



## Transforming Nova Scotia

More than ever Nova Scotians want leadership they can trust, a government with a vision and a leader with a realistic plan to get us there.

The Liberal plan offers constructive solutions that benefit every family, every business and every community in Nova Scotia. Our policies offer Nova Scotians a more transparent and accountable government today and they position our province for a brighter future tomorrow.

A Liberal government will prepare our children for the opportunities that await them. We will start early and allow schools to address individual priority needs to help every student reach his or her full potential.

A Liberal government will support the men and women who have helped build Nova Scotia and are keen to continue investing here at home. We will partner with small businesses, allowing them to grow, invest and become more competitive.

A Liberal government will ensure Nova Scotians have access to quality health care in their own communities. We will ensure every Nova Scotian has a family doctor and work to further reduce wait times.

A Liberal government will make strategic investments in infrastructure so we can participate in, and benefit from, the region's renewable energy opportunities. We will focus on the development of a renewable energy industry that will generate jobs, guarantee economic growth and provide energy security into the future.

Nova Scotians want their government to be fair, accountable and action-oriented. They want us to build a brighter future by spending tax dollars in a smarter, more efficient way. Liberals are committed to bringing positive change to government to ensure that occurs.

We are committed to bringing about positive change for all Nova Scotians by strengthening our economy, so we can secure and improve the programs and services we value.

I believe our brightest days are yet to come. Working together, with strong leadership and a clear plan for the future, we can build the kind of province that we want – and the next generation deserves.

*Please join us.*

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Stephen McNeil".

Stephen McNeil, Leader  
Nova Scotia Liberal Party

## Liberal tradition; fundamental values

The Liberal plan to guide Nova Scotia to a sustainable, secure and prosperous future is founded on liberal tradition: Individual rights are paramount and the purpose of government is to do for the people what they cannot do for themselves.

The Liberal government led by Stephen McNeil will be guided by fundamental values:

**Trust and honesty:** Trust requires absolute and complete honesty on the part of government at all times. Government conduct that falls short of this standard is a betrayal of the citizens' trust.

**Inclusion:** Every Nova Scotian has a right to equal participation in the life of the province and that right extends to equality of opportunity.

**Fairness:** All citizens have a right to expect fair and equitable treatment from their government and from public institutions.

**Caring:** Nova Scotians care about their communities, their neighbours and each other. They expect no less from government.

## A real plan of action

The Liberal plan will build a stronger Nova Scotia now and set us on a course of action that will take us to a more prosperous, sustainable and secure future. This is the plan:

- To make government more accountable and affordable;
- To improve the health of Nova Scotians and manage health care delivery in a way that offers Nova Scotians the health services they need today, when and where they need them;
- To stimulate sustainable growth and promote economic stability in all regions of this province;
- To guarantee Nova Scotia's future energy security;
- To act now to meet our obligation to leave future generations a sustainable environment;
- To build on our strengths: cultural diversity, a vibrant arts sector, strong families and communities;
- To put our children, their education and their opportunities to thrive in Nova Scotia at the top of our priority list.



## Education: A bold new direction

*"Education holds the key to a brighter tomorrow."*

There's a line you could easily coax out of any politician in Nova Scotia, past or present. The reality is very few have turned it into action. The Conservative government has sprinkled some new schools around Nova Scotia and dreamed up a few fine-sounding programs with limited effect. The NDP offers only familiar platitudes about "a learning province."

Stephen McNeil's Liberal government will change Nova Scotia forever by making education here quite simply the best.

Stephen McNeil believes in Nova Scotians and believes the status quo is not acceptable.

*We need to choose a bold new direction.*

## **Start at the beginning**

The key to securing Nova Scotia's economic future is education. A Liberal government's top priority will be educating our children and helping them prepare for the economic opportunities that await them. We need to invest in our children.

Every parent and teacher knows that education begins long before your child starts school. Parents are their children's most important teachers. Liberals recognize and respect the work being done by parents, community service providers, early learning centres and organizations across the province.

