# families. Building for the future.

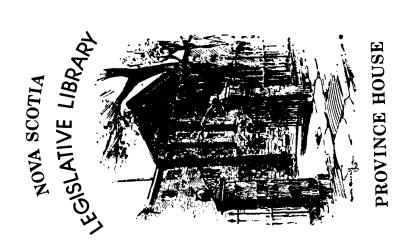
Plan for a Stronger Nova Scotia

NS 324. 271604 P96 2006 c.2 PC

## A Message from the Honourable Rodney MacDonald

Nova Scotia families are the foundation on which our province will grow and prosper. In today's Nova Scotia, there are many different kinds of families, but they all play the same role in shaping the society we hope to pass on to our children. Our province's families work hard, play by the rules, pay their taxes and do

their utmost to give the next generation the best start in life.



NS 324, 271604 2006

These are the values I learned growing up in small-town Nova Scotia. They are the values my parents helped me discover. They are the values my wife and I hope our son learns from us. They are Nova Scotian values – whether you're from Bedford, Berwick or Baddeck.

Over the last several months, I have had the chance to get out and about around our great province. If there's one common view that Nova Scotians have shared with me as their Premier, it's this: Nova Scotian families are the biggest single contributors to our province's success in recent years – it's time for government to do more to recognize their contribution.

That's what my plan – Building for Families, Building for the Future – is all about: Supporting working families who often face tough choices in an increasingly hectic and difficult world.

As part of this plan for a stronger Nova Scotia, my team and I have identified seven key priorities that, with your support, will focus our efforts as a government:

- Helping the 140,000 Nova Scotians who don't have a basic drug plan.
- Giving working families a break through lower taxes on household essentials, like energy.
- Supporting students of all ages, through lower tuition and smaller class sizes up to grade six.
- Ensuring every senior has a home, through either 1,300 new nursing home beds or greater support to stay in their own homes.

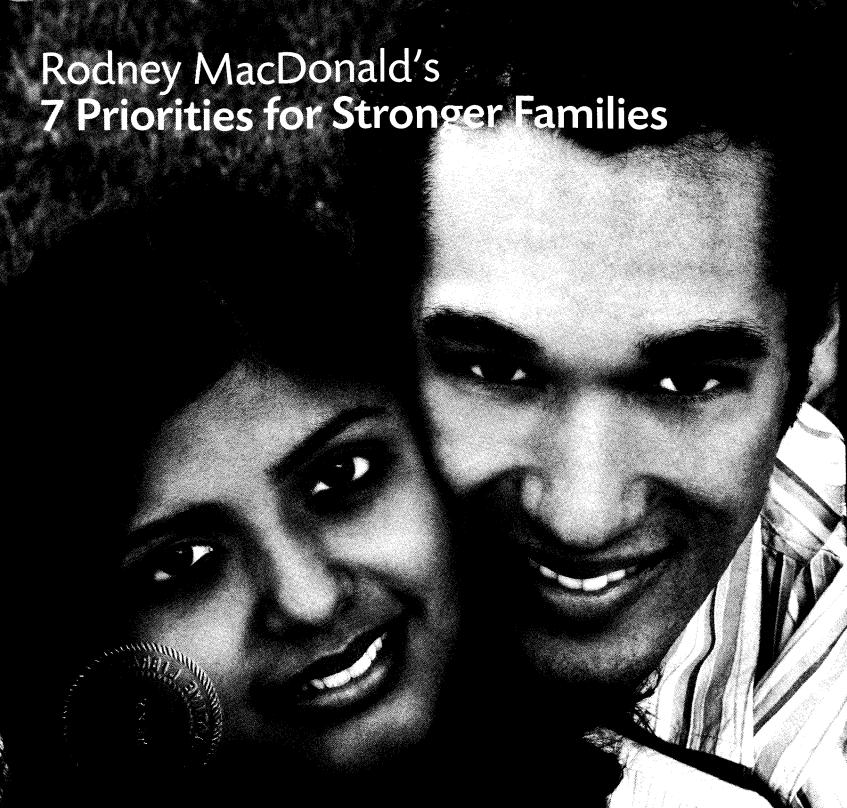
- Establishing the largest single road building program in the last 40 years, starting with 2,000 kilometres of new or repaved road work.
- Setting aside more parks and green spaces for all to enjoy.
- Hiring 250 new police officers to keep our streets and communities safe.

