

New Brunswick
Liberal
Nouveau-Brunswick

**Charter for
Change**

**Pacte pour le
changement**

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Charter for Change

*Shawn Graham's plan
for a better New Brunswick*

September 2006



The Charter for Change

The Liberal plan for a better New Brunswick

New Brunswick
Liberal
Nouveau-Brunswick

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A Message from Shawn Graham



The opportunity we have as elected officials is so unique and often so fleeting. Four years; eight years; 10 years – this is not a long time to transform the destiny of a province. We cannot afford to lose a moment to fear or complacency.

I never want to look back and think; *we could have done something really important for that community or that family or that person but we didn't have the courage. We didn't think it was our job. We were waiting for someone else to take the lead.*

For seven years, government has allowed opportunity after opportunity to pass us by.

I say it's time to bring back the pride.

My vision for this province is as straightforward as it is challenging. I want New Brunswick to join the ranks of the 'have' provinces and I want the province to accomplish this over the next 20 years.

We'll put our province on the road to self-sufficiency by turning New Brunswick into a leader in energy conservation and generation, by going from worst to first in education and by making job creation a priority again.

Strengthening these pillars will allow us to invest in important initiatives like reducing health care wait times and providing seniors with the increased care they deserve.

I want to know that, from day one of our mandate, we governed boldly, wisely and fairly. We will be open to new ideas and new solutions.

That's why this platform was developed with the input of thousands of New Brunswickers. Liberal Party members contributed through a policy development process that was the first of its kind for any party in New Brunswick.

We also engaged experts, stakeholders and policy makers through individual meetings and a series of Leader's Forums.

Finally, this plan for New Brunswick would not be possible without the contribution of our Liberal Members of the Legislative Assembly who contributed both individually and through caucus committees.

We can do better in New Brunswick. A new Liberal Government means real change for our province – people for a change.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shawn Graham
Leader of the Liberal Party of New Brunswick

The Liberal Charter for Change

Together we will...

Make job creation a priority again by making New Brunswick a leader in **economic development**;

Build our workforce by making **first-year tuition** more affordable and by increasing **community college training** opportunities;

Go from worst to first in education by **strengthening our schools** and **supporting our teachers**;

Lead the country in **energy generation, green power technology** and **conservation**;

Help New Brunswick families access a **family doctor and the specialists they need** through intensive training and recruitment programs;

Provide increased hours of **home care** and **nursing home care** at a more affordable rate for older New Brunswickers;

End unfair discrimination on automobile insurance and ensure that New Brunswickers receive **good automobile insurance coverage at a fair price**;

Break the cycle of poverty for **low-income New Brunswickers** by providing literacy skills and adequate housing;

Connect our communities and our people with **better roads**;

Be responsible to New Brunswickers today and in the future by committing to **fiscal accountability** and **environmental sustainability**.

A Leader in Economic Development

It's time to bring back the pride and the "Can-Do" spirit in New Brunswick. In economic development, attitude is everything. We understand the art of the deal. The power of an open door. The importance of a returned phone call. A Liberal Government knows what it takes to make it happen.

We will create an investment-friendly climate that will enable entrepreneurs to create jobs and wealth for New Brunswickers.

It is time to restate our purpose.

It is time to restart our economic development engine.

It is time to reinvigorate New Brunswickers' pride in ourselves and in our province.

We will work cooperatively with the private sector, universities and colleges, the education system, unions and all levels of government to lead New Brunswick towards this goal.

Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth

New Brunswick was built by entrepreneurs. Each made the most of their opportunities and many became leaders in their fields.

A Liberal Government will support our entrepreneurs and ensure they have the resources to make New Brunswick a leader in **job growth** and **economic development**.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Provide start-up capital of up to \$100,000 for new businesses and up to \$60,000 for business expansion and diversification.
2. Ensure a minimum of one per cent of **New Brunswick Investment Management Corporation's** total assets is invested in New Brunswick projects.
3. Work closely with the federal government to simplify tax regulations to facilitate **succession planning** for small businesses and farms.
4. Utilize the **Small Business Loan Guarantee Program** with Caisses Populaires and Credit Unions.
5. Be the **model user** of our own New Brunswick-made Information & Communications Technology products.
6. Work with research institutions, universities and business to facilitate the commercialization of New Brunswick ideas.

Population Strategy

New Brunswick is a great place to live, which is why three-quarters of a million Canadians call it home. However, that number is set to decline. For the first time since the Great Depression of the 1930s, deaths and out-migration outnumber births and immigration. We are losing people. This is not unique to New Brunswick but a challenge we share with the rest of Atlantic Canada.

This has a direct impact on our provincial economy. New Brunswick businesses are already experiencing a shortage of skilled workers and if we do not stem our population decline, the problem will worsen. Without workers to fill positions, it will be difficult for companies to expand or for new businesses to invest here.

New Brunswick can increase its population in a number of ways: by welcoming immigrants, by attracting Canadians from other parts of the country, by encouraging New Brunswickers to return home, and to encourage those who are here to stay. But there must be something to bring them here. A Liberal Government will make job creation a central piece of its population strategy.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish a **Population Growth Secretariat**.
2. Develop a **comprehensive strategy** to promote population growth including retention of New Brunswick residents, repatriation, immigration and settlement.
3. Establish a **Repatriation Unit** within the *Population Growth Secretariat* with a proactive approach to recruiting and matching former New Brunswickers with job opportunities in our province.
4. Partner with Federal and Municipal governments to:
 - a. Increase the number of immigrants coming to the province with the goal of **attracting at least 5,000 people** per year by the year 2015;
 - b. Establish **increased targets** for the number of immigrants attracted under the Provincial Nominee Program;
 - c. Invest in a co-funding arrangement with the federal government to **increase settlement funding support** and partner with community based organizations to improve local settlement services and increase our retention rate to 80 per cent by 2015;
 - d. **Increase resources in second language training** to meet the needs of new immigrants; and,
 - e. Work with the federal government to offer a **three-year work visa to international students** who graduate from a New Brunswick post-secondary institution and choose to stay in the province.

Traditional Industries

Forests, fish and farms: together they form the base of New Brunswick's economy. A Liberal Government will build upon our province's traditional industries by encouraging modernization and value-added processing of seafood, wood, minerals and agricultural products.

We must also capitalize on New Brunswick's natural beauty. Tourism has long been a mainstay of our regional economy. We can do a better job of promoting our Picture Province to the world through innovative marketing and we can ensure tourists will enjoy their stay and want to return by investing in key infrastructure.

Forestry

The opening years of the 21st century have not been easy for the Canadian forestry sector. A worldwide slump in pulp and paper prices coupled with increased competition has left its mark on the forestry industry. Here in New Brunswick, forestry drives exports and, equally important, employs a significant percentage of the labour force, particularly in rural New Brunswick. The forestry industry is changing and a Liberal Government will work collaboratively with all stakeholders to smooth its transition.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish a **cabinet committee** to work with industry to further modernize forestry in the province.
2. Undertake the necessary work to implement a **forest management plan** for 2007-2012.
3. Ensure that there is **equitable market treatment for private woodlot owners**.
4. Work with New Brunswick community colleges to provide **training** for modernized forestry operations.
5. Examine options for using **abandoned farmland for forestry purposes**.