*The Liberal government will work with early learning educators, early learning educational institutions, community health boards and parents to give preschoolers the foundation they need. Together, we will develop and invest in resources, training, accreditation and support across the province – to increase literacy, to promote healthy eating and to encourage physical activity everywhere our preschool children live, learn and play.*

### **Solid Start Resource Program**

Parents want the very best for their children. While play and activity provide the fuel for healthy minds, reading is the foundation for every child's success in school and in life.

*Working with school boards and early educators, a Liberal government will develop a Solid Start open-house resource program for three year olds. This program will be available in elementary schools, childcare centres and resource centres. Families in this program will receive age-appropriate books, information on available programs and helpful tips for preparing their children for success in school.*

### **Early Learning Support Grant**

Early learning support for preschool must meet the needs of each community.

*A Liberal government will develop a community-based Early Learning Support Grant available to school boards, community health boards and community groups. These grants will support local initiatives, from preschool preparation to student breakfast programs, parental support and health promotion initiatives.*

### **Early Childhood Learning and Access to Care**

Research shows that early learning initiatives give children the best possible start as they grow and begin school. Early identification of developmental issues in children ensures greater success in that child reaching his or her potential

*A Liberal government will increase wellness screening for toddlers and pre-primary children to ensure early identification of developmental issues such as autism. Support programs will be enhanced to meet needs as they are identified.*

All children should also have the chance to socialize with other children in a safe and enriching environment.

*A Liberal government will work to restore the National Early Learning and Child Care Plan. We will also help parents find local childcare spaces that are conveniently located for their needs by implementing a centralized childcare website.*

### **Student Support Grant**

Liberals recognize that different schools have different needs. Schools are made up of diverse student populations - tailoring services and programming at a local level will improve student success. Teachers, principals and parents are in the best position to determine required resources. We must empower our local schools to reach their potential and provide the best possible education for our students.

*A Liberal government will introduce a Student Support Grant for local schools. We will channel more resources to the local level, with a focus on three key areas:*

- *classroom educational assistants*
- *after school reading, writing and arithmetic support programs*
- *social resources such as psychologists, behavioural supports and security*

### **Curriculum**

A Liberal government will make sure our students are gaining necessary skills by enhancing the existing curriculum. New curriculum and resource support will help students advance to post-secondary studies while giving them the knowledge they need in their day-to-day lives.

*A Liberal government will appoint a Curriculum Advisory Committee made up of parents, teachers, school board representatives and education experts. The Committee will update existing material and implement new curriculum enhancements. One of the first priorities of this Committee will be to shape the junior high school civics curriculum. The Committee will also be charged with implementing a personal finance curriculum, giving students the practical knowledge they need to budget, save and plan for their future success.*

### **Options and Opportunities – Preparing our youth for their future careers**

The Options and Opportunities program has provided many of Nova Scotia's students with a head start on their future careers. Despite the success of this program, the current government has failed to provide schools with adequate funding to give every student this valuable opportunity.

*A Liberal government will expand the Options and Opportunities program to every high school in the province. Through a combination of school-based and online courses, cooperative education and skills certificates, students across Nova Scotia will have the opportunity to start building successful careers.*

### **Teacher Expense Tax Credit**

A Liberal government will recognize the financial contribution many Nova Scotia teachers make to enhance the learning experience of their students.

*A Liberal government will implement a teacher expense tax credit, up to \$1000, for purchases of classroom supplies and other teaching tools.*

### **Reforming Post Secondary Education**

Nova Scotia has a world-class post-secondary education system and we need to make sure the system stays that way for the benefit of all Nova Scotians. We must make sure our universities and community colleges are able to respond to the challenges of changing demographics and fluctuating student enrollments in order to maintain their level of excellence.