These are my priorities to help Nova Scotians build a stronger future for them and their families. This is my plan to get the job done – a plan that continues John Hamm's legacy to our children of balanced budgets and paying down our debt.

On behalf of Progressive Conservative candidates from one end of this province to the other, I ask for your support so that together, we can make things better for Nova Scotia families.

Yours truly,

Kooney Mac Janald
Premier Rodney Mac Donald
Leader, PC Party of Nova Scotia



- A Working Families Pharmacare Plan for the 140,000 Nova Scotians who go without.
- Nova Scotia's first Anti-Crime Agenda, including 250 new police officers to keep our streets and communities safe.
- A break for working families, starting with no provincial sales tax on home energy costs.
- Greater support for all students, from lowering tuition by more than \$1000, to smaller class sizes up to grade 6.
- The right home for every senior, through 1,300 more nursing home beds or more help for seniors to stay in their own homes.
- The largest single roadbuilding program in 40 years with at least 2,000 km of new paving.
- 7 More parks, more green spaces and 500 km of new trails.



Rodney MacDonald believes that making sure the people of Nova Scotia are healthy, especially our youngest Nova Scotians, is so much more than treating illness. It's about making healthy lifestyles a lifelong commitment for people, preventing injuries, illness and disease and fighting the substances that cause so much harm.



As Canada's first-ever Minister of Health Promotion, Rodney MacDonald earned a reputation for developing and implementing policies promoting healthier populations that larger provinces would later copy. From the toughest anti-smoking law in Canada to major new investments in healthier meals and physical activity, Rodney MacDonald's three years as Minister of Health Promotion marked the beginning of creating a culture of health among Nova Scotians.

As Nova Scotia's new Premier, one of Rodney MacDonald's first acts was to build on Nova Scotia Health Promotion's success by establishing a new Department of Health Promotion and Protection. With a broader mandate to include public health, this new Department will again lead the way in Canada in helping people become healthier.

Rodney MacDonald also knows that all Nova Scotians, regardless of where they live, must have faith that when they or a loved one gets sick, the public health care system will be there for them, when and where they need it. Some progress on reducing wait times has been achieved. For patients awaiting treatment for other serious afflictions, like cancer, the waits are far too long.

As the husband of a registered nurse, Rodney MacDonald knows first hand how essential good people are to delivering a great health care system. Health care professionals – such as doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, technologists and paramedics – need the tools and support from government to provide high quality health care and lower wait times.



A new Rodney MacDonald government will build a healthier future for Nova Scotia families by honouring the following commitments:

- Implement innovative solutions, including new financial and human resources, to reduce wait times for cancer and other serious illnesses.
- Expand early detection programs for cancers such as colorectal, cervical and breast cancer.
- Dedicate new funding and staff to physician, nurse and other professional recruitment and retention so that every health care professional who wants to work in Nova Scotia has the opportunity to do so.
- Continue to increase investments in capital equipment to lower wait times on the front lines and bed sides of health care.

- Work with expert organizations like the Canadian Mental Health Association, as well as district health authorities, to improve access to mental health assessment and treatment.
- To encourage greater support and recognition of those with mental illness, provide targeted tax relief to private and not-for-profit employers that provide mental health programs for their employees.
- Initiate a province-wide RN-based tele-health system for people who require an initial consultation and assessment on non-urgent conditions.
- Add more funding for Nova Scotia's Integrated Stroke Strategy each and every year until it reaches \$3 million annually by 2010.

As part of a new Continuing Care Strategy, Rodney MacDonald and his team will take the following action for seniors and their families:

- Create more than 1,300 new long-term care beds across the province over the next 10 years – with 800 within the next four years.
- Expand home care service for families in need.
- Increase the number and length of adult day care programs in Nova Scotia communities.

A new Rodney MacDonald government will also put major new resources toward Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection to ensure Nova Scotians continue to get healthier. By doubling the budget of this new Department over the next four years, Rodney MacDonald will be able to deliver some of the following commitments:

- Increase the healthy living tax incentive for Nova Scotians under the age of 18 from \$150 to \$500 per person to emphasize the importance of physical activity for young people.
- Extend the \$500 healthy living tax incentive for young people to all Nova Scotians.
- Double the number of children from low-income families who can access the KidSport program run by Sport Nova Scotia.