Moose Hunting Licenses

A responsible, sustainable and well-regulated moose hunt provides economic opportunities for outfitters and recreation for New Brunswick hunters. However, the current process for granting moose hunting licenses has resulted in an inequity for some New Brunswick hunters. A new Liberal Government will work with hunting organizations to reform the way licenses are granted to ensure fairness for all New Brunswick hunters.

Agriculture and Aquaculture

New Brunswick's food basket is a lucrative one; contributing more than \$1 billion annually to the provincial economy. The agriculture and agri-food sector employs about one in seven New Brunswickers. Meanwhile, along our coasts, the aquaculture industry has changed the fortunes of communities. Aquaculture shares many issues, challenges, methods and approaches with agriculture. However, like the forestry sector, the business of food production is evolving to meet the demands of a modern, globalized marketplace.

A Liberal government will encourage and support the continued development of value-added products in agriculture and aquaculture.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish a **Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture**.
2. Continue to invest in the research and development of **value-added processing, packaging and market development**.
3. Enhance the **New Entrant Development Strategy** to address challenges facing new farmers.
4. Complete an inventory of **abandoned farms and farmland** and establish a policy on the redevelopment of these properties.
5. Maintain policies that support family farms.
6. Expand the **NB Grown** marketing program.
7. Work aggressively with the aquaculture industry to move forward with **disease management, marketing and product diversification**.
8. Urge the federal government to introduce a **sustainability program** for aquaculture.

Fisheries

A Liberal Government will establish a Department of Fisheries so the unique needs of this traditional, coastal industry are met. Modernized, value-added seafood processing depends on a skilled workforce for this industry.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish a **Department of Fisheries**.
2. More actively **promote innovation**, with programs being developed and administered in each of the regions to address the distinct opportunities each region offers.
3. Work with stakeholders to increase **training opportunities in the seafood processing sector**.

Mining

The mining industry contributes nearly \$1 billion to New Brunswick's economy annually. But some of our key mining operations are at a critical juncture. A Liberal Government will encourage investment in mineral exploration and development of existing reserves.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish a **Mining Development Fund** to assist in financing:
 - a. Increases in mineral exploration;
 - b. Development of existing reserves not presently being mined;
 - c. New technology to profitably extract ore from current uneconomic deposits; and,
 - d. Development of the NB government's exploration database website so that exploration companies can instantly access all available data and maps.
2. Allow New Brunswickers to invest in the mineral industry by **modernizing laws and regulations**.

Tourism

Each year tourists are drawn to New Brunswick's natural beauty and rich culture. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, and we must ensure New Brunswick is a destination of choice. A Liberal Government will enhance existing tourism infrastructure and strengthen our marketing campaigns both at home and abroad.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Commit to establishing a **three-year marketing strategy** and **add \$3 million to the annual tourism marketing budget**.
2. Invest in **tourism and accommodation infrastructure** in areas where there is an identifiable shortage.
3. Better **integrate our summer and winter tourism strategies**.
4. Pursue an agreement with the federal government to complete the **Fundy Trail**.
5. Examine the feasibility of enhancing Phase 2 of the **Village historique acadien**.
6. Promote the **2009 Congrès mondial acadien** in the Acadian Peninsula as a major tourism event including the development of tourist greeting and interpretation infrastructure for the Acadian Peninsula.
7. Work with communities and port authorities to promote New Brunswick as a **cruise ship destination**.
8. Renew investments in the **New Brunswick trail system**.

A Vibrant Cultural Sector

In almost every area of artistic discipline or cultural endeavour, New Brunswick has produced artists and artistic works that are recognized on the national and world stage. A strong cultural sector contributes to the quality of life of all citizens and a vibrant cultural environment promotes a sense of identity and belonging to our province. The linguistic and geographic diversity of New Brunswick is celebrated and promoted through our cultural sector.

Cultural activity offers significant benefits for the local and provincial and national economy. Not only is employment created by cultural activities, a culturally vibrant community attracts tourism and business investment.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Implement a book publishing policy to support the artists working with the written word, including a new fund to support literary translation;
2. Support the **Beaverbrook Art Gallery** to prevent the loss of art works donated to this institution;
3. Provide assistance to New Brunswick artists and performers seeking access to federal support from FACTOR/CTL, VideoFACT, the Canada Council and other federally-sponsored cultural funds;
4. Ensure the eligibility of cultural entrepreneurs for start-up capital that would be available to small businesses in New Brunswick;
5. Undertake an inventory of architecturally-significant buildings and communities with a view to identify, protect and promote the common built heritage of New Brunswick;
6. Protect and enhance the New Brunswick Provincial Archives as well as the public library system throughout New Brunswick; and;
7. Promote heritage tourism sites, such as **Kings Landing** and **Le Pays de la Sagouine**, as part of New Brunswick's tourism marketing strategy.

Pay Equity

The amount of a New Brunswicker's paycheque should not be determined by gender. Despite improved educational levels and more women entering non-traditional occupations, New Brunswick women still earn 79 cents for every dollar earned by men. A contributing factor to the wage gap is the historic undervaluing of female-dominated occupations. As an employer, government should be setting the example when it comes to pay equity.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish clear and measurable benchmarks and targets for the achievement of **pay equity** supported by yearly progress updates.
2. Ensure that the **Pay Equity Act** applies to all parts of the public service.
3. Bring together all stakeholders to further address issues raised at recent public hearings with the goal of extending pay equity to the private sector through legislation.
4. Establish **government as a model employer** by starting job evaluations to extend pay equity to workers providing contracted services to government.

A New Era for Northern New Brunswick

New Brunswick's strength lies in the combined economic muscle of its regions. A Liberal Government will work with the citizens of Northern New Brunswick to develop a bold new agenda for northern development, including the development of a new infrastructure program. Adequate infrastructure is an important tool for economic development in the region.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Create the **Northern New Brunswick Initiative (NNBI)** as a comprehensive strategy for the northern and Miramichi regions.
2. Assign responsibility for the NNBI to a Minister with an economic portfolio.
3. As part of the **New Brunswick Infrastructure Program** include the following:
 - a. Develop **The Road to Resources/La route des Resources** trade corridor between northern New Brunswick and the United States, Ontario and Quebec;
 - b. **Improve Routes 11 and 17;**
 - c. **Offer cost-free space in all industrial parks** in the area with a minimum capital investment;
 - d. Continue to develop **the Port of Belledune;**
 - e. Undertake a feasibility study regarding **the expansion of the Belledune Generating Station;** and,

f. Undertake a feasibility study as a first step to **bring natural gas** to Northern New Brunswick.

