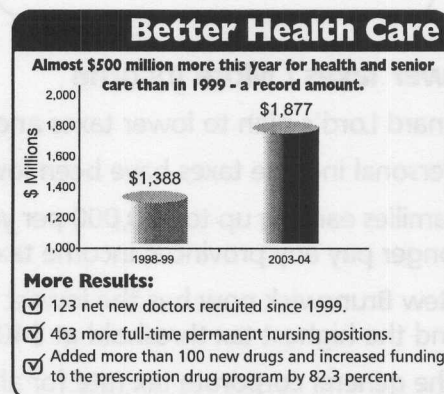
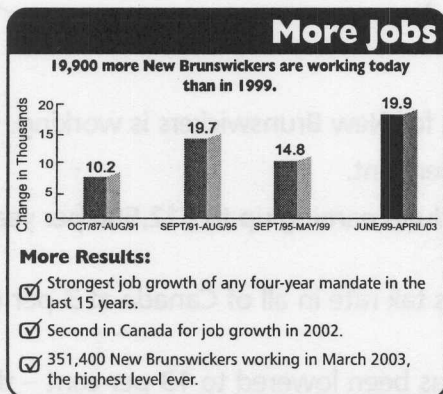
Premier Bernard Lord and his PC Team came into office in 1999 with a clear vision and a plan for the future. A plan to build new job opportunities, renew health care, invest in education, change the way government works, and manage smarter while lowering taxes. A plan to make our province a better place to live, work and raise a family.

Our plan is working. The results are clear.

More Jobs

Bernard Lord's plan to build new job opportunities is working.

- There are almost 20,000 more New Brunswickers working today than in June, 1999.
- More new jobs have been created during Bernard Lord's mandate than in any four-year mandate since 1987.
- Employment in New Brunswick reached 351,400 in March 2003 - the highest level ever.
- Last year, New Brunswick had the second-highest job growth rate in the country at 3.3%. We exceeded the Canadian growth rate of 2.2% and the Atlantic Canada rate of 1.3%.
- Employment grew by 11,200 in 2002 - the best calendar year for job creation since at least 1976.



Better Health Care

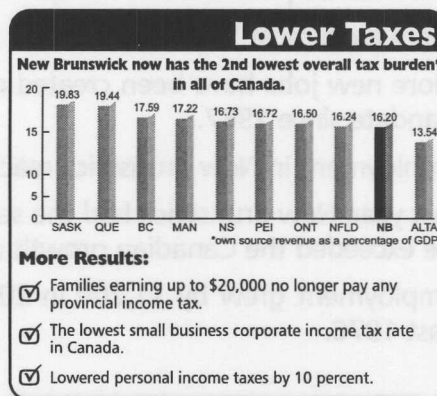
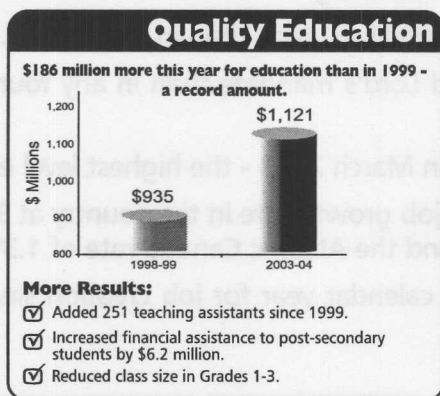
Bernard Lord's plan to renew health care is working.

- Funding for health and senior care is almost \$500 million more in 2003 than it was in 1999.
- Over 120 net new doctors have been recruited since 1999 helping to give New Brunswick the highest percentage of people with access to a family physician in Canada.
- There are over 460 more permanent, full-time nursing positions in 2003 than in 1999.
- Over 100 new drugs have been added to the Prescription Drug Program and funding for drugs for seniors and social assistance recipients has been increased by over 80 per cent.
- The first four Community Health Centres are being established in Saint John, Doaktown, Minto, and Lamèque.

Quality Education

Bernard Lord's plan to invest more in quality education for New Brunswickers is working.

- Funding for education has increased by \$186 million more in 2003 than in 1999.
- 250 new teaching assistants have been added to the system.
- Class sizes for Grades 1-3 have been reduced.
- Increased financial assistance to post-secondary students by \$6.2 million.
- Increased university funding by 6 percent over our first three years.



Lower Taxes / More Income

Bernard Lord's plan to lower taxes and raise income for New Brunswickers is working.

- Personal income taxes have been lowered by 10 per cent.
- Families earning up to \$20,000 per year and individuals earning up to \$12,500 per year no longer pay any provincial income tax.
- New Brunswick now has the lowest small business tax rate in all of Canada at 3 per cent and the highest tax threshold at \$400,000.
- The general corporate tax rate for all businesses has been lowered to 13 per cent – the third lowest in all of Canada.
- The minimum wage has been increased by 50 cents to \$6.00 per hour.

Reaching Higher. Going Further.

Targets to make New Brunswick Stronger

More Jobs

New Brunswick will lead Atlantic Canada in new job growth.

New Brunswick will create even more new jobs than during the past four years.

New Brunswick will have an increase in personal income for workers.

Better Health Care

New Brunswick will have even more funding directed to health and senior care.

New Brunswick will have more doctors and nurses than ever before.

New Brunswick will have shorter wait times for key services.

Lower Auto Insurance Rates

New Brunswick will have lower auto insurance rates beginning July 1st.

New Brunswick will have a new, affordable basic, "no frills" insurance option by July 1st.

New Brunswick will have lower rates through common Atlantic solutions.

Quality Education

New Brunswick will have even more funding directed to education, universities, and students.

New Brunswick children will all be able to read by the end of Grade 2.

New Brunswick will have more teachers and resources in the classroom.

Lower Taxes

New Brunswick will have the lowest personal income taxes in eastern Canada.

New Brunswick will have the lowest small business taxes in all of Canada.

New Brunswick will have the highest Tax Free Threshold for low-income earners in all of Canada.

OUR TOP 5 PRIORITIES

We will focus on meeting each of these five priorities as part of our plan.