*A Liberal government will initiate a comprehensive review of our entire post-secondary education system to ensure our universities and community colleges play a key role as economic drivers as well as institutions of higher learning. We will encourage participation from students, universities, colleges, employers and other stakeholders to create a comprehensive vision for post-secondary education.*

### **Building a Knowledge Economy through Research Parks**

A Liberal government will work to bridge the gaps between public research and private sector development. Nova Scotia is known for its 11 degree-granting institutions and network of community colleges. They are the key to our economic future - they educate our children, provide good jobs for our workforce and contribute to our collective economic growth. The research strength of these institutions must be linked to the economic development of Nova Scotia if we are to truly build a knowledge economy.

*A Liberal government will support and promote the development of post-secondary research parks. Research parks will encourage technology transfer and commercialization. Building on our existing strengths, Nova Scotia will attract business and retain talent.*





### **University Tuition**

Education must be affordable and accessible.

*A Liberal government will maintain the long-term commitment to reduce tuition to the national average by 2011, as set out in the current Memorandum of Understanding with the province's universities.*

### **University Infrastructure**

Nova Scotia's universities face a \$500 million infrastructure deficit. Without immediate action this problem will only get worse and leave our universities unable to provide the quality of education our students deserve. Our universities have taken the lead with concrete proposals for infrastructure projects. These projects will provide economic stimulus in the short-term, while offering Nova Scotia students top-quality learning institutions well into the future.

*A Liberal government will work with everyone involved – Nova Scotia's universities, our federal counterparts and the private sector – to address the infrastructure deficit. A Liberal government will also develop a long-term strategy to improve the quality of our educational infrastructure.*

# Less Government, More Prosperity

A government's approach to supporting economic growth and helping families should be "less is more." There should be less government interference in the economy and peoples' lives.

There should be lower business and gas taxes.

There should be no more "nickel and diming" Nova Scotians for basic government services.

*A Liberal government will give families and businesses a break on costs and reduce red tape.*

*A Liberal government will be a partner, not a hindrance, to economic growth.*

*Less government will mean more prosperity for all Nova Scotians.*

## Fairness for Families

### February Holiday

Nova Scotia has only five statutory holidays, the fewest in Canada. Liberals recognize the need to build a healthy balance between work and family.

*A Liberal government will create a February holiday for all Nova Scotians to enjoy.*

### Freeze the Fees

The Conservatives have steadily increased the overall tax burden on Nova Scotians by raising user fees on over 1,500 government services.

*A Liberal government will freeze user fees.*

### Scrap Tax on Funerals

The government currently charges a provincial sales tax on funeral services.

Government should not profit from the personal tragedies of Nova Scotians.  
Taxing funerals is wrong.

*We will remove the provincial portion of HST from funeral services.*





# Economic Prosperity

## Reducing the Energy Cost Burden

Nova Scotia taxes gasoline at the second highest rate in Canada. This presents a significant competitive disadvantage for businesses operating in the province. High gas prices also place a heavy burden on Nova Scotians.

Instead of making gas cheaper, regulation is increasing the cost of gas in Nova Scotia. Eliminating administration costs and allowing the price to adjust quicker to downward market trends will benefit everyone at the pumps.

*A Liberal government will remove the expensive and ineffective gas regulation system. We will also ensure further costs savings by cutting the provincial motive fuel tax by four cents per litre - at a minimum of one cent per year.*

*We will also institute a gas price watchdog to ensure Nova Scotians are not being gouged at the pumps.*

## Reducing the Tax Burden

Positive measures that assist small businesses have a significant economic impact and help improve the lives of everyone. Small businesses employ half of all Nova Scotians and generate 50 per cent of our province's GDP.

Reducing the business tax burden will give entrepreneurs more opportunity to invest in their businesses and their employees. Reducing the business tax burden will also attract new companies to our province, generating more job opportunities.