4. Work with all economic partners in developing markets and secondary and tertiary production capacities for Northern New Brunswick **natural resources.**

Supporting our workers

To attain self-sufficiency as a province, we need an energetic labour force to power our growth. A Liberal Government will ensure employees' work sites are safe and their benefits secure.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Undertake a comprehensive review of the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC).
2. Take stronger measures to ensure the security of private sector pension plans, including improved oversight by the Supervisor of Pensions and closer monitoring of underfunded private pension funds.
3. Institute mandatory coroner's inquests for workplace fatalities.
4. Establish regular meetings between the Premier, Cabinet Ministers and union leaders.

Charter for Change: A Leader in Economic Development

A Liberal Government will:

- **Partner with Federal and Municipal governments** to establish a comprehensive population strategy;
- Establish a **cabinet committee** to work with industry to further modernize forestry in the province;
- Establish an independent **Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture** and an independent **Department of Fisheries;**
- Ensure a minimum of one per cent of **New Brunswick Investment Management Corporation's** total assets is invested in New Brunswick projects;
- Commit to establishing a **3-year tourism marketing strategy** and **add \$3 million** to the annual tourism marketing budget;
- Create the **Northern New Brunswick Initiative (NNBI)** as a comprehensive economic development strategy for the northern and Miramichi regions.

High Hopes for Higher Education

New Brunswickers have long understood the value of education. A school was one of the first institutions the United Empire Loyalists created. From this root grew the University of New Brunswick, which, in 1859, pledged to provide a practical education to all those who qualified. It was a significant promise to make in those early years. Today, it is essential that we honour it.

New Brunswick is home to four respected publicly-funded universities and a vibrant community college system. These institutions are essential to New Brunswick's future because this is where our students will learn to become creative and confident citizens. It is here where we will find our next generation of leaders.

But we need to do more than echo the promises of the past. We need to act upon them. That is why a Liberal Government will ensure post-secondary education is **accessible, affordable** and provides adequate **skills training opportunities**.

The Liberal Party believes people shouldn't have to shelve their dreams because of their family income. We need to do better at getting low-income students through the doors of our universities and colleges. And we can do better at ensuring that New Brunswickers can get the skills training they need, where they need it and when they need it.

Affordable Post-Secondary Education

High tuition is discouraging too many young New Brunswickers who want to pursue higher education. New Brunswick university graduates have the second highest student loan debt levels in the country. Nearly a quarter of New Brunswick students leave university with debt in excess of \$25,000. At the national level, only 13 per cent of students have debt levels this high. A Liberal Government has a plan to provide financial assistance to New Brunswick students at every stage in their university careers.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Offer a one-time grant of \$2,000 to every full-time, first-year New Brunswick student entering a provincial university.
2. Establish the **NB Hopes Scholarship** program that will cover a portion of a continuing students' tuition based on need.
3. Remove the **assessment of parental and spousal income** from student loans.
4. Offer a **tax rebate** to students who complete post-secondary education and choose to stay in, or return to, New Brunswick.

The Future of Post-Secondary Education

New Brunswick is home to four respected publicly-funded universities. Each plays an important role in our province but each faces challenges too. A Liberal government will work cooperatively with universities to create a new vision for post-secondary education in our province.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Appoint a **Commission on Post-Secondary Education** that will examine the higher education needs of New Brunswickers.
2. Authorize the Standing Committee on Education to invite **university officials** to outline their plans, priorities and financial needs on an annual basis.
3. Work with the federal government to establish a **dedicated transfer for post-secondary education** that is adequate, stable, and predictable.

Training For Skilled Trades

New Brunswick faces a shortage of skilled workers and, yet, every year young people are turned away from the New Brunswick Community College because of lack of space. For instance, earlier this summer, 600 applicants were turned away from NBCC's carpentry, electrical and plumbing programs set to start this fall.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Add 12,000 new spaces at the **New Brunswick Community College** over five years.
2. Introduce a **new vision for the New Brunswick Community College** including:
 - a. a comprehensive provincial inventory of skills and skill requirements;
 - b. improved access in rural New Brunswick;
 - c. access to university-recognized credits in specific NBCC courses; and,
 - d. a review process for community college tuitions.
3. Expand **distance education opportunities** including using existing infrastructure to **expand the current offerings of Year 1 and 2 university programs at the NBCC Miramichi campus**.
4. Create a **new community college campus in Fredericton**.

Charter for Change: High Hopes for Higher Education

A Liberal Government will:

- Offer a **one-time grant of \$2,000** to every full-time, first-year New Brunswick university student attending a provincial university.
- Establish the **NB Hopes Scholarship** program that will cover a portion of a student's tuition, based on achievement and need, for those already in university.
- Remove the **assessment of parental and spousal income** from student loans.
- Offer a **tax rebate** to New Brunswick high school graduates who complete post-secondary education and choose to stay in, or return to, New Brunswick.
- Establish a **Commission on Post-Secondary Education** that will examine the higher education needs of New Brunswickers.
- **Add 12,000 new spaces** at the New Brunswick Community College over five years.
- **Create a new community college campus in Fredericton**.

First in Education

It is the most important promise we can make: to educate our children. From their first day of kindergarten to their last day of high school, we must provide our children and our teachers with the tools they need. A Liberal Government will **strengthen our schools and support our teachers.**

Not every child learns the same way and our classrooms must reflect that. A Liberal Government will provide the necessary support to ensure our classrooms not only welcome all our children, but provide each with an equal opportunity to learn to their fullest abilities.

We will also strengthen the ties between our students and the communities, especially for those students most in need of support and assistance.

Being first in education isn't just about test scores. It's about being the leader in giving our children the best start in life.

Opportunity First

In his 2006 report, *Connecting Care and Challenge: Tapping our Human Potential*, Wayne MacKay wrote New Brunswick's education is "under considerable stress and at an important turning point." Mr. MacKay set a clear course to create learning opportunities for all New Brunswick children with 95 recommendations and 60 key deadlines for action.

The MacKay Report outlines a bold course for education in New Brunswick.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Endorse and implement the recommendations and timelines outlined in the MacKay Report.
2. Within one year, establish a new formula **to determine funding for students with special needs** in our schools.
3. Within one year, establish a **Provincial Learning Disabilities Strategy** focusing on earlier identification of learning disabilities and increased access to treatment and support services.
4. Ensure funding support for schools to **reduce class size** in compositionally challenging classrooms.
5. Implement the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee on Autism.

Supporting our Teachers

At the heart of every classroom is a teacher. A Liberal Government will enable our teachers by providing them with the support and the tools they need to provide excellence in teaching.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Develop increased opportunities for **professional development**.
2. Work with the New Brunswick Teachers Federation to enhance and enforce the **Student Code of Conduct** that emphasizes respect for teachers and gives students an environment suited for learning free of bullying and harassment.