- 75 % of all new program funding dedicated to health care and education.
- Lower auto insurance rates beginning July 1st to save drivers money.
- 5 % tax cut for all New Brunswickers to put more money in people's pockets.
- 1 % tax rate for small businesses to create jobs.
- Balanced budget over the next four years.

Prosperity For All

Bernard Lord's plan to reach higher and go further has one overriding goal: to help bring prosperity for all New Brunswickers, wherever they live.

Prosperity is the basis for all we do. It means more jobs and economic growth. It means creating more wealth that allows us to invest more in health care, education, and other important priorities for people. Investing in prosperity will reap dividends through a stronger, growing economy for the future.

That's why our plan focuses clearly on prosperity: Building Prosperity. Sharing Prosperity. Supporting Prosperity.

Building Prosperity means growing our economy and generating the new economic wealth we need to create more jobs and opportunity for people and communities to help fund our most important social programs like health care.

Sharing Prosperity means ensuring all New Brunswickers benefit from the wealth created by a strong, growing economy through new investments in health care, social services, the environment, and other important priorities of people and families.

Supporting Prosperity means providing good government that listens to people with strong democratic decision-making foundations and partnerships supporting our prosperity plan to ensure people participate in the key decisions we take as a province to reach higher and go further.

Our *Reaching Higher, Going Further* platform sets out the priorities we will focus on and the key initiatives we will take over the next four years to ensure prosperity for all New Brunswickers.

I. Building Prosperity

A strong, growing economy is at the heart of New Brunswick's future. We must do everything we can to create more jobs and become even more competitive in today's global knowledge-based economy.

But prosperity isn't automatic. We must build our prosperity by taking even more steps; steps that lead to greater opportunity for individual New Brunswickers. Steps that encourage more entrepreneurship and innovation; steps that reward success rather than subsidize effort; steps that encourage individual opportunity rather than dependency; steps that focus our investments on the long-term; and steps that encourage governments, the private sector, and our post-secondary institutions to work together.

Our ten-year prosperity plan called *Greater Opportunity*, which was released in February, 2002, will be the basis for future action by a new Bernard Lord PC government to bring lasting prosperity and greater economic opportunity to New Brunswickers. It is based on four building blocks:

- **Investing in People**
- **Creating a Competitive Fiscal and Business Environment**
- **Embracing Innovation**
- **Building Strategic Infrastructure**

Each building block consists of four cornerstone priorities we will focus on with new initiatives.

Investing in People

Greater opportunity for people is the top priority of our Prosperity Plan.

We need to create more job opportunities for New Brunswickers wherever they live. And we need to ensure both young New Brunswickers and working New Brunswickers have the quality education, skills, and training they need to compete and win the jobs of the 21st century.

Our learning institutions – schools, universities, and community colleges – must be strong and relevant to the learning needs of students today and the job needs of workers tomorrow.

All New Brunswickers should have the opportunity to work, provide for their families, and contribute to our province's future. We need to remove the barriers and disincentives to work that currently hold some people back.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to invest in people by focusing on new job creation, quality education, and workforce skills training to create even more job opportunities for people and help New Brunswick reach higher and go further.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

Quality Learning Agenda

We will fully implement our ten-year *Quality Learning Agenda* to create a culture of excellence and high achievement exemplified by innovation and lifelong learning. The QLA is the most comprehensive learning policy ever undertaken in New Brunswick. The QLA focuses on the full continuum of learning based on four "stepping stones": Early Childhood Development; Kindergarten to Grade 12; Post-Secondary Education and Training; and Adult and Lifelong Learning. Specific and comprehensive policy documents will be released for each "stepping stone". The first one for K-12 called *Quality Schools, High Results* was released on April 23, 2003.

We will fully implement *Quality Schools, High Results*, our ten-year plan to create a world-class public education system that aspires to excellence and achievement at all times. Our plan contains over 70 initiatives for quality education based on five specific objectives: (1) Ensure students achieve at the highest standards of excellence; (2) Develop the whole child; (3) Promote strong, successful schools within involved communities; (4) Support successful transitions to further learning and training; and (5) Ensure Accountability throughout our education system. Specific initiatives we will undertake include:

- Maximizing instructional time within each school day
- Focusing on math and science by setting specific new learning outcomes
- Enhancing the training and certification of principals and vice-principals
- Improving training and professional development opportunities for teachers, including the use of on-line learning

- Expanding the use of technology in the classroom to support learning
- Expanding distance education offerings to 60 high school courses
- Undertaking two pilot projects to improve the school readiness of pre-schoolers
- Developing strategies to improve the literacy achievement levels of boys and overall achievement of Aboriginal students
- Issuing a public library card to all public school students
- Maintaining reduced class sizes in the early grades
- Maintaining the policy of providing regular classroom settings for the inclusion of all students to the fullest extent possible
- Undertaking a special learning awareness initiative for parents and students
- Ensuring all guidance counselors meet new provincial certification standards

We will immediately target early literacy by ensuring that all children will leave Grade 2 able to read – 90% at grade level and 20% at superior level. Targeted intervention programs will be put in place for all children needing additional support to learn to read during Grade 3. Pre-school literacy will be emphasized by identifying children requiring reading intervention by January of their Kindergarten year.

We will add an additional 500 teaching positions over the next four years; 125 per year beginning in September, 2003, to support the QLA. This will reverse the trend of simply reducing teaching positions as pupil enrolment declines. By 2006/07, there will be a net increase, therefore, of 105 teaching positions from today's levels. The first 125 new teaching positions will focus on our new early literacy initiative.

We will provide schools with additional resources to purchase new books for children to support the early literacy initiative.

We will increase funding for education each and every year of our next mandate to fully support the *Quality Learning Agenda* and other important K-12 education and post-secondary activities.

We will increase funding for post-secondary education by a minimum of 13 per cent over the next four years to enhance access to post-secondary educational opportunities and help provide a predictable, multi-year funding envelope to universities and community colleges.

We will increase financial assistance for post-secondary students by \$2 million to increase access to post-secondary education for New Brunswick students.