- By 2010, ensure the majority of Nova Scotia schools are "active school communities" in which children have access to a wide range of active, healthy lifestyle choices.
- Make physical education a mandatory high school credit by the 2007-2008 school year.
- Create a new, comprehensive sport and recreational infrastructure program to update and replace many of Nova Scotia's aging facilities.

Smoking continues to kill far too many Nova Scotians. Thanks in part to Rodney MacDonald's work as Health Promotion Minister, thousands of Nova Scotians no longer smoke. Tobacco remains a highly addictive product, with far too much appeal for younger Nova Scotians. A new Rodney MacDonald government will introduce a new comprehensive anti-tobacco strategy that includes:

- A ban on aggressive point of sale advertising.
- Taking action with Bill 222 to initiate the best possible legal action to recover the costs to our health care system caused by large multinational tobacco companies – with all net proceeds being applied to health promotion programs.





From the living room, to the school yard to the classroom, government and society as a whole must do everything possible to guarantee that each child has the best start and is able to reach his or her full potential without worrying about some of the darker forces of modern life, like poverty, violence and crime.

One of the best ways to help our children is to help their families – families who face many challenges in life. From higher energy costs, to just trying to make ends meet on other household expenses, many families are forced to take precious time away from the real priorities in life to make sure they have the dollars and cents to pay the bills.

A new Rodney MacDonald government will take the following actions to protect our families and secure the future of not only our children, but society as a whole:

- Remove the provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales
   Tax on all household energy costs by January 1, 2007.
- Effective October 1, 2006, introduce a new pharmacare program for children of low-income families.
- Create a Working Families Pharmacare Plan to ensure that 140,000 working Nova Scotians are able to access basic drug coverage where currently they have none.
- Continue the cap on sudden property assessment hikes and consider further steps, in consultation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, to help Nova Scotians deal with higher property taxes.
- Lower taxes for working families by fully indexing income tax rates.

- Starting in 2007, initiate a multi-year program to make university education more affordable for Nova Scotia students, through lowering undergraduate tuition fees by more than \$1000 over a four-year period.
- Extend public school class size reductions up to and including grade 6.
- Introduce vocational/composite programming in our high schools to give older students a greater choice.
- Review the bus transportation criteria to ensure young children are not walking too far or in unsafe conditions to school.



- Expand the number of Youth Health Centres in the province.
- Provide more support for English as a Second Language (ESL) programming to match growing demands.
- Increase investments in public school and university infrastructure on a needs basis, while leveraging federal funding opportunities for the latter.
- Begin consultations on the second phase of the NSCC's growth plan, including consideration of new campuses where educational needs warrant.
- Starting in the fall of 2006, extend the province's Tuition Support Program to three years, until greater consultation can be completed with parents, students, educators, administrators and medical professionals on a new provincial policy for students with special needs.
- Expand the number of International Baccalaureate sites to ensure students at every school board in the province have access to excellence in education.
- Continue to act upon the conclusions of the Black Learners Advisory Committee Report.
- Expand support for adoptive and foster families to create more happy homes for waiting children here at home and around the world.

- Extend the Alternate Family Support Program provincewide to help families caring for adults with disabilities.
- Implement a 10-year child care strategy, creating more than 1,500 licensed and portable child care spaces.
- To help fight poverty, legislate annual adjustments to the Department of Community Services' basic personal allowance.
- Establish a new Persons with Disabilities Allowance that recognizes that many Nova Scotians are unable to work due to a permanent disability.
- End the Department of Community Services' clawback of Canada Pension Plan disability benefits.
- Accelerate implementation of Affordable Housing Agreement Phase II within the next 24 months – ensuring hundreds of Nova Scotian families have access to a home two years sooner.
- Develop and implement in consultation with poverty advocates, social workers, educators, employment experts, business and community leaders – a multi-year Poverty to Work Strategy, aimed at reducing poverty, particularly among women and children, and generating more meaningful employment through a variety of ways to improve the standard of living of Nova Scotians struggling on low incomes.



- For seniors, establish a new home renovation plan to help more seniors stay in their homes.
- Double the cap of the 50 per cent Seniors' Property Tax
   Rebate from \$400 to \$800 to help seniors manage the growing costs of living in their own homes.
- Starting July 1, 2006, regulate the price of motive fuels, such as gasoline and diesel in Nova Scotia, matching all provinces east of Ontario.
- Adopt new measures to protect consumers, including a new law governing the conduct of the payday loan industry, based on legislation recently introduced in Manitoba.