Schools at the Centre of Communities

As we raise our children to be confident adults, we must nurture within them a culture of learning - a desire to learn about the world around them. It begins just outside the school doors, in the communities where we live. A Liberal Government will strengthen the relationship between the neighbourhood school and its neighbours.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Develop a **Community Schools Policy** to:
 - a. Allow greater local flexibility in course development;
 - b. Allow for greater use of school facilities beyond the typical school day;
 - c. Increase the presence of non-educational support services to children within schools, such as social workers and speech language pathologists; and,
 - d. Enable non-profit organizations to use schools more easily after-hours.
2. Explore best-practice options for a voluntary, province-wide **After-School Program**.
3. Establish a **Rural Schools Policy** that will outline a clear direction for smaller schools in rural areas and examine the unique funding challenges of smaller schools.
4. Include **civics training** in the education curriculum.
5. Establish five-year targets for strengthening our **school and public libraries**.

Preparing for the Future

Upon completion of high school, New Brunswick graduates should be aware of their options and equipped with the skills to pursue their goals whether they head to university, to community college or to the work force.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Support initiatives that improve **post-secondary awareness** for students and parents.
2. Increase **vocational and trade options** in New Brunswick high schools.
3. Examine best-practice options for **literacy and math recovery programs** to help low-performing students.
4. Work with universities to create **university-based summer camps** for middle school students.

Accountability in Education

Standards are to education what a regular check-up is to health: an opportunity to assess how well a student is doing. Each September parents send their children to school with the expectation that they will learn to the best of their abilities. A Liberal Government will set accountability measures to ensure parents' expectations are met.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Reinstate **Provincial Achievement Examinations** to ensure all students are learning the essential skills.
2. Examine the best practices for **student evaluation**.
3. Work with the District Education Councils to track both **qualitative and quantitative indicators** in the education system.
4. Instruct the Minister of Education to appear before the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education to present an **annual report of performance indicators** in education.

Healthy Families

One in three children in New Brunswick is overweight or obese. This is compounded by low levels of physical activity among young people. A Liberal Government will promote healthy living for families and within our schools. By starting families on the path to healthy lifestyles early, we will see increased levels of wellness across our province.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Create the **Premier's Committee on Healthy Families**.
2. Promote excellence and involvement in sport by reinstating the **New Brunswick Games** for New Brunswick students.
3. Implement a **Healthy Schools Act** to:
 - a. Ensure every school provides **150 minutes per week of physical activity and education**;
 - b. Monitor percentages of schools with a dedicated physical education teacher on staff;
 - c. **Track levels of extra-curricular physical activity** options available to students;
 - d. Examine **best practices in wellness education** programs;
 - e. Measure the quality and availability of recreation facilities;
 - f. Develop a **province-wide program of extra-curricular athletics** for all schools;
 - g. Ensure that each school has **access to a physical education specialist** in planning wellness curricula;

- h. Develop a **province-wide curriculum for physical education** at the elementary level; and,
 - i. Develop a province-wide set of **standards and indicators for physical fitness at each age group**.
4. Examine opportunities to partner with health advocacy groups, non-profit organizations and others to introduce activity-oriented programs for students, such as the Pedometer Challenge.

Early Childhood Education

The early years of foundational learning are essential to a child's development. For instance, Moncton's Headstart Program is a well-established and successful program. A Liberal Government will improve accessibility to infant and early childhood education programs for families in need of support.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Double the **number of spaces** for infants in licensed daycare centres.
2. Establish a **New Beginnings Program** to focus on prenatal and postnatal care for mothers and babies to promote the best start for our future generation.
3. Improve **wages and benefits** for childcare workers to attract and retain qualified staff.
4. Provide \$2 million in annual funding and establish Moncton Headstart as a **Centre of Excellence** for upgrading the skills of early learning workers around the province.
5. Add an **Early Years Evaluation of Literacy** to the Preschool Assessment done at 3.5 years as part of the Early Childhood Initiatives Program.
6. **Integrate services** for young children and their families by enhancing and expanding the Early Childhood Initiatives Program to ensure a smooth transition into public school for children identified as at risk or those with special needs, such as autism.
7. Work with New Brunswick **social workers** to put in place a strategy for coping with staff shortages as outlined in the Children Come First report.

Youth at Risk

Teens between the ages of 16 and 18 straddle two worlds; not quite adults, but beyond childhood, they may sometimes wonder where they fit. Unfortunately for those who struggle with addictions, homelessness or who live in poverty without family supports, the future can be bleak. Specialized social programs must be developed to assist our older youth at risk. A Liberal Government will provide supports for this vulnerable group.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Create a **Youth at Risk Unit** to coordinate regionally-based services including:
 - a. A new **Youth at Risk Income Supplement Program**;
 - b. A reduction of the barriers to eligibility for social services payments to youth identified to be "at risk";
 - c. Development of a youth homelessness strategy;
 - d. Examination of best practice options for alternative learning environments; and,
 - e. Development of a comprehensive addictions strategy.
2. Preserve the scope and independence of the Child & Youth Advocate.

Charter for Change: For New Brunswick Children

A Liberal Government will:

- Establish a new formula to determine **funding for students with special needs**.
- Establish a **Provincial Learning Disabilities Strategy**.
- Offer funding support for schools to **reduce class size** in compositionally challenging classrooms.
- Develop a **Community Schools Policy** to allow greater use of school facilities outside the regular school day.
- Increase **vocational and trade options** in New Brunswick high schools.
- Reinstate **Provincial Achievement Exams**.
- Examine the best practices for **student evaluation** which include academic achievement, but also social skills and citizenship.
- Double the **number of spaces** for infants in licensed daycare centres.
- Improve **wages and benefits** for childcare workers.
- Create a **Youth at Risk Unit** to coordinate regionally-based services.

The Best in Energy Generation & Conservation

With rising gasoline prices and home heating costs, New Brunswickers are thinking about energy. How it's produced, how it's consumed and how it can be conserved. A Liberal Government will introduce an innovative plan that will position New Brunswick as an **energy leader in generation, promote green power and implement a massive conservation program** that will grant homeowners \$2,000 for home conservation.

Through NB Power, New Brunswick has long met the electricity needs of its citizens. Large construction projects, such as the refurbishment of Point Lepreau, can also stimulate the economy and provide employment to highly skilled professionals and tradespeople. A Liberal Government will encourage the research and development of alternative energy. Our aim is to make New Brunswick **a pioneer in the implementation of green power technology.**

We will give consumers real control over energy costs and we will put more money back in New Brunswickers' pockets. As energy prices fluctuate worldwide, a Liberal Government will work to protect consumers here at home.

Conservation

There's more to conservation than turning off the lights when we leave a room. It is about recognizing our individual impact on our provincial electricity system. There is a limit to how much electricity can be transmitted across New Brunswick's power lines on any given day. As our economy expands, there will be greater demands placed on this system. Which is why all of us – corporate, commercial and residential users – must reconsider how we use this important resource. A Liberal Government will make conservation a cornerstone of its new mandate and position New Brunswick as a leader in home energy conservation programs, including financial incentives, time-of-day savings and increased support for Efficiency NB.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish an extensive home energy conservation effort of **\$2,000 per household** including covering up to \$250 towards the cost of a household energy audit.
2. Introduce demand side efficiency programs for residential customers, such as **net metering** and **time-of-day savings**.
3. Offer incentives for New Brunswickers who switch to **alternative fuel vehicles**.
4. Increase funding to **Efficiency NB**.
5. **Pursue an “at source” residential rebate for the eight per cent provincial portion of the HST** on electricity, natural gas and home heating oil.