We will restructure the New Brunswick Community College System to ensure it is better able to meet the growing demands of the private sector for skilled and trained employees. By restructuring, we will ensure that the NBCC:

- has significantly increased capacity;
- operates in a cost-effective manner, with less red tape and more flexible and efficient use of instructional resources, such as e-learning;
- operates in full compliance with the *Official Languages Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- has greater opportunity to create strategic partnerships with organizations, educational institutions, industry and governments;

- is better able to access private and federal funds to help with infrastructure and equipment costs; and
- is in a position to carry out innovative research and development projects.

We will make universities more accountable to taxpayers and citizens by requiring each institution to appear annually before the Select Committee on Education as part of providing more information to the public.

We will enhance the contribution of our universities to the future economic competitiveness of New Brunswick by establishing a Commission on the Future of New Brunswick's Universities, with a global mandate to study and make fundamental recommendations on how each of our universities can grow and become stronger national and international institutions over the long-term, contributing to our province's economic, social, linguistic, and cultural advancement.

Skills Training and Retraining

We will develop and implement targeted community-based skills training and retraining programs for each region of the province.

We will fully connect all schools and community colleges with high-speed broadband Internet by fall, 2003, to enhance our skills training and retraining capacity as part of a New Brunswick Learning Grid.

We will link job needs with training opportunities by providing prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) services so individuals can move more quickly through the process to meet our needs for a more skilled workforce. On the basis of a career plan, individuals would then be fast-tracked for eligibility for post-secondary and other training by taking courses only in those areas where their prior experience and learning is lacking.

We will undertake a review of all student financial assistance programs within New Brunswick and assess options for harmonizing with the federal government existing student financial assistance programs so they are targeted more effectively on student's needs.

Recruitment, Retention and Repatriation

We will maintain our \$10 million annual *JobStart* Strategy to recruit, retain and repatriate up to 1,000 post-secondary graduates each year to build the future here in New Brunswick.

We will recruit more New Brunswickers under *JobStart* by increasing the number of co-op placements in the public sector; implementing a Post-Secondary Recruitment Incentive to employers in areas where shortages have been identified who hire a student prior to graduation; establishing job fairs to bring together employers and current/future graduates at an early stage in an effort to match human resource requirements of the business community with the skills of our post-secondary graduates; and starting a Targeted Sector Initiative to provide a summer employment placement to individuals studying towards occupations for which there are labour shortages in New Brunswick.

We will retain more New Brunswickers under *JobStart* by providing an increased Wage Supplement to assist employers in hiring post-secondary graduates in permanent positions; an Employer Liaison Initiative to ensure stronger linkages between New Brunswick employers, universities, and graduates; by expanding on our existing efforts to promote early recruitment activities and human resource planning to assist small and medium sized

employers in developing effective retention strategies within their businesses by providing access to human resource expertise.

We will repatriate more New Brunswickers under *JobStart* through our "Be. Here. Now." repatriation program for New Brunswick university alumni and others who have left the province and wish to return home and work.

We will encourage more immigration to New Brunswick through the recently signed three-year agreement with the federal government to make it easier for foreign students to work an additional year in our province. We will also strengthen the provincial nominee program to increase our immigration numbers and strengthen the prosperity of the province over the long term.

Reducing Barriers to Work

We will help create greater economic opportunity for New Brunswickers by raising the minimum wage from \$6.00/hour to \$6.60/hour – a 10 per cent increase – over the course of our next mandate. We will phase it in to ensure small businesses are able to plan and adjust.

We will reduce barriers to work by making work pay more for working families. We will increase personal incomes for workers and working families by raising New Brunswick's Low Income Tax-Free Threshold to the highest in Canada, from \$12,500 per year for single taxfilers to \$13,750 and from \$20,000 per year for families to \$22,000. This will remove thousands more low-income New Brunswickers from the provincial income tax rolls exempting them from paying any provincial personal income tax.

We will formally call upon the federal government to match our low-income tax-free threshold by exempting qualifying individuals from federal personal income tax payable.

We will establish an initiative for older workers in the non-profit sector to provide employment opportunities to the people who have been unable to find work or take part in retraining. This program will target persons 55 years of age or older who are unemployed and whose prospects for finding sustained employment on their own are limited. Under this initiative we will provide a grant to a Community Volunteer Agency (e.g. food bank, soup kitchen, etc.) that would permit them to hire up to two individuals for half a year each time.

We will address disincentives to work and help social assistance clients make the transition to work by implementing a new, one-time program of transitional supports called *Working Now*, which will provide a range of flexible financial and other supports to help clients overcome the specific barriers to work in their individual cases. Specifically, we will provide:

- an automatic, one-time extension of health card benefits to social assistant recipients who have been on social assistance for one year or more making the transition to work for up to one year depending on the availability of an employer plan.
- a one time transition benefit of up to \$300 to those individuals who have been on assistance for one year or more and who could succeed in the workforce if given a boost to assist with specific costs such as transportation related expenses.
- access to skills training and supplemented work experience where such work experience is a legitimate component of an individual's case plan.
- post-employment counseling to assist individuals who have made the transition into the workforce deal with issues which may arise once they become employed.

Achieving Pay Equity

We will continue to implement pay equity in the public sector through the collective bargaining process as we have successfully done in the past four years.

We will work towards implementing the forthcoming recommendations of the Wage Gap Roundtable in order to ensure that women in New Brunswick are paid fairly and that the real issues underlying the wage gap can be practically addressed in a New Brunswick setting.

Creating a Competitive Fiscal and Business Environment

Lower taxes and strong financial management are essential to make New Brunswick a stronger place to invest and create jobs. Lower taxes for people and businesses lead to greater prosperity and more jobs by encouraging new investment. Allowing individuals and families to keep more of their hard-earned income with targeted tax relief is both fair and good for the economy.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. Lower taxes for small business entrepreneurs allows them to invest more in their business to create even more jobs.

At the same time, people want to ensure their government lives within its means. It is very important to New Brunswickers that we have balanced budgets. Managing smarter within government by finding efficiencies and savings in operations means freeing up more dollars for health care and education. Doing even more to cut government red tape for businesses so they can invest and create jobs is just common sense.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to create a competitive fiscal and business environment with lower taxes and strong financial discipline, balanced budgets and less red tape that will help New Brunswick reach higher and go further.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

Competitive Taxes

We will ensure New Brunswickers continue to enjoy the lowest personal income taxes in eastern Canada.