*The Liberal plan will reduce the small business tax rate from five per cent down to one per cent. This 80 per cent reduction will benefit all Canadian-owned businesses, from natural resources to tourism.*

### **Enhancing Business Investment Support**

Tax reductions allow Nova Scotia's small businesses to keep more of their earnings so they can invest in their future growth. A Liberal government will make new credit options available. They will be scaled appropriately to the specific needs of sole proprietors and small businesses.

Many small businesses need financial support to help make their operations sustainable and profitable. With existing financing tools designed for large and medium-sized borrowing, sole proprietors and small businesses are often faced with lending options that are not well suited to their needs.

*A Liberal government will implement a microcredit lending program within Nova Scotia Business Inc. We will expand the mandate of NSBI so they can provide loans of up to \$25,000 to small businesses in our province, allowing them to thrive here.*

*We will also place the Industrial Expansion Fund under NSBI's management to ensure decisions are based on economics, not politics.*

### **Investing in Roads**

Our highways link us to each other and the rest of Canada. They must be properly maintained. A Liberal government will take the politics out of renewing our transportation infrastructure.

*A Liberal government will create and maintain a publicly accessible priority list for road maintenance.*

When dangerous weather conditions create unsafe and hazardous road conditions, government will respond to these emergencies immediately.

*A Liberal government will also ensure there is a base level of funding for all communities.*

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

Under a Liberal government, program spending will not increase at a rate greater than the province's economic growth. This will give Nova Scotians confidence in our fiscal management.

*A Liberal government will review the additional programs and services created by the previous government to ensure taxpayers dollars are being spent in the most efficient manner.*

## **Nova Scotia Public Pension Plan**

Nova Scotians should be able to retire with dignity and financial security.

*A Liberal government will establish a province-wide Nova Scotia Public Pension Plan. This will allow employers, regardless of size, to offer their employees a pension plan. Employees not covered by a company pension plan will also have access to one. This will provide confidence and security.*

## **Nova Scotians Investing in Nova Scotia**

Currently much of the pension fund money paid by Nova Scotia employees and taxpayers is invested outside our province. It's time many of these funds looked at investing in our own region.

*A Liberal government will direct public pension fund managers to look for Nova Scotia investment opportunities and to use up to one per cent of their investment portfolio on strategic infrastructure investments in this province.*

## **Building a Knowledge Economy**

Liberals know that our ability to meet future social and economic challenges relies on a highly skilled workforce.

*A Liberal government will work with community colleges, local businesses and the non-profit sector to ensure that funding for skills training is effectively allocated through the Labour Market Agreement.*

The research strengths of our post-secondary institutions must also be linked to our future economic development to enable us to retain our brightest talent.

We will also work to bridge the gaps between public research and private sector development.

## **Arts and Culture**

Nova Scotia is fortunate to have a vibrant arts and culture community. The Conservative government failed to recognize the economic significance of this key sector when they broke their promise to double the culture budget over three years.

*A Liberal government will make up the funding shortfalls and broken promises of the Conservatives. We will double the culture budget by 2010-11, giving arts and culture organizations the financial stability they need.*

### **Promote Our Tourism Sector**

The tourism industry in Nova Scotia is vital to our economic success, contributing over \$1.3 billion to our economy in 2008. There are many world class sights and attractions which attract visitors from around the globe. The current government has not done enough to effectively market our province.

*A Liberal government will re-direct tourism marketing money to emerging markets ensuring that our strategy is right for Nova Scotia.*

*A Liberal government will also work directly with the tourism industry to establish a comprehensive plan that will help guide government resources in providing government-wide assistance, market access information, and established best practices.*





A black and white photograph of two men standing in a rural setting. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and a baseball cap. The man on the right is wearing overalls and a baseball cap. They are standing in front of a combine harvester in a field.

# Primary Industries – the Backbone of Rural Communities

## **Stimulating our Forestry**

A Liberal government will lower the tax burden on our small forestry operations. Our small business tax reduction from 5 per cent to 1 per cent will help support this vital sector. Our microcredit loans will also aid small operators and help sustain this cornerstone of rural communities.