Halifax recently earned the dubious distinction from Statistics Canada as the country's most violent city. There are many complex causes that contribute to crime – causes that Rodney MacDonald's Plan for Nova Scotia will help address.

But there is no excuse for doing wrong and committing violent acts against peaceful, law-abiding citizens. Nova Scotians are counting on governments at all levels to send a strong message to criminals that violent activity against seniors, men, women, teenagers and children will not be tolerated in this province.

A new Rodney MacDonald government will bring forward Nova Scotia's first comprehensive anti-crime agenda to ensure Nova Scotians are safer by:

- Over the next four years, providing funds to hire 250 new police officers for communities that commit to maintain current levels of policing, with new officer positions allocated to RCMP and municipal forces on a needs-based formula.
- Establishing a Youth Attendance Centre that requires young law-breakers to participate in crime prevention programs.
- Committing new resources to dedicated squads for child pornography and illegal drugs.
- Passing new laws against the production of illegal drugs and criminals profiting from their crimes.
- Taking a hard stand against crack houses through a new Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

- Working with MADD Canada to improve our performance compared to other jurisdictions in fighting drunk driving.
- Taking all necessary steps to successfully implement Canada's first program of electronically monitoring offenders.
- Establishing and funding a provincial program that will offer rewards for information leading to arrests and convictions in cases of unsolved crimes.
- Continuing to lobby the federal government to act on its stated priority of tackling crime, through tough amendments to the Criminal Code and Youth Criminal Justice Act.

While Nova Scotia's debt performance continues to improve, according to the world's leading credit agencies, taxpayers expect their government to be vigilant, open and modern to ensure that every tax dollar is spent with respect.

To ensure Nova Scotia continues to have a government that is modern and best reflects the hopes and aspirations of its citizens, a new Rodney MacDonald government will:

- Reintroduce and pass Nova Scotia's fifth straight balanced budget this summer, with the same revenue and expenditure measures brought forward in the legislature on May 9, 2006.
- Maintain Nova Scotia's legislated commitment to balanced budgets, debt management and debt reduction.
- Direct the all-party Nova Scotia Election Commission to prepare recommendations to fundamentally reform the financing of political parties and candidates.

## A Realistic Plan **Taxpayers Can Afford**

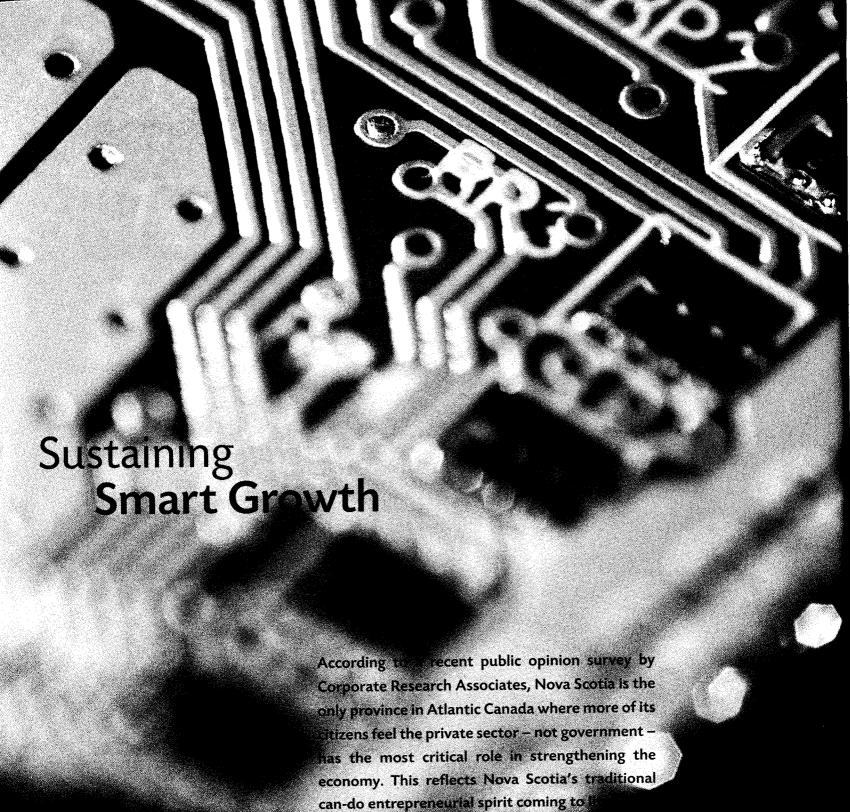
Budget 2006-2007 clearly outlined how Rodney MacDonald's new PC Team will make smart investments in the priorities of families, while delivering for the first time in more than 40 years, Nova Scotia's fifth straight balanced budget and a debt management plan that's the law of the land.