We will provide further personal income tax relief to individuals and working families by lowering personal income taxes by an additional 5 per cent from current levels.

We will lower the small business corporate income tax rate to 1 per cent – an historic low for New Brunswick and the lowest small business tax rate in all of Canada. We will increase the small business corporate income tax threshold by a further \$100,000 to \$500,000 so it remains the highest tax threshold in all of Canada, allowing small businesses to keep more of their profits to invest in new job creation.

We will maintain the general corporate income tax rate for all businesses among the third lowest in Canada to help businesses remain competitive and create new jobs.

We will promote new equity investments in New Brunswick small businesses through the recently-announced New Brunswick Small Business Investor Tax Credit which offers a 30 per cent non-refundable personal income tax credit of up to \$15,000 per year on eligible investments by New Brunswickers.

We will live up to the law of the new *Taxpayer Protection Act* which protects taxpayers by

requiring a binding referendum vote before establishing any new taxes, increasing the HST, or putting tolls on any New Brunswick highways.

We will not raise gas taxes over the course of our next mandate. All revenues raised from gasoline and motive fuel taxes will continue to be invested fully and completely in the New Brunswick Road Investment Fund to be used exclusively for road and highway construction, maintenance and operation as is the case now.

Balanced Budgets

We will continue to balance the province's books by living within our means, ensuring efficiencies and savings in government operations, and finding new, innovative ways of service delivery.

We will add to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund whenever possible in positive financial years to ensure New Brunswickers can benefit from this fund when needed by ensuring health care and education spending for people is protected.

Debt Reduction

We will continue to reduce our public debt by making payments on gross debt when there is an excess cash surplus, thereby reducing over time the cost to future generations of the financial decisions taken in the past and present.

We will continue to reduce our debt-to-GDP ratio.

Red Tape Reduction

We will do even more to cut red tape affecting job creation by establishing an ongoing red tape reduction mechanism. The Office of Red Tape Reduction will continue to monitor and support key recommendations of the Report of the Red Tape Reduction Committee. We will ensure that the potential impacts of any new legislative and/or regulatory amendments are examined through the application of the new Business Impact Test. A New Brunswick Regulatory Excellence Initiative will be started to focus on legislation and regulations that hurt job creation. The Red Tape Reduction Committee will be maintained as an advisory body.

We will table a new *Securities Act* to create a modern and responsive securities regulation regime for New Brunswick by harmonizing New Brunswick's securities regulatory system with most other Canadian jurisdictions. We will establish an efficient regulatory agency, which will implement policies to maximize investment growth in New Brunswick; reduce red tape and improve regulatory efficiencies to the financial sector; encourage confidence and investment in New Brunswick businesses; and educate, inform and protect investors.

We will offer to host a special Border Security and Open Trade conference in New Brunswick with representatives of interested eastern Canadian provinces, New England states, and New Brunswick and other Atlantic businesses, as well as the government of Canada, to help secure our border and trade access to the United States market for exporters and manufacturers.

Embracing Innovation

Innovation is the lifeblood of today's knowledge-based economy. The most prosperous economies that are creating the most jobs are those that embrace innovation and research

and development. Innovative economies are more productive and competitive, leading to stronger job creation and a higher standard of living for workers and families.

New Brunswick has a strong reputation as willing to embrace innovative ideas in information technology, our natural resources sector, our education system, and elsewhere. Now we have the opportunity to succeed even more in a globalized economy with new investments through the \$20 million New Brunswick Innovation Foundation and our ten-year Innovation Agenda.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to fully implement *Embracing Innovation: An Innovation Agenda for New Brunswick, 2002-2012* to help New Brunswick reach higher and go further. Our strategic approach over the next mandate will consist of:

- focusing on the key strategic clusters of knowledge industries, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and value-added natural resources;
- building innovation capacity across industry and the education and the R&D sectors;
- creating strategic partnerships amongst government, industry, and post-secondary institutions.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

eNB.ca

We will continue to implement our government-wide eNB.ca strategy of e-Government, e-Business, e-Learning, and e-Infrastructure by implementing all 36 recommendations of the report of the Premier's Roundtable on eNB and Innovation.

We will provide all appropriate government services on-line by 2005.

We will provide up to 60 distance-learning courses in our high school system on-line by 2007.

Total Development

We will ensure a sustainable wood supply from all sources for our province's important forestry industry to help provide jobs and wealth for people and communities in rural New Brunswick. To do so, we will review existing legislation and market mechanisms to ensure that private woodlots are harvested in a sustainable manner and are considered as a primary source of supply for the forestry industry.

We will strike a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Wood Supply in order to immediately examine opportunities and strategies arising from the Jaakko Pöyry Report to increase the available wood supply in New Brunswick, as well as address other key issues facing the forestry industry.

We will continue to implement our Total Development strategies for value-added natural resources, fisheries and aquaculture, and agriculture.

We will take additional steps to place more agricultural land into value-added production to ensure the farming sector remains a strong contributor to jobs and our economy.

We will undertake a Life Sciences/Bioeconomy Sector Strategy for New Brunswick based on biological sciences and advances in bio-based technologies that use biomass and biological

organisms as the raw materials for making various types of products, including energy, in new ways. By nurturing Life Sciences/Bioeconomy based industries in New Brunswick, we will create new opportunities to use the raw primary resources in which our province's economy has traditionally been grounded.

We will implement our new provincial tourism development strategy to help New Brunswick become a leading year-round tourism destination in Canada by 2005.

R&D

We will continue to invest in R&D and innovation through the new \$20 million New Brunswick Innovation Foundation with programming aimed at building our research and development and innovation capacity by supporting targeted and leveraged investments in the province.

We will promote new R&D investment in New Brunswick businesses through the recently-enhanced New Brunswick R&D Tax Credit which now offers companies a fully-refundable, 15 per cent tax credit on eligible research and development expenditures, one of the most competitive R&D tax credits in Canada.

We will undertake a private sector led Strategic Clustering Initiative focused on enhancing the economic competitiveness of our knowledge industries, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and value-added natural resources.