*A Liberal government will consult with all levels of our forestry sector to provide Nova Scotia with a sustainable plan, focusing on responsible silviculture practices in our province.*

## **Ensuring a Future for Nova Scotia Farmers**

Agriculture has been a key component of Nova Scotia's economy for generations and the decline in the number of farms in recent years is a disturbing trend. A Liberal government would make it a priority to ensure the agricultural industry in our province is both sustainable and viable.

We would focus in four key areas: transitional funding; strategic infrastructure investments; taking advantage of green technologies; and the development of a sustainable multi-year strategy.

*A Liberal government will enter into negotiations with federal agencies – the Department of Agriculture, AgriFood Canada and ACOA - to provide a transition fund for our farmers. Transition funding would provide farmers with the flexibility to respond to changes in the market.*

*A Liberal government will initiate a steering committee on carbon capture technology, made up of agriculture industry representatives and academics. Our agricultural community has a large role to play when it comes to protecting our environment. In addition, carbon capture has the advantage of being financially beneficial to our farmers.*

*A Liberal government will work with the industry to ensure that the Strategic Infrastructure monies made available through the Federal/Provincial Growing Forward Agreement are invested in projects that will support the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia today and tomorrow.*

*A Liberal government will enhance and expand the Agriculture in the Classroom Program - today's students become tomorrow's consumers. When students learn about the importance of agriculture, they not only make healthier food choices, they also become more aware of the importance of supporting our local economy.*

While these initiatives are immediate priorities, it is important to acknowledge that securing the future of the agricultural industry in Nova Scotia requires we take a long term view.

*A Liberal government would work with all industry stakeholders to develop a multi-year strategy.*

## **Reclaiming the Success of our Fishery**

For generations fishing has been the economic and social mainstay of many coastal communities around our province. The fishery continues to make a very important contribution.

*A Liberal government will work with our fishing industry to create a higher profile for Nova Scotia fish products in wholesale, retail and foodservice markets.*

*A Liberal government will work with Ottawa to find ways of giving the industry more direct access to markets.*

Liberals also recognize the unique challenge fishers experience when working in the industry.

*A Liberal government will mandate the Workers Compensation Board to establish an Industry Safety Association for inshore fishers with direct participation by the industry to address rising premium costs and ensure that the three-person rule is not reduced.*



# Health Care When and Where You Need It

Nova Scotians are more concerned than ever with the challenges facing our healthcare system. We must have access to the best care possible, when and where we need it.

## **A Doctor for Every Family**

Every family in Nova Scotia should have a doctor. Liberals are committed to making this a reality by ensuring a steady supply of physicians for under-serviced areas.

*A Liberal government will provide free medical school tuition to 20 students per year for five years. In return, these doctors must agree to serve for five years in an under-serviced area.*

*We will also aggressively recruit foreign health professionals from jurisdictions like Great Britain, which had an excess of 14,000 physicians seeking work in their field of study in 2008.*

## **Wait Times Reduction**

Wait times are one of the biggest challenges facing our health care system.

In the past five years, the Conservative government received over \$122 million in federal



funding to address the issue of wait times in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, there has been little improvement when it comes to decreasing wait times for certain key procedures.

The Surgical Care Network has been working on centralizing operating room wait lists for all elective surgeries. This would provide better coordination of data to ensure patients are able to have their surgeries in areas where wait times are lower. The Network is also doing an inventory of surgical services to determine deficiencies in order to improve access.

These are the types of systemic changes the Conservative government should have started years ago.

*A Liberal government will ensure that the remaining Wait Times Reduction Fund, including \$7 million the province will receive this year, is used to support the efforts of the Surgical Care Network.*

### **Emergency Room Access**

Communities across this province have endured emergency room closures last year that total 9,758 hours. A decade of Conservative mismanagement has resulted in a 377 per cent increase in ER closures. That is simply unacceptable.