Here is the estimated four-year cost breakdown for new, additional commitments made in Building for Families, Building for the Future. These new commitments account for approximately 2 per cent of estimated government spending over the next four years. Government's estimated surpluses over the next four years, with debt repayment, remain intact.

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#### A Realistic Plan Taxpayers Can Afford

	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11
Healthier People				
Cancer care	\$5 million	\$6 million	\$7 million	\$8 million
More health care professionals	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million	\$5 million
Mental health tax credit		\$1 million	\$1 million	\$1 million
Stroke strategy	\$1 million	\$1 million	\$2 million	\$3 million
Healthy living tax credit for all	\$8 million	\$8 million	\$8 million	\$8 million
KidSport	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Families				
Working Families Pharmacare Plan	\$25 million	\$75 million	\$75 million	\$75 million
Lower tuition by \$1000	\$36.5 million	\$36.5 million	\$36.5 million	\$36.5 million
Extend class size reductions		\$2.58 million	\$3.85 million	\$1.27 million
Special needs tuition support	\$150,000			
Composites	\$1.94 million	\$2.72 million	\$1.6 million	
Extend IB sites	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$90,000	
Extend alternate family supports	\$1.2 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.4 million	\$1.5 million
Basic personal allowance	\$1 million	\$2 million	\$2 million	\$2 million
Disabled persons	\$3.9 million	\$3.9 million	\$3.9 million	\$3.9 million
End CPP clawback	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
Seniors property tax rebate	\$2 million	\$2 million	\$2 million	\$2 million
New police officers	\$8 million	\$15 million	\$17 million	\$25 million
Unsolved crime rewards	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Smart Growth				
Matching workplace tool tax credit	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Broadband/HRM WiFi	\$375,000	Study will determine	Study will determine	Study will determine
Immigration	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Tourism marketing	\$2.5 million	\$3 million	\$3.5 million	\$4 million
Agriculture support officers	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$800,000
Agriculture research and development	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
NS farm product marketing	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Communities				
Trails	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$1.5 million	\$2 million
Conserve NS	\$1 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.4 million
Match federal transit tax credit	\$1.3 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.3 million
French-language services	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Heritage strategy	\$1 million	\$1.1 million	\$1.2 million	\$1.3 million
Gaelic affairs	\$250,000	\$350,000	\$400,000	\$450,000
Volunteer insurance	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Volunteer resource centre	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Firefighter tax credit	\$4.5 million	\$4.5 million	\$4.5 million	\$4.5 million
Total	\$114.465 million	\$178.4 million	\$184.115 million	\$191.195 million



#### Sustaining Smart Growth

As Nova Scotia's first-ever Immigration Minister, Rodney MacDonald was charged with contributing to the province's record-setting levels of economic growth by leading the province's historic new Immigration Strategy. The result – a nine per cent increase in the number of immigrants to Nova Scotia. And despite major world-wide factors affecting tourism in Canada – including a 30-year low in US visitors to Canada – Rodney MacDonald's tenure as Tourism Minister saw a closer partnership between government and industry, annual plans for tourism growth based on industry direction and record-setting years in visits to Nova Scotia in 2002 and 2004.

Guided by Nova Scotia's updated growth strategy, Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity, a new Rodney MacDonald government will put in place the following winning conditions for the private sector to grow our economy and create the jobs of the future for Nova Scotians today:

- · Lower taxes for small business.
- Match the federal government's tax credit to help workers offset the cost of work-related products, such as tools and uniforms.
- End the large corporation tax for business by July 1, 2012.
- Expand the Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative (CCI) to help businesses that deal with government succeed.
- Based on the success of the current Credit Union Loan Guarantee Program, help small businesses access financing not presently offered by looking at new complementary programs that would be offered by credit unions and/or other private sector financial institutions.
- As part of Nova Scotia's Route to Prosperity strategy, create the province's largest single highway and road building program of the last 40 years, which will result in 2,000 new kilometres of twinned, paved or repaved highways over the next four years.