Building Strategic Infrastructure

Strategic infrastructure is key to New Brunswick becoming more competitive. Today, strategic infrastructure extends beyond highways and roads to information technology and knowledge parks, to our electricity grid and natural gas pipelines, to the hospitals and schools in our local communities. All have a role to play in making our province more attractive for new investment and for getting our goods to and from markets easier and faster.

Strong communities with modern infrastructure and facilities will help generate even more job-creating investment. It will also make our communities an even better place to live for families.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to invest even more in building strategic infrastructure to make our province and communities more economically competitive and to help New Brunswick reach higher and go further.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

Transportation

We will invest \$200 million as New Brunswick's share to complete the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway across our province by 2007.

We will invest \$90 million to improve Routes 11 and 17 in Northern New Brunswick. We will continue to demand that the federal government match this investment 50/50 to provide the same support we are to communities and people in this region.

We will commit \$49 million and continue to pursue federal funding under the Border Infrastructure Fund to build a third bridge crossing between St. Stephen and Calais and finish

the twinning of Highway One between the Calais border and Waweig, and to twin the Trans-Canada Highway from the Woodstock exit to the Houlton border.

Communications

We will partner with the federal government and the private sector to provide high-speed broadband Internet technology to virtually all New Brunswick communities by 2007. This will build on the work we have done to bring high-speed broadband to New Brunswick's schools and community colleges. We will make New Brunswick one of the most connected provinces in Canada .

Energy

We will maintain NB Power as a publicly-owned crown corporation.

We will continue to protect ratepayers and taxpayers by implementing our deliberate, controlled plan for electricity restructuring and commercialization as set out in the new *Electricity Act*.

We will continue to foster the distribution of natural gas throughout the province including up the Saint John River Valley and through lateral pipelines to the Northeast.

Public Infrastructure

We will establish a new Community Economic Infrastructure Fund to provide financial support toward strategic infrastructure initiatives that will promote community economic development and are endorsed or supported by the community/region.

We will implement a multi-year nursing home infrastructure plan that will result in the construction, replacement and renovation of 12 nursing homes in New Brunswick over the next four years. It will result in the construction of the first new additional nursing home in the province in fifteen years.

We will implement a second, four-year *Healthy Schools* capital improvement program for New Brunswick's schools to ensure they are healthy and safe for students and educators.

II. Sharing Prosperity

Sharing is a New Brunswick value and a Canadian tradition. All New Brunswickers should have the opportunity to share in the prosperity we are building in our province.

A strong, growing economy is essential to generate the wealth we need to share with all New Brunswickers. That's why the first part of our platform focuses on Building Prosperity.

But prosperity should be for everyone. No one should be left out. All should have the opportunity to share in that prosperity for themselves and their families. That's why the second part of our platform focuses on Sharing Prosperity.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to make it a priority to share the prosperity of a growing New Brunswick economy with people and communities.

Our Sharing Prosperity plan focuses on better health care, a better start for children and support for working families, affordable, fair and accessible automobile insurance, improving incomes and opportunity for people on social assistance, a better life for disabled New Brunswickers, and a cleaner environment for New Brunswick.

Better Health Care

Sharing prosperity begins with better health care for New Brunswick families and seniors. Publicly-funded and delivered health care, as set out in the *Canada Health Act*, is a New Brunswick priority and a Canadian value; one that we share.

We have put patients first with record new investments to improve access to health care. This year, we will spend \$500 million more on health and senior care than was spent in 1999. This new funding is working. Already, we have recruited over 120 net new doctors, created over 460 permanent new full-time nursing positions, expanded our prescription drug program for seniors and social assistance clients by over 80 per cent, and invested in new MRIs and other new medical equipment in our hospitals.

We are well on our way to creating a truly patient-focused, community-based health care system with new Regional Health Authorities, Community Health Centres, Nurse Practitioners, and Canada's first-ever Health Charter of Rights and Responsibilities. We are also changing the way health services are delivered to ensure more and more dollars are focused on front-line medical care and not administration.

We have put patients first and will do even more to improve access to health care services for patients and families.

Better health care for New Brunswick families and seniors will be a top priority of a new Bernard Lord PC government.

Our focus over the next four years will be to:

- Increase funding to sustain our health care system.
- Improve access to 24/7 primary health care services.
- Recruit more doctors, nurses, and health care professionals.
- Enhance the services provided by hospitals.
- Ensure more accountability to patients and taxpayers.
- Expand the prescription drug program

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

More Funding, More Accountability

We will increase health care funding each and every year of our mandate just as we did each and every year of our first mandate.

We will spend all additional federal dollars from the 2003 First Ministers Accord on Health Care directly on health care and the earmarked priorities of health reform, primary care, medical equipment, and home care.

We will be fully accountable for the health care dollars we spend with our annual NB Health Care Report Card and the new Health Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, with a Health and Wellness Advocate reporting directly to the Legislature.

More Doctors, Nurses, and Health Care Professionals

Our Physician Recruitment and Retention Plan is working. Over 120 net new physicians have been recruited since 1999 – New Brunswick's best performance ever. We will maintain this successful initiative. But we need to do more, especially to ensure we have sufficient family physicians in hard-to-recruit areas such as parts of rural New Brunswick.

We will enhance our recruitment success by focusing on two key areas: first, designated or hard-to-recruit areas of the province or those without adequate physician coverage; and second, younger physicians, to ensure we are building a longer-term commitment from newly-graduated doctors to stay and practice in New Brunswick. In particular, we want to focus on New Brunswick medical students because of their attachment to the province. Here's what we will do:

Designated Areas Strategy

We will provide an additional business establishment grant of \$15,000 over and above our current location grant for doctors agreeing to practice in a designated area.

We will guarantee a minimum salary level of up to \$175,000 for a new Family Practitioner who agrees to practice in a designated area.

Young Physicians Strategy

We will provide a new Student Loan Forgiveness Program for new medical school graduates in designated disciplines who agree to serve a minimum of five years in a designated area or RHA. The loan would be reduced in equal installments over the 5-year period.

We will introduce a new Medical Student Bursary Program of up to \$6,000 for medical students in their last two years of training in exchange for a commitment to practice in a designated area or a specified practice area.