*Liberals will offer a long-term solution by paying the tuition of 100 medical students who agree to practice in underserved communities.*

*In the short-term, a Liberal government will create a centralized database where District Health Authorities can inform the database administrator of upcoming emergency room closures. Available doctors could advise the administrator of their availability. Closures and schedules would be matched efficiently and effectively.*

### **Patient Access 24/7**

A Liberal government will ensure that patient care is available 24/7. Our world class ambulance system, coupled with the 24/7 tele-health system, are doing their part but we can still do better.

*A Liberal government will immediately consult with Doctors Nova Scotia about adopting a system called "Advanced Access."*

Advanced Access is a scheduling technique whose objective is to provide patients with same-day appointments in a doctor's office. This would reduce costly visits to hospital emergency rooms and enable patients to see physicians earlier.

## **Health Human Resources**

Training, recruitment, retention and utilization of human resources are all necessary for a stable health care system.

*A Liberal government will establish a central website of all available health sector jobs throughout the province. This website will enable interested health professionals to view Nova Scotia opportunities at a click of a mouse.*

*We will also make it easier for foreign health professionals to be licensed and to upgrade their skills when necessary.*

We also need to make better use of the professionals we have.

*A Liberal government will make more efficient use of our health human resources and fully leverage the training and expertise of all health professionals. We will actively promote positive changes to the system, such as the establishment of collaborative practices and family care teams. A Liberal government will also encourage health professionals who are nearing retirement to stay involved in the system.*

## **Caring for Seniors**

Senior citizens have contributed so much to Nova Scotia communities and families - they deserve the best health care possible.

Liberals have been calling on the Conservative government to reinstate the In-Home Support Program they cancelled when they came to power in 1999. The reinstatement of the In-Home Support Program would ensure seniors have the resources they need to maintain their independence and enjoy the freedom of living in their own communities.

*A Liberal government will ensure that the former In-Home Support Program - now known as the Caregiver Allowance Program - remains in place and becomes available province-wide.*

## **Seniors Pharmacare Co-Pay**

The Conservative government eliminated the \$30 co-pay cap forcing seniors to pay more. For a senior who is prescribed a \$300 drug, this would amount to a charge of almost \$100.

*A Liberal government will reinstate the \$30 co-pay cap, making it easier for seniors to manage their monthly budgets.*

*A Liberal government will also improve the delivery of health services for seniors by establishing teams of dedicated pharmacists, nurses, nurse practitioners and doctors to provide consultative care in communities and nursing homes.*



### **Medication Repository Program**

Nearly 20 per cent of Nova Scotians do not have an insurance program that covers prescription drugs. While these individuals may qualify for other government pharmacare programs, there are some costly catastrophic drugs not covered. Most of the cancer drugs developed in the last five years cost as much as \$40,000 to \$70,000 a year.

A properly regulated drug recycling program will help patients get the prescription medication they could not otherwise afford. Nova Scotians should not be forced to choose between paying for food and paying for essential medication.

*A Liberal government will work with all stakeholders to create the necessary legal framework for a drug recycling program in Nova Scotia.*

### **Continuing Care**

A well-functioning home care program, including in-home support, will reduce pressure on hospitals. It will make more hospital beds available and more efficient use of our health system's valuable human resources.

*A Liberal government will work with district health authorities and hospitals to improve home care services. We will also hire a director of palliative care to deliver a comprehensive palliative care strategy to the government.*

## **Mental Health**

Mental health does not receive the attention it requires. One in five Nova Scotians will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime. The deputy minister of health said last year that everyone's help is needed to ensure mental health is treated as a priority issue.

*A Liberal government will create a provincial Mental Health Commission, made up of academics, mental health professionals, mental health consumers and family members, to report directly to the minister of health. This publicly accountable commission will speed up the flow of information and collaboration among government departments and stakeholders.*

Families, schools, communities and government share the responsibility to ensure children have access to resources that promote mental health and well-being.