Generation

New Brunswick is an energy leader in Atlantic Canada and in particular the Saint John region has emerged as a regional energy hub, well-positioned to serve both American and Canadian markets. A Liberal Government will build upon this foundation and set a bold energy generation agenda. We can transform energy from a drain on our public purse into an economic advantage for our province.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Develop a clear, long-term strategic plan to increase New Brunswick's **generation capacity**, with an emphasis on stabilizing domestic rates and serving export markets.
2. Examine the feasibility of a second nuclear reactor at **Point Lepreau**.
3. Explore **hydrogen fuel cell opportunities** in relation to increased generation capacity at Point Lepreau.
4. Examine the feasibility of a **second generating facility in Belledune**.
5. Support exploration of **natural gas resources in southeastern New Brunswick**.
6. Undertake a feasibility study as a first step to **bring natural gas to northern New Brunswick**.

7. Establish New Brunswick as a model user of green power by:
 - a. Increasing **generation from renewable sources** to 10 per cent of New Brunswick's overall generation capacity by 2016;
 - b. Investing in **tidal power research** and commercialization;
 - c. Encouraging research and development of **biofuels**, such as ethanol, produced from either agricultural products such as corn, barley or wheat, or from wood waste; and,
 - d. Examining the feasibility of new **small scale hydroelectric generation** projects.

Accountability at NB Power

The people of New Brunswick are the shareholders of NB Power. Government does not need to be involved in the day-to-day operations of the utility but there is a responsibility to provide clear strategic direction and to define expectations.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Maintain NB Power as a **publicly-owned utility** that will serve all New Brunswickers equally.
2. Amend the *Electricity Act* to include a clear statement of purpose that puts the **public good** of New Brunswickers at the forefront.
3. Establish a **long-term energy plan** for NB Power with clear strategic direction and objectives.
4. Pursue a **Maritime Energy Accord** between the three Maritime provinces.
5. Establish **regular reporting** between the CEO of NB Power and the Minister of Energy.
6. Amend the *Energy and Utilities Act* to restore the independence of the **Energy and Utilities Board**, including the ability to review NB Power contracts over \$75 million.
7. Establish an independent **Office of the Consumer Ombudsman** at NB Power.
8. Appoint a **Consumer Representative** to the NB Power Board of Directors.
9. Establish a **no-disconnect policy** between November 1 and March 31 for households in legitimate economic need.

Automotive Fuels

In a rural province like New Brunswick, the use of an automobile is fundamental to our quality of life and our ability to work. Although the price of automotive fuels is set by world markets, the provincial government does have some room to help drivers with the rising cost of fuel. Currently, New Brunswick drivers pay 14.5 cents per litre in excise tax, including a total 3.8 cent increase added by the Bernard Lord Government since 1999. A new Liberal Government will take immediate steps to provide price relief to consumers.

A Liberal Government will:

1. **Immediately eliminate the 3.8 cent per litre Bernard Lord Excise Tax** on gasoline.
2. Provide equivalent relief to owners of non-commercial diesel vehicles through a reduction in annual vehicle registration fees.
3. Consult with wholesalers, retailers, regulatory experts and consumers to create a new regulatory framework to ensure that New Brunswick drivers pay the lowest possible price for automotive fuels.

Charter for Change: The Best in Energy Generation & Conservation

A Liberal Government will:

- Establish an extensive home energy conservation effort of **\$2,000 per household** including a reimbursement up to \$250 towards the cost of a household energy audit.
- **Pursue an at source rebate on the eight per cent provincial portion of the HST** on electricity, natural gas and home heating oil.
- Examine the feasibility of a second nuclear reactor at **Point Lepreau** and a **second generation facility at Belledune**.
- Increasing **generation from renewable sources** to 10 per cent of New Brunswick's overall generation capacity by 2016.
- Establish an independent **Office of the Consumer Ombudsman** at NB Power.
- **Immediately eliminate the 3.8 cent per litre Bernard Lord Excise Tax** on gasoline.

A Healthy New Brunswick

Coping with illness or emergencies can be scary and stressful – especially if you don't have a family doctor. We want to end the uncertainty for thousands of New Brunswick families. A Liberal Government will **help New Brunswick families access a family doctor and the specialists they need.**

If we want people to come to, and stay in, our province, it's not only about creating economic opportunity. People want to know their families can get the health care they need. We need to make sure that accessible, quality health care is a reality across the province.

Recruitment

Long wait times and emergency room closures have become all too familiar in New Brunswick. In order to change this, we need to get more highly trained health care professionals into our hospitals and community health care centres.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Have the Premier take a **direct role in recruiting** health care professionals, including family doctors, to New Brunswick.
2. Offer differential **incentives to physicians** who practice in areas where the need is greatest, including:
 - a. New Brunswick Health Care Bursaries for students in health care professions who agree to work in New Brunswick; and,
 - b. An income tax credit for recent graduates in the health care professions who work in New Brunswick.
3. **Establish medical training** opportunities in Saint John and Moncton.

Community Health

Not every health care need requires a trip to the hospital. By improving our community health centres, we can help New Brunswickers get the right care in the right place.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Enhance the role of nurses, nurse practitioners and pharmacists as well as other health care providers to **increase patient access to primary health care**.
2. Enhance the **Extramural Program** in each of the regional health authorities.
3. Strengthen resources for **palliative care**, including the creation of palliative care units in Dalhousie, Caraquet and other communities in rural New Brunswick.
4. Introduce a **Travel Assistance Program** for New Brunswickers who must travel outside of the province to receive medical services.
5. Establish a provincial **Rural Health Framework** including:
 - a. The **Rural Health Institute** as a research centre in partnership with the federal government;
 - b. **Centres of specialty services** in smaller regional health authorities;
 - c. **Training, recruiting, retaining and supporting** rural health care providers;
 - d. **Stronger technological links** between health care providers;
 - e. Increased **education and training** of rural physicians;

- f. Opportunities for specialists in larger centres to provide **backup to rural physicians**; and,
 - g. Restoration of certain services to specific areas, including the Acadian Peninsula.
6. Enhance **Telemedicine** networks across New Brunswick.
 7. Establish a **new satellite cardiac catheterization lab** in Moncton by 2008.
 8. Establish a **Health Innovation Working Group** to attract health research investment to New Brunswick.

Ambulance Services

Whether responding to emergencies or transferring patients between health care facilities, our ambulance services are a vital part of our health care system.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Develop a single **provincial ambulance system** to meet the international standards of the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services.
2. Expand the use of technologies to allow up-to-the minute communications between ground and air ambulances and emergency departments or trauma centres.