We will expand the current Location Grants program of \$25,000 for Family Practitioners and \$40,000 for Specialists to residents in their last two years of training to secure an earlier commitment by a physician to practice in New Brunswick and to provide guaranteed job security with an RHA or in a private practice.

Nursing Resource Strategy

We will expand our current Nursing Resource Strategy to increase the number of nurses in New Brunswick and improve the working conditions of nurses in our hospitals by:

- Increasing the number of admissions to nursing programs by 95 admissions per year.
- Expanding the number of Nurse Practitioners around the province in a range of practice settings including Community Health Centres, nursing homes, collaborative practice clinics, and Family Physician offices.

Guaranteed Service Times

We will establish a new Guaranteed Service Times policy setting out wait list management for specific health care services. It will include a guarantee of service within a designated period of time as part of the new *Health Charter of Rights and Responsibilities*. Specific wait times for services will be developed by a new Clinical Services Times Committee of expert medical professionals, the RHAs, and the Department of Health and Wellness. The first two services with guaranteed service times will be cardiac surgery – no longer than 2 months - and radiation oncology – no longer than 4 weeks. Should patients have to wait longer, provisions will be made to provide those services out-of-province within the guaranteed service time at no cost to the patient. Other services will be designated over time based on clear clinical standards and availability of resources.

We will improve Ambulance services in both rural and urban New Brunswick with established response times, Advanced Life Support, and national educational standards.

24/7 Primary Health Care

We will continue to invest to improve access to primary health care on a 24/7 basis by adding at least four additional Community Health Centres around the province based on community health care needs. Currently, there are four CHCs being introduced in Saint John, Doaktown, Minto, and Lamèque. Each CHC will operate on a collaborative practice basis with family physicians, nurse practitioners, and other health care professionals.

We will invest in new Collaborative Practice Clinics to attract new family doctors and provide more convenient access to care for families and patients in local communities. The first such clinic was recently announced for Fredericton.

Wellness

We will implement a Wellness Strategy Action Plan which will focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing the incidences of major illnesses and chronic disease through strategies to increase physical activity level, and promoting good nutrition, reduced tobacco and alcohol use and improved mental health of New Brunswickers.

Better Health Care for Seniors and Low-Income Families

We will significantly improve prescription drug coverage for seniors and working families through a \$15 million enhancement of the New Brunswick Prescription Drug Program to protect more seniors and families from high or catastrophic drug costs. It will cap high or catastrophic drug costs for individuals and families based upon their income and actual drug costs, and will provide new drug cost protection for many currently uninsured families and

seniors. By focusing on catastrophic or exceptionally high drug costs, the program would target financial relief to those who need it the most. It will be based on income and need. The less income a person has, the less the individual will have to pay towards these catastrophic drug costs. Total amounts will be capped for eligible individuals and families to ensure that relief is provided against high drug costs.

We will make care for seniors more affordable in Special Care Homes by eliminating the "grandfathered" clause for residents put in place by the previous government. This will allow Special Care Homes to receive more money to go towards the direct care of residents in their homes. At the same time, we will gradually increase the per diem rate charged for Level I care.

We will reduce the burden on seniors requiring nursing home care and their families by allowing seniors to keep more of their savings for themselves, their spouses and their children by raising the cash exemption.

A Better Life for Working Families with Children

Prosperity for all means a better life for working families and children. Many families today, particularly low-income ones, require child care assistance to help them find and keep a job. In today's economy where both parents are often working, affordable child care that is available is a need, not a luxury. Accessible, affordable child care helps low-income working families to continue to make ends meet and create the greater economic opportunity they need to stay in the work force.

Over the past four years, we have made real progress in improving child care opportunities as part of our New Brunswick Early Childhood Development Agenda. New programs have been introduced to enhance day care services, improve the wages and training of child care workers, provide pre-natal benefits to expectant mothers, and reduce waiting lists for language pathologists to help children with speech, language, and learning disorders.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to do even more for working families with children to help New Brunswick reach higher and go further.

We will create an additional 1,500 child care spaces by making day care more affordable and accessible for low-income families.

We will raise the family income threshold for a full day care subsidy under the Day Care Assistance Program from the current \$15,000 to \$22,000.

We will increase the day care assistance program subsidy rate by \$3.50 per day for full-time care and \$1.50 per day for school-aged children to \$22.00 per day for children under the age of two, \$20.00 per day for children over the age of two; and \$10.00 per day for after-school children.

Affordable, Fair, and Accessible Automobile Insurance

New Brunswickers deserve affordable automobile insurance with lower rates. That's why a comprehensive plan to lower rates and make insurance more fair and accessible is being implemented. It will lead to lower rates for drivers beginning July 1st.

Bernard Lord's plan puts the teeth back into the Public Utilities Board that were removed by the previous Liberal government giving it strong new regulatory powers to order public hearings, review rates and order rate reductions.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will make automobile insurance more affordable, fair and accessible for drivers beginning July 1st.

We will adopt limits on claims for non-economic losses arising from minor personal injuries – the main cost-driver of higher rates – by June 15th.

We will require all insurance companies to submit their new lower rates based on these new claim limits within two weeks, before July 1st.

We will ensure that beginning July 1st, the Public Utilities Board will start reviewing these new lower rates to ensure they are fair and reasonable. Any rates that are not fair and reasonable will be lowered.

We will put in place a new basic, “no frills” automobile insurance policy to provide a more affordable automobile insurance option for drivers at a cost of between \$500 and \$1,000. The Legislature will be recalled before the end of June to pass a bill requiring all insurance companies in New Brunswick to offer this new policy in all regions of New Brunswick. This will remove many drivers from the Facility Association and benefit seniors and young drivers in particular.

We will meet with the Council of Atlantic Premiers before the end of June in New Brunswick to consider common solutions that will lead to lower automobile insurance rates across the region in recognition that this problem extends beyond just New Brunswick.

We will rigorously uphold our new regulations prohibiting discriminatory underwriting practices by insurance companies.

Respecting People; Encouraging Opportunity

Today, New Brunswick has the lowest caseload in social assistance in twenty years. Over the past four years, the number of individuals on social assistance has dropped by over 12,000 as the economy has improved and more jobs have been created.