Unaddressed childhood mental health issues can lead to future unemployment, exclusion from society, criminal activity and homelessness.

*A Liberal government will expand the new school-based program designed to identify and care for children with mental health issues.*

## **Wellness**

Our health care system focuses too much on treating people after they become sick and not enough on preventing illness. We will create a culture of wellness to reduce health costs and improve the overall health of Nova Scotians.

*A Liberal government will fund insulin pumps to reduce the healthcare costs associated with diabetes.*

*We will also increase tobacco taxes to discourage smoking. This will allow us to:*

- *fund new, community-based recreational infrastructure and programs*
- *develop an all-ages physical activity strategy framework for Nova Scotia and*
- *renew the Tobacco Control Strategy*

## **Health Care Sustainability**

The Conservative government promised in 1999 to fix health care for an additional \$46 million. However, the health care budget in this province has grown by over \$1.6 billion in the past decade. We need to spend smarter.

*A Liberal government will create a Healthcare Sustainability Council to provide guidance and recommendations to ensure an efficient and sustainable healthcare system.*



# Stronger, Safer Communities

An essential role of government is to protect its citizens and help those most in need. The best way to reduce crime is to address its root causes - poverty, illiteracy, addiction, lack of education and lack of economic opportunity.

## Healthy Active Kids

Our children need positive experiences and constructive ways to spend their time. This is particularly true of at-risk youth who might otherwise turn to crime.

*A Liberal government will create a fund to help communities establish recreational infrastructure and programming. Communities will be eligible for help building skateboard parks, keeping school gyms open in the evening, or establishing programs designed to give youth positive experiences and activities. Communities will decide what projects to pursue.*

*A Liberal government will create more economic opportunity by transforming our education system and empowering those at risk.*



### **Hire More Prosecutors**

Our justice system moves too slowly and does not prosecute all offenders as aggressively as it should.

*A Liberal government will hire an additional 10 adult prosecutors and five youth prosecutors to help ensure that the justice system is doing everything it can to make our communities safer.*

### **Correctional Services**

Under the Conservative government, there have been more than 10 mistaken releases, two escapes and one individual held for two months longer than he was sentenced. This is not acceptable.

*A Liberal government will invest \$3 million to fix the Conservative government's mismanagement of our correctional facilities. We will invest in enhanced equipment and staff to ensure that necessary measures are put in place to ensure this type of activity never happens again. We will also use additional resources to increase behavior management programming within the facilities to further rehabilitate offenders to ensure their most recent crime is their last.*

### **Office of Fire Services / Fire Commissioner**

Firefighters require high-level organization to ensure correct and consistent training. Having a responsible and accountable representative for firefighters is necessary if we are to support the hard work of those who risk their lives to protect us.

*A Liberal government will create an Office of Fire Services and appoint a Fire Commissioner.*





# Protecting our Environment

Protecting our environment is vital to preserving the beauty of our province and maintaining our quality of life. Minimizing our daily impact on the environment can reduce economic costs and create new opportunities for the people of this province.

*A Liberal government will reduce its own environmental footprint and work with families and businesses to help them reduce theirs. We will support private sector partners – including renewable energy producers – so they can take advantage of the economic opportunities created by green products.*

## Public Transit

Public transit is a key part of our economic infrastructure and significantly reduces our greenhouse gas emissions. Government has failed to adequately invest in public transit and sustainable transportation.

*A Liberal government will double the current investment in transit and support community-based public transit infrastructure projects.*



## **Reducing Plastic Waste**

Reducing the amount of plastic that ends up in landfills is a priority.

*A Liberal government will ban the use of non-recyclable plastic bags in retail stores and non-recyclable plastics from restaurants.*

## **Increasing Energy Efficiency**

Reducing energy consumption is the most effective way to lessen our impact on the environment. We can all make small improvements that reduce energy consumption.