Chronic Conditions

Thousands of New Brunswickers face a lifetime of health care needs due to chronic conditions. Improved access to the medications, supplies and devices needed to manage these conditions can help avoid lengthy hospital stays or severe complications.

A Liberal Government will:

1. **Commence legal action against tobacco companies** to recover health care costs related to tobacco consumption.
2. Develop a **Diabetes Assistance Program** to improve access to necessary medication, supplies and devices.
3. Work with other advocacy and professional groups to develop **chronic care strategies** for other conditions such as arthritis or HIV/AIDS.

Prescription Drugs

Every day thousands of seniors and low-income earners in New Brunswick face the heart breaking decision of which basic need, such as food or heat, will be sacrificed so they can afford necessary prescription drugs. In addition, the unmonitored

distribution of prescription drugs, especially those with addictive properties, in New Brunswick cannot continue.

When you rely on medication to improve your quality of life and an expensive pill is all that stands between you and debilitating pain, this is an uncertainty you cannot afford.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Create an **online Prescription Drug Monitoring Program** as the first component of an **Electronic Patient Record**.
2. Develop a **Medication Review Service** to maximize the benefit from drug therapies for seniors and those with chronic conditions.
3. Champion the creation of a **National Drug Agency**.
4. Streamline the **approval process** for new drugs.
5. Encourage **clinical trial opportunities** for drug therapy in New Brunswick.

Accountability in Health Care

New Brunswickers expect and deserve a health care system that is accountable and responsible to the public.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Ensure that regional health authority (RHA) chief executive officers report to their local RHA boards.
2. Establish a permanent **New Brunswick Health Council** comprised of the RHAs to ensure:
 - a) Inter-regional and inter-jurisdictional cooperation;
 - b) Promotion of best practices across the province;
 - c) Long-term planning for capital and technological investments;
 - d) The development of the eHealth record, ePharmacy, ePhysician, teleradiology, and expanded use of telemedicine applications;
 - e) A reduction of duplication through standardization procedures;
 - f) Management of wait lists and access to clinical care; and,
 - g) Management of health human resources planning.
3. Create a subcommittee of the Health Council, supported by an associate deputy minister, to provide direction in developing **health care delivery in francophone communities** with special emphasis on the Acadian Peninsula.
4. Establish **multi-year funding plans** based on submissions by regional health authorities.

Provincial Addictions Strategy

Communities across New Brunswick are concerned about the prevalence of drug addiction. Drug addiction has enormous human and societal cost. A Liberal Government will partner with regional health authorities, service providers and community organizations to develop a Provincial Addictions Strategy.

- **Improved availability of methadone treatment**

We need to provide a clear road to recovery for those fighting addiction. That's why a Liberal Government will improve the availability of methadone treatment in urban centres as well as in rural communities.

- **Drug Treatment Courts**

Drug Treatment Courts aim to reduce crime committed as a result of drug dependency through court-monitored treatment and community service support for offenders with drug addictions. The federal Department of Justice and Health Canada have used the Drug Treatment Court model in major urban centres since 1998. A new Liberal Government will set up two pilot sites for Drug Treatment Courts in New Brunswick.

- **Prescription Drug Monitoring Program**

In 2001, the coroner's inquest into the death of Stephen Beshara recommended the establishment of a prescription drug database to help pharmacists and other health care providers curb prescription drug abuse. A Liberal Government will establish a **prescription drug monitoring program** as a tool to prevent drug addiction, flag dangerous drug interactions and curb drug abuse.

- **Heightened Action Against Organized Crime**

A Liberal Government will partner with the federal government to take action against organized crime and the drug trade.

- **A Focus on Youth-at-Risk**

A Liberal Government will create a Youth-at-Risk Unit, which will work with community groups on addiction prevention and treatment for this vulnerable group within our society.

Charter for Change: A Healthy New Brunswick

A Liberal Government will:

- Ensure the Premier takes a direct **role in recruiting health care professionals** to New Brunswick.
- Implement a comprehensive **Provincial Addictions Strategy**.
- Improve **recruitment incentive programs**, including a Health Care Bursary and income tax-credits, for health care professionals working in New Brunswick, particularly in rural areas.
- **Establish physician training** in Moncton and Saint John.
- Establish a **Travel Assistance Program** for New Brunswickers who must travel who must travel outside the province to receive services.
- Create an **online prescription drug program** as the first component of an electronic patient record.

Respect for Seniors

Independence and dignity; these are the twin goals of the Liberal Party's senior care agenda. Whether through nursing home care or individualized home care services, our seniors must receive the right services at the right time. This is why a Liberal Government will **provide increased hours of home care and nursing home care at a more affordable rate for older New Brunswickers.**

Today's senior care is about more than just nursing homes. For those who choose to stay at home, they must receive the support they need to maintain their independence through an enhanced home care system. Our nursing homes must be equipped to properly care for elderly residents. A Liberal Government will honour its commitment to seniors by creating a **Minister Responsible for Seniors Issues.**

A generation ago, when living at home became impossible, a senior could frequently drive him or herself to the nursing home. There they could receive some assisted living and medical care. Today many of these needs are met by home support workers or special care homes. And that's a good thing. It allows more seniors to stay in their own homes longer. But it also means the level of care needed in our nursing homes has increased and greater investment in home care is necessary.

Nursing Home Care

For years family members of nursing home residents and the staff who care for them have passionately advocated for improved nursing home services, and in particular increased hours of care. A Liberal Government will act quickly to increase hours of care because it understands that, for nursing home residents, this will mean timely feeding assistance, the chance to enjoy more than one bath a week and improved access to regular exercise. Above all, it provides greater dignity for those who have spent their lives building our province.

A Liberal Government will:

1. **Immediately increase hours of care** to 3.0 hours a day in nursing homes by increasing the number of support staff workers;
2. **Increase hours of care to 3.5 hours a day** within two years.
3. Change the fee policy from a means-based test to an **income-based test** when determining support for long-term care.
4. **Reduce the daily rates** in nursing homes to \$70 per day to reflect room, board and assisted living only.
5. Special Care Home rates for Level I and Level II Residents will be increased to a standard subsidy rate of \$74 per day by April 1, 2007.
6. Establish and monitor **provincial standards** in our long-term care system as requested by the Auditor-General.
7. Ensure adequate resources to the **Office of the Public Trustee**.

Home Care

Many older New Brunswickers want to remain in their homes as long as they can. But sometimes, in order to do so, they need a helping hand. Accessing that helping hand is sometimes difficult, particularly in rural New Brunswick.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Immediately **restore the maximum number of hours of home support** available to 215 hours per month.
2. Improve **wages and benefits** for home support workers.
3. Improve the accessibility to **respite care** for the frail and elderly through residential and home support to allow time off for informal caregivers.