Social assistance programs should always be designed to encourage and assist able individuals to enter the workforce. The option of earning a living through work should always be more beneficial than receiving social assistance benefits.

That’s why improving social assistance programs should aim at providing greater economic opportunity for people. Reducing the barriers to work, cutting taxes for low-income earners, and raising the minimum wage are all designed to increase the value of work. This can be done while adopting a people-focused social services approach that tailors assistance as much as possible to the needs of the individual.

There is a need to ensure social assistance benefits can help meet the basic needs of people. Rates have not been raised in over five years.

- We will increase social assistance rates for the first time since 1997, in recognition of the need for families and individuals to have more disposable income to meet the cost of their basic needs.
- We will examine the concept of a made-in-New Brunswick Basic Income Guarantee that would simplify the current dual rate system, eliminate duplication and overlap between federal and provincial programming, ensure child benefits go directly to children, while continuing to encourage individuals to seek gainful employment as the first option.

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A Better Life for Disabled New Brunswickers

Sharing prosperity means ensuring that all New Brunswickers are included in society and able to participate fully in every aspect of life in our communities. We need to help persons with disabilities help themselves, by eliminating barriers to independence, which prevent participation and inclusion.

In the past four years, we have taken action to improve services to persons with disabilities living in New Brunswick. We have increased funding for the Long Term Care Program, enhanced the disability supplement by \$1000 per year, improved training opportunities for persons with disabilities, and provided funding for the New Brunswick Association for Community Living to build on community inclusion projects.

In recognition that adults with disabilities have unique needs different from seniors, we have already committed to removing adults with disabilities from the current long-term care policy and establishing a separate framework to meet their unique needs. The New Brunswick Disability Framework Working Group established by Premier Bernard Lord has consulted with members of the disabled community and their advocates to make recommendations on a new disability framework.

A new Bernard Lord PC Government will continue to build on the work we have done and reach higher and go further to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of community living.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

We will adopt in principle the recommendations of the Disability Framework Working Group for a new, flexible and personalized approach to disability supports.

We will accept the following as guiding principles for the New Brunswick Disability Framework:

- Empowerment and Self-Determination
- Respect
- Rights and responsibilities
- Access
- Participation
- Equality
- Individualization

We will undertake two pilot projects to test new approaches recommended by the Disability Framework Working Group for delivering supports to persons with disabilities. The pilots will test recommendations for more meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in decision making regarding their own disability support plans; community involvement in the design of new personalized and flexible support options; use of independent facilitators to support individuals and families in the development of a personalized, flexible disability supports plan; innovation in program delivery and supports; and the delegation of decision-making to the regional level.

We will work with community stakeholders to seek transitional funding from the federal

government to help implement a disability support innovation strategy for the delivery of personalized and flexible supports.

A Clean and Sustainable Environment for New Brunswickers

Sharing prosperity means ensuring that all New Brunswickers are able to live in a clean and sustainable environment.

One of our greatest provincial assets is the beauty and cleanliness of our natural surroundings. The preservation of our environment is the greatest legacy we can leave to future generations.

In the past four years, we have taken strong actions to protect our environment by bringing in a new *Protected Natural Areas Act*, strengthening the *Clean Water Act*, the *Clean Air Act*, and the *Clean Environment Act*, and entering into a six-year Infrastructure Agreement with our federal and municipal partners with a clear focus on "green infrastructure" projects. We have made huge strides in protecting our watershed supplies in and around municipalities. We are improving the environment through a new Waste Reduction and Diversion Action Plan, consulting on a provincial Climate Change Action Plan, and implementing new Coastal Zones Protection and Wetlands Protection policies.

A new Bernard Lord PC Government will continue to build on the environmental protection actions we have taken, by reaching higher and going further to ensure New Brunswickers have a cleaner, sustainable environment.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

We will take further steps to ensure that New Brunswickers have access to the quality and quantity of water for drinking and other purposes through a new Water for Life strategy. New Brunswick must take action that will ensure safe, secure drinking water, reliable water supplies for economic development, and healthy lakes and rivers for recreation and tourism.

We will complete the six-year, \$163 million Infrastructure Program with our federal and municipal partners, which has as its goal a minimum investment of 70% of those funds in "green infrastructure" projects, including improvements to municipal water, waste water, and sewage systems. We are prepared to extend this agreement with additional dedicated funding on an equal cost-shared basis with our partners.

We will introduce a new Greening of Government initiative in order to use the leadership position of the public sector to demonstrate best practices in the following areas:

- Efficient use of energy
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Responsible government procurement policies
- Public education and partnerships

We will examine the creation of a Community Environmental Partnership, which will combine the research and policy capacity of the provincial government with the operational experience of local governments to implement community friendly environmental projects, including:

- Carpool programs

- Energy
- Prom
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- Energy use audits and reduction plans
- Promotion of ridership on public transportation
- Enhancing the availability of non-motorized transportation modes

We will honour commitments made as a partner in the Council of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers to meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, as set out in the NEG-ECP *Climate Change Action Plan*.

A Culturally Rich New Brunswick

Our province has a rich cultural identity and heritage, which enhances our quality of life. New Brunswick has a unique and distinctive cultural environment that needs to be nurtured and supported, not just for today's generation but for tomorrow's as well.

Our artists, cultural professionals, volunteers and community leaders all contribute to the development of our culture. Our museums, art galleries, theatres, heritage events, and fairs are visible cultural manifestations of both individual and collective expressions of how we see ourselves and the communities and province in which we live.

Our unique and proud status as Canada's only officially bilingual province must also be reflected in our cultural policies. Celebrating this fact makes us more aware of both the responsibility and the special nature of how it contributes to New Brunswick.

A new Bernard Lord PC Government will continue to play a leadership role to encourage a strong, vibrant, and rich cultural life and environment in New Brunswick that is distinctive and allows our province to reach higher and go further.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

We will fully implement our Cultural Policy for New Brunswick. The Cultural Policy, the first of its kind in New Brunswick, is a tool to enable all partners in the arts and heritage sectors to share a common vision for the development of culture in our province. It is based on four interrelated pillars: Culture in Everyday Life; Professional Artists and Cultural Professionals; Our Collective Heritage; and Culture and the Economy. Specifically, we will:

- Improve access to and awareness of culture in New Brunswick, increase participation in cultural activities and increase the cultural educational opportunities within New Brunswick's education system.
- Encourage excellence in the work of artists and cultural professionals and uphold the principle of freedom of expression.
- Preserve New Brunswick's culture and its cultural resources.
- Maximize the economic benefits of culture in order to improve New Brunswick's position in the global economy.