- Use existing provincial agencies and resources, such as the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission, to develop a transportation strategy specific to the needs of the people of the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- Pursue a comprehensive transportation infrastructure agreement – covering highways, air, rail and ports – with the federal government to establish Nova Scotia as Canada's Atlantic Gateway.
- Build 21st century infrastructure by working with the private sector and other levels of government to guarantee that all Nova Scotians, regardless of where they live in the province, have access to high-speed Internet service by 2010, in concert with the introduction of WiFi in the Halifax Region.

#### Sustaining Smart Growth

- Expand the Skills Nova Scotia Framework, working with the private sector and educators, to develop and implement a new 4Rs strategy (retain, retrain, repatriate, recruit) to address the looming skills shortage in the province and region.
- Provide additional funding to accelerate results of the Immigration Strategy.
- Over the next four years, dedicate more marketing dollars to promote Nova Scotia as a tourist destination experience to visitors here and abroad.
- Take all steps, in concert with the federal government, other provincial governments and the private sector, to counter the detrimental economic effects of new incoming United States travel rules.

- Act on the recommendations of the Premier's Council of Innovation, particularly as they relate to commercialization and research and development.
- Update Nova Scotia's five-year old Energy Strategy to ensure it reflects the energy realities of today and tomorrow.
- Ensure Nova Scotia's film tax credit continues to be competitive with other jurisdictions to maintain the province's position as a leader in Canadian film production.
- Extend the eligibility criteria of the film tax credit to include digital entertainment.

Many of Nova Scotia's foundation industries in past centuries – agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining – will only be able to grow and thrive if government is an active partner in helping these sectors adapt to today's realities. Moreover, emerging industries, such as aquaculture, can accelerate their growth through government doing what's necessary to create a competitive business climate.

One of Premier Rodney MacDonald's first decisions in government recognized this fact by re-establishing a separate Department of Agriculture and creating a new Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture.



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#### Sustaining Smart Growth

A new Rodney MacDonald government will ensure these industries remain part of Nova Scotia's future, sustaining the livelihoods of thousands of Nova Scotia families for many years to come, by taking the following steps:

- Hire new support officers for farmers within the new Department of Agriculture.
- Provide immediate short-term relief for struggling farm sectors, such as red meat producers, by implementing a one-year interest forgiveness of Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board payments.
- In consultation with farmers, develop a comprehensive long-term strategy for sustainable agricultural growth.
- Dedicate new funding to research and development, in concert with federal efforts, at facilities like the Experimental Farm in Nappan.
- Establish a marketing program to encourage more
   Nova Scotians to purchase agricultural and fishery
   products made in Nova Scotia.
- Review, consider and act on best aquaculture practices from jurisdictions that have built larger aquaculture industries.
- Finalize a long-term strategy covering mining, forestry, parks and biodiversity, consistent with Nova Scotia's Green Plan.





Rodney MacDonald believes that regardless of the communities in which we live, Nova Scotians share many of the same values. One of those shared values is the desire to enjoy nature, close to home, and to be able to pass that along to future generations.

#### Cleaner, Greener, Stronger Communities

Another shared value is the belief in supporting those who help build the quality of life in our communities, with no expectation of a personal return or benefit. Nova Scotia is also a special place in the world where our diversity as a society is finally starting to be celebrated, thanks in large part to the many contributions our diverse peoples have made to the growth of the province.

This spring, Premier Rodney MacDonald's government released Nova Scotia's updated economic growth strategy, Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity. For the first time in modern history, Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy was inextricably linked to our environmental performance.

A new Rodney MacDonald government is committed to building the kind of 21st century communities – urban, suburban, small-town, rural – that will keep more of our best and brightest right here at home. Among the commitments to make this happen:

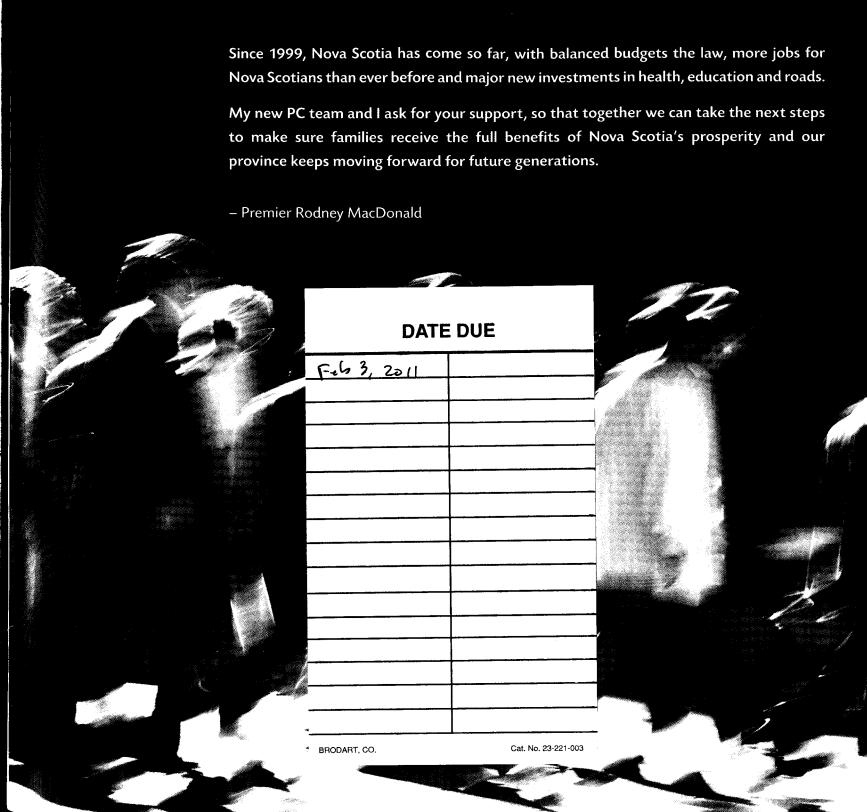
- Expand the number of protected green spaces.
- Designate five new nature reserves.
- Acquire more environmentally significant coastal land, as was done with Cape Split.
- Support the conversion of major public facilities to natural gas, starting with the Nova Scotia Hospital, Dartmouth General Hospital and the Nova Scotia Community College.
- Dedicate new resources to developing a comprehensive province-wide trail system connecting many of our communities – resulting in 500 kilometres of new trail over the next four years.
- Adopt amendments to strengthen the Environment Act.
- Commence formal consultations with communities and environmental leaders to update and enhance Nova Scotia's Green Plan.

- Work with the federal government to increase support to encourage industry compliance with lower emissions from sulphur dioxide, mercury and nitrogen oxide.
- Create Conserve Nova Scotia a new Crown corporation, wholly funded by the province, not the private sector – whose sole goal is to persuade Nova Scotians to decrease their environmental footprint, through a wide range of new and existing programs, to reduce energy consumption or become more energy efficient in their day to day activities.
- In consultation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and the Government of Canada, focus new infrastructure dollars towards community basics, such as clean water and sewer.
- Work with the federal government and interested municipalities to increase the capacity of public transit services – by bus, ferry or rail – in high traffic or remote areas.

#### Cleaner, Greener, Stronger Communities

- By 2007, match the federal government's transit tax credit.
- Continue to take action, in concert with the federal government, to ensure First Nations treaty rights are respected in Nova Scotia and to close the gap between the quality of life experienced by the Mi'kmaq and other Nova Scotians.
- Establish satellite offices for the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, starting in Cape Breton and continuing in southwestern Nova Scotia, central Nova Scotia and the Valley.
- Through the Office of Acadian Affairs, expand the provincial government's in-house capacity to provide
   French-language documents to ensure the criteria of the
   French-language Services Act is met.
- Through Nova Scotia's new Heritage Strategy, deliver stable, predictable, increased funding to community museums.
- Create the Office of Gaelic Affairs, with its mandate to be determined through consultation with the Gaelic community.

- Ensure community welfare and student benefit are legislated criteria for school boards when they consider the future of schools with declining populations.
- Eliminate the need for not-for-profit groups and organizations to buy insurance when they use school buildings for recreational and community events.
- In keeping with the recommendations of the Canada/Nova Scotia Volunteerism Initiative Network, create volunteer resource centres to help volunteers with education and training and to identify other options to make insurance more affordable and accessible for volunteers.
- Adopt a new \$500 tax credit to help volunteer firefighters offset some of the costs of doing this important job in many Nova Scotia communities.





families.
Building for the future.



N O V A S C O T I A

Rodney Mac Donald. ca