A Voice for Seniors

With improvements to health and quality of life, many older New Brunswickers can contribute to the community. We want to make sure their voices are heard.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Appoint a **Minister Responsible for Seniors Issues**.
2. Double the Low-Income Seniors Benefit from \$100 to \$200 on April 1, 2007 with a further increase of \$200 by April 1, 2010.
3. Within one year, implement a renewed **Long-Term Care Strategy** that includes the continuum of home care, special care homes and nursing home care.
4. Implement a **Seniors' Housing Strategy** to provide options for independent living.

Charter for Change: Respect for Seniors

A Liberal Government will:

- Change the policy from a means-based test to an **income-based test** when determining support for long-term care.
- **Reduce the daily rates** in nursing homes to reflect room, board and assisted living only.
- **Increase hours of care** in nursing homes to 3.0 hours a day immediately and to 3.5 hours per day within two years.
- **Restore the maximum number of hours of home support** available to 215 hours per month.
- **Appoint a Minister responsible for Seniors Issues**.
- Improve **wages and benefits** for home support workers.

Fairness in Automobile Insurance

New Brunswickers deserve fair treatment from automobile insurance companies. Insurance premiums remain too high for many New Brunswickers and the quality of coverage has declined. A Liberal Government will **end discrimination on automobile insurance and ensure that New Brunswickers get good automobile insurance coverage at a fair price.**

Right now, automobile insurance companies charge different premium rates to drivers based on gender, age and their place of residence within New Brunswick. The Liberal Party believes the only basis for differences in insurance premiums should be your driving record or the type of car you drive. Bad drivers should pay more; good drivers should pay less. Expensive cars should cost more to insure than more economical vehicles.

The Liberal Party is built on the tradition of Equal Opportunity. We don't believe any New Brunswicker should be penalized based on where they live or other factors that would be considered unfair discrimination in the workplace or in society. The current practices of the automobile insurance companies fly in the face of our principles. That's why these practices must end.

A new Liberal Government will take immediate steps to rectify this situation. We will **complete negotiations with the insurance companies** to secure fair treatment for New Brunswick policyholders. If insurance companies are unwilling to reform their practices after 60 days, then a new Liberal Government will initiate **a process with the Independent Insurance Brokers and consumers** to determine which model of **public automobile insurance** currently in use would best suit their needs. This practice of **discrimination must end.**

Affordable Insurance

A Liberal Government will:

1. Complete negotiations with the insurance companies to **secure fair treatment for New Brunswick drivers.**
2. **Eliminate all territories** for the purpose of automobile insurance to ensure that New Brunswickers have affordable access to insurance no matter where they live in the province.
3. **Eliminate discrimination** based on gender and age. These factors would no longer be considered when evaluating consumer risk.

Real Action against Poverty

For some New Brunswickers, achieving self-sufficiency is a daunting task. Addressing chronic poverty is about more than creating jobs; it is about lowering barriers to education and opportunities. A Liberal Government will **enhance adult literacy training** and improve access to **safe and affordable housing**.

Transition to Work

New Brunswick has some of the lowest social assistance rates in Canada; the aid we provide to the poorest of the poor is inadequate. So too are the supports we provide to the working poor, who, despite having a job, continue to live in poverty. For these two groups it is a struggle to afford basic needs – food, shelter and clothing. There is rarely money left over to cover transportation or child care. This is often a barrier to employment. A Liberal Government will introduce programs to assist people living in poverty as they enter the workforce.

Access to quality child care is particularly important for those who are trying to work their way out of poverty. We need to create more child care spaces and we need to offer more support to single-parent families.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Review the **current social assistance rates** paid to recipients and the programs available to people on social assistance with the goal of raising rates to the average for Atlantic Canada.
2. Increase the **maximum allowable earnings** that can be retained from casual or part-time work for people who are on social assistance.
3. Provide **enhanced day care support** during the transition to full-time work for parents on social assistance.
4. Increase the **Comfort and Clothing Allowance** for persons living in residential facilities.
5. Enhance medical and drug coverage for low-income earners.
6. Review the definition of **economic unit** to encourage the development of support systems for individuals in need of assistance.
7. Create an independent **Minimum Wage Board** to give its recommendation to Cabinet within 90 days of its appointment and yearly thereafter.
8. Establish a **Provincial Strategy on Disabilities** issues including:
 - a. Flexible programming and services;
 - b. Measures to improve access to post-secondary education; and,
 - c. A comprehensive employment strategy.

Affordable Housing

Approximately 40,000 families and individuals in New Brunswick live in inadequate housing units. The lack of quality, affordable housing is a major issue for families across the province. Inadequate housing affects families in many ways, from higher utility bills to poorer health. Access to affordable housing is also an issue for many New Brunswickers.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Create a **new Crown Corporation** that will engage with non-profit and community service groups **to create and maintain new housing units**, including units for disabled and elderly New Brunswickers.
2. Appoint a **Minister Responsible for Housing** to lead the renewal of provincial housing policies and programs and, through the new Crown corporation, administer federal-provincial housing programs.
3. Pass laws and regulations to **empower municipalities** to deal with substandard housing issues and the enforcement of work orders.
4. **Promote consumer protection** with regard to housing renovations and other housing related issues.
5. Work with municipalities and planning commissions to develop **effective zoning policies**.

Literacy

New Brunswick has some of the highest adult illiteracy rates in Canada. This is unacceptable. Literacy is about more than the ability to read and write. It is about providing people with the skills and confidence they need to fully participate in society.

Low literacy rates keep too many people out of the workforce and presents barriers to those who seek advancement in their jobs.

A Liberal Government will:

1. **Eliminate wait lists for literacy training** in the province.
2. Re-establish the **New Brunswick Literacy Secretariat**.
3. Work with educators at the high school level to **ensure acceptable literacy levels upon graduation**.
4. Offer incentives for employers who offer **in-house literacy training**.
5. Provide **literacy training** in French and English at all campuses of the New Brunswick Community College.
6. Provide **an additional \$2 million in funding** over four years for community literacy providers.

Charter for Change: Real Action Against Poverty

A Liberal Government will:

- Increase the maximum **allowable earnings** that can be retained from casual and part-time work for people who are on social assistance.
- Provide **enhanced day care support** for single parents receiving assistance during the transition to full-time work.
- Create a Crown Corporation to deliver housing programs and appoint a **Minister Responsible for Housing**.
- Enhance **affordable housing programs** in both urban and rural areas.
- **Eliminate wait lists for literacy training** in the province.

Moving Ahead on Transportation

It is about staying connected. To markets. To essential services. To communities. To each other.

From Central Canada's perspective, New Brunswick is the gateway to the Maritimes. But it's a two-way street and for regional exporters, all roads to major markets in Ontario, Quebec and the northeastern United States lead through New Brunswick. A comprehensive provincial highway system, with safe and reliable connections to our province's ports, airports, rail lines and manufacturing and production facilities, is essential for economic growth.

Equally important is ensuring the citizens of New Brunswick feel safe on our highways.

A Liberal Government will **help connect our province with better roads** through a comprehensive, multi-year transportation strategy. We will also aim to become a leader in Intelligent Transportation Systems – both to encourage smarter, safer travel at home and to market our technology abroad.