We will adhere to the principles and law of the new *Official Languages Act* to ensure we continue to preserve and promote both official languages and both official linguistic communities within the province.

III. Supporting Prosperity

Prosperity is about people – building prosperity through jobs and economic wealth; sharing opportunity so all New Brunswickers can benefit; and supporting prosperity by working with New Brunswickers with good government and giving them even more opportunities to participate in government decisions affecting them most.

Prosperous societies and economies have strong foundations underneath to support their efforts to build prosperity and share prosperity with people. These are strong democratic foundations with more participation by people and greater accountability by government; strong public service foundations with the skills, technology, and innovative desire to go further; and strong partnership foundations with other governments to find common solutions to common problems.

Together, they add up to working with New Brunswickers to make life better in our province.

Our plan to Support Prosperity will bring New Brunswickers together to take part in the decisions that will affect not only our lives, but those of future generations. A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to support prosperity by:

- Strengthening our Democracy
- Building Partnerships
- Managing Smarter

Strengthening our Democracy

Empowering people is at the top of our list for Supporting Prosperity. We need to create more opportunities for New Brunswickers to participate in decisions that affect them wherever they live. Every person in this province should have an opportunity to make a difference, no matter their background or status.

That's why during our first mandate we created new District Education Councils, Regional Health Authorities, and Community Economic Development Agencies to ensure the voices of people and communities would be heard in decisions affecting them most.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to strengthen our democratic institutions even more by focusing on new ways to consult New Brunswickers and involve people in meaningful decision-making so New Brunswick can reach higher and go further.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

Legislative Democracy

We will strengthen the role of the Select Committees on Education and Health Care by asking the Legislature to make them full Standing Committees.

We will establish a Commission on Legislative Democracy to study the concept of proportional representation, fixed election dates, and other mechanisms to ensure the full range of people's voices are represented in government and legislative debate and decision-making.

We will establish an Electoral Boundaries Commission with the mandate to review riding

boundaries.

Direct Democracy & Accountability

We will introduce a New Brunswick Referendum Act to allow the public to decide for themselves on important public policy issues through binding referendums.

We will strengthen existing legislation governing the use of plebiscites and referendum in municipalities, giving to people living in our cities, towns and villages the opportunity to initiate clear questions on matters of local concern.

Building Partnerships

Working together makes New Brunswick stronger. Our common goal of more prosperity for New Brunswickers, as Canadians, helps unite us.

Our government has established a strong record of partnering with other governments to meet this common goal. As Premier, Bernard Lord is nationally recognized as a strong and effective advocate for regional cooperation amongst provinces and collaborative federalism with the federal government.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to partner with other levels of government, the private sector, our post-secondary institutions, and First Nations Communities by working with them to find more ways of working together that will help New Brunswick reach higher and go further.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

Municipal Partnerships

We will continue to work with municipalities to develop fair and equitable provincial-municipal financing arrangements.

We will establish a Provincial Capital Commission.

We will continue to work with local governments giving them more local control and autonomy at a pace that works for them. We will not impose amalgamations on New Brunswick communities.

Provincial and Regional Partnerships

We will build upon the recommendations of *Working Together for Atlantic Canada: An Action Plan for Regional Cooperation*, produced by the Council of Atlantic Premiers. This action plan focuses on results for Atlantic Canadians in the areas of health, education and skills development, environment, red tape reduction, e-government, government procurement, research and development, and energy.

We will continue to take a leading role in the Annual Premiers' Conference to strengthen the federation, and in particular we will pursue the enactment of the principles contained in the First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal, and on righting the fiscal imbalance in the federation.

We will continue to take a leading provincial role in finding regional solutions to border

security, trade, energy and environmental issues as part of the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers.

Federal Partnerships

We will continue to utilize our new Office of Strategic Partnerships to establish even stronger working relationships with individual departments of the Government of Canada to ensure New Brunswick receives its fair share of investment from the federal government for R&D and innovation, roads and highways, technology, infrastructure, and more.

We will continue to push for a fair and effective Equalization Program from the federal government, in partnership with other provinces, so it meets its constitutional obligations of ensuring provinces have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.

International Partnerships

We will actively pursue the more than 50 action items outlined in *Prospering in a Global Community: New Brunswick's International Strategy*, the first of its kind for our province.

We will create a new International Trade Promotion Agency led by the private sector to help develop export and trading opportunities for New Brunswick businesses in the United States and other target markets.

Working with First Nations Communities

We will continue to work with our province's First Nations communities, in order to establish more meaningful and effective relationships with each of them.

Managing Smarter

Taxpayers want cost-effective government. By working together with our dedicated public servants, we have made great strides over the past four years in managing smarter by delivering services and programs more efficiently and effectively.

A new Bernard Lord PC government will continue to build on this record by ensuring the provincial public service has the talent and skills to meet the needs of New Brunswickers at the start of the 21st century.

What we will do to reach higher and go further:

Strong Public Services

New Brunswickers benefit from strong public services delivered by dedicated and professional public servants.

We will ensure that New Brunswickers can continue to count on high quality, efficient, and cost-effective delivery of public services to meet the changing needs of people and communities.

We will continue to respect our working relationship with the New Brunswick Public Service,

supporting a work environment that maximizes the potential of every employee.

We will remain competitive with other provinces by investing in skills training, appropriate recruitment and retention practices, and ensuring opportunities for promotion and advancement exist.

Efficient and Effective Government

We will continue to enhance the number of services made available by Service New Brunswick, whether at the counter, by phone, or over the Internet, thereby ensuring that all New Brunswickers have better access to their government no matter where they live in the province.

We will continue to work with our Municipal and Federal partners to involve them in the Service New Brunswick network, so that citizens can have better access to one-stop government services.

We will further eliminate red tape and duplication by providing a single entry point for businesses and individuals seeking licences and permits.