Transportation

A Liberal Government will:

1. Complete a **Provincial Ring Road** to connect communities and citizens. In addition to completing the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway, this initiative includes **significant upgrades to Route 11 and Route 17**.
2. **Twin Route 1 between St. Stephen and Saint John** in anticipation of the new Eastlink Interstate running from Calais, Maine to upstate New York.
3. Improve **Route 8** with the construction of the Marysville bypass and improved passing lanes.
4. Put in place a three-year plan to specifically address the **road infrastructure needs of rural New Brunswick**.
5. Develop **The Road to Resources/La route des Ressources** trade corridor between northern New Brunswick and the United States, Ontario and Quebec.
6. Establish a new **Intelligent Transportation Strategy** that would see New Brunswick become a national leader in ITS technology.
7. Erect 300 kilometres of **wildlife fencing** along highway collision hotspots throughout the province within two years.

Charter for Change: Moving Ahead on Transportation

A Liberal Government will:

- Complete a **Provincial Ring Road** to connect communities and citizens, including significant upgrades to Route 11 and Route 17 along with the completion of the **twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway** in New Brunswick.
- Develop **The Road to Resources/La route des Ressources** trade corridor between Northern New Brunswick and the United States, Ontario and Quebec.
- **Twin Route 1** between St. Stephen and Saint John.
- Improve **Route 8** with the Marysville bypass and improved passing lanes.
- Erect 300 kilometres of **wildlife fencing** along highway collision hotspots throughout the province within two years.

An Accountable and Responsible Government

New Brunswick has a history of strong political leaders who applied their passion and ingenuity to move the province forward. A new Liberal Government will respect this historic role. It will be a champion of provincial interests, a responsible steward of the environment and an able guardian of public finances.

Governing isn't just about what happens today. It's about the kind of province we want to build for future generations. A Liberal Government will be responsible to New Brunswickers today and in the future by committing to **fiscal accountability** and **environmental sustainability**.

Fiscal Responsibility and Government Accountability

A Liberal Government will improve government performance through an unprecedented level of financial openness and public accountability.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Adhere to New Brunswick's **Fiscal Responsibility and Balanced Budget Act**.
2. Introduce a **Fairness in Fees Act** to require any increases in government fees to be debated and passed by the Legislative Assembly and that suitable public notice of fee changes is given to the public.
3. Set a standard calendar for the fall and spring sessions of the Legislative Assembly.
4. Modify the **Member's Conflict of Interest Act** to ensure integrity in political fundraising and forbid additional salaries for elected officials.
5. Modernize **privacy and right to information laws** in New Brunswick and further protect an individual's personal information from misuse in the Legislative Assembly or elsewhere.
6. Introduce legislation to **protect government employees** who advise the public or the Legislative Assembly of government mismanagement.
7. Improve the **appointment process** for agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs) and outline specific qualifications for certain ABCs, such as the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.
8. Provide fixed dates for Provincial Elections.

Relationships with Non-Profit Organizations

The Liberal Party recognizes that our community non-profit sectors are being asked to do more with fewer resources.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Within 90 days, appoint a task force to examine the challenges facing the non-profit sector and to make recommendations that would ensure that the work of these vital organizations will continue to benefit society.

Relations with Other Governments

A Liberal Government will work cooperatively with other levels of governments to pursue and promote New Brunswick's interests.

The Liberal Party knows no one level of government has a monopoly on ideas or solutions. The citizens we represent are not separate and distinct groups. They are all New Brunswickers. We need to ensure our working relationship is focussed on the best interest of our province and not on our differences.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Champion **New Brunswick's role in the Canadian federation**.
2. Seek **reform to the Equalization Program** based on all revenues from all provinces taken into consideration when calculating fiscal capacity.
3. Pursue a **Maritime Energy Accord** between the three Maritime Provinces.
4. Pursue a **Maritime Transportation Accord** between the three Maritime Provinces.
5. Ensure the Premier meets annually with representatives of **New Brunswick's municipalities** and ensure appropriate Cabinet Ministers attend the yearly meetings of the municipal organizations.
6. Establish an ongoing bilateral process and regular meetings between **Aboriginal leaders and the Premier** and members of Cabinet to address issues of mutual interest.
7. Establish a **Provincial Capital Commission** to manage and enhance the common built heritage of New Brunswick in the Capital area and to promote the Provincial Capital Region.

Environmental Sustainability

A Liberal Government will introduce a combination of legislation and programming to enhance our commitment to clean air and water, including the introduction of alternative fuel sources and proper steps to protect the province's water supply.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Establish a **Maritime Green Power Pool** to:
 - a. Develop interconnection agreements to maximize development and construction of renewable energy;
 - b. Develop power purchase agreements for renewable energy; and,

- c. Legislate targets for a **Renewable Portfolio Standard** to ensure that 10 per cent of all electricity generation capacity in New Brunswick is from renewable sources by 2016.
2. Designate funding, through the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, for **environmentally focussed research and development**.
3. Establish **green purchase requirements** for government vehicles and set targets for the government fleet to become a **model user of alternative fuel vehicles**.
4. Offer provincial sales tax rebates to New Brunswickers who purchase **alternative fuel vehicles**.
5. Set clear internal timelines for the **development and review of drinking water guidelines** and work with the municipalities to develop options to accelerate the process of approval of these guidelines.
6. Work to improve environmentally damaged sites, including:
 - a. Immediately commit the provincial government to pay its one-third share of the \$88 million necessary for the clean-up of the **Saint John Harbour** and to complete this project within seven years;
 - b. Commit to the restoration of the **Petitcodiac River** by selecting one of the four options resulting from the Environment Impact Assessment in a timely fashion; and,
 - c. Pursuing the remediation of contaminated soil in the **Belledune region**.

Charter for Change: An Accountable and Responsible Government

A Liberal Government will:

- Adhere to New Brunswick's **Fiscal Responsibility and Balanced Budget Act**.
- Ensure the Premier meets annually with representatives of **New Brunswick's municipalities**.
- Designate funding, through the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, for **environmentally focussed research and development**.
- Immediately commit the provincial government to pay its one-third share of the \$88 million necessary for the clean-up of the **Saint John Harbour**.
- Commit to the restoration of the **Petitcodiac River**.
- Pursue the remediation of contaminated soil in the **Belledune region**.

Environmental Responsibility and Sustainability

We all have a responsibility as government, as industry and as individual consumers to set priorities and make choices that are environmentally responsible.

A Liberal Government will:

1. Implement pay-for-performance based remediation contracts to encourage **increased innovation and cutting-edge technology** in environmental remediation projects.
2. Commit to **better enforcement** of current regulations under the Department of Environment.
3. Establish a comprehensive plan for **brownfield redevelopment**.
4. Develop **clear protocols for New Brunswick Kyoto credits** to ensure that all carbon credits from Crown corporations, lands and government initiatives are the property of the people of New Brunswick.