*A Liberal government will cover the complete cost of energy efficiency audits. We will make sure Nova Scotians who want to upgrade their homes do not face financial barriers.*

## **Protecting Game Sanctuaries**

Nova Scotia's wilderness regions are a beautiful natural landscape. The current government has failed to take responsible care of our protected areas.

*A Liberal government will prohibit mining, logging and other invasive activities in game sanctuaries.*

## **Replenishing our Forests**

The Conservative government failed to implement proper silviculture practices. This must be changed if Nova Scotia's forests and eco-systems are to survive.

Forest harvesters are currently required to plant trees in proportion to the amount of wood removed. They are not required to re-plant in harvested areas.

*We will consult with industry and implement an annual allowable cut on Crown lands. Our forests are a precious resource – providing an annual limit on harvesting will benefit both the industry and our environment.*

## **Wetland Protection**

Nova Scotia's wetlands are an important part of our ecosystem.

*A Liberal government will encourage responsible use of these precious assets. Businesses will be required to replace or repair any and all wetlands affected by their activities.*



# Renewed Energy Leadership

## Regional Approach to Energy

Atlantic Canada's tremendous potential for renewable energy development will guarantee our economic growth and prosperity.

*A Liberal government will work to increase regional cooperation on energy production and exportation. We must address our collective energy challenges with regional solutions that benefit all partners.*

Atlantic energy sources, such as Nova Scotia's tidal power or Newfoundland's Lower Churchill hydro project, are important potential sources of renewable energy. We must ensure that their economic and environmental benefits are shared by all Atlantic Canadians.

We can only achieve this goal through enhanced focus and investment in transmission infrastructure.

*A Liberal government will ensure that our province can fully realize the benefits of Atlantic Canada's renewable energy potential by immediately starting to build the necessary infrastructure. This will put Nova Scotians to work today and keep them working well into the future.*

## **Supporting Renewable Energy Producers**

Nova Scotia possesses a wealth of untapped energy resources. Unfortunately, the current government has done little to support this emerging industry.

Renewable energy producers must have the opportunity to sell energy directly to customers, instead of being forced to sell to Nova Scotia Power. Governments should not be a barrier to green energy development.

*A Liberal government will open the market and allow renewable energy producers to sell directly to customers. This initiative will help support an exciting new industry and help reduce our impact on the environment.*

## **Energy Security and Sustainability**

The lack of energy security continues to be a detriment to long-term growth in Nova Scotia. The Conservative government has allowed Nova Scotia to become an energy island while choosing to import oil from Venezuela and coal from Colombia. Nova Scotia's energy future must be controlled by Nova Scotians.

*A Liberal government will ensure that all new offshore and onshore natural gas projects will dedicate an appropriate amount of supply to Nova Scotia's energy needs.*

The current government has allowed the vast majority of our natural gas to be exported to the benefit of others.

*A Liberal government will begin to convert coal-fired generating plants to natural gas once a sufficient supply has been secured.*

## **Nova Scotia Power Accountability**

Nova Scotia Power and the Conservative government have forced our province to pay for five power rate increases in seven years. This government has abdicated all responsibility for energy development and energy efficiency, handing it over to Nova Scotia Power.

*A Liberal government will make Nova Scotia Power more accountable to the citizens of this province. As a monopolistic power utility, Nova Scotia Power must live up to its social responsibilities. We will make Nova Scotia Power more accountable by:*

- Requiring the Utility and Review Board to consider social responsibility and the public good during rate adjustment hearings;
- Requiring Nova Scotia Power to provide the minister of energy with quarterly updates on environmental goals, energy efficiency and long-term energy security;
- Requiring full disclosure of power outages. All outages must be posted on a website and that information must include the location, reason for outage and the length of time until recovery of service. Additionally, Nova Scotia Power will be required to file an outage report with the Utility and Review Board each month to ensure reliability issues are continuously monitored by the board.

### **Offshore Discovery Licenses – “Use it or Lose It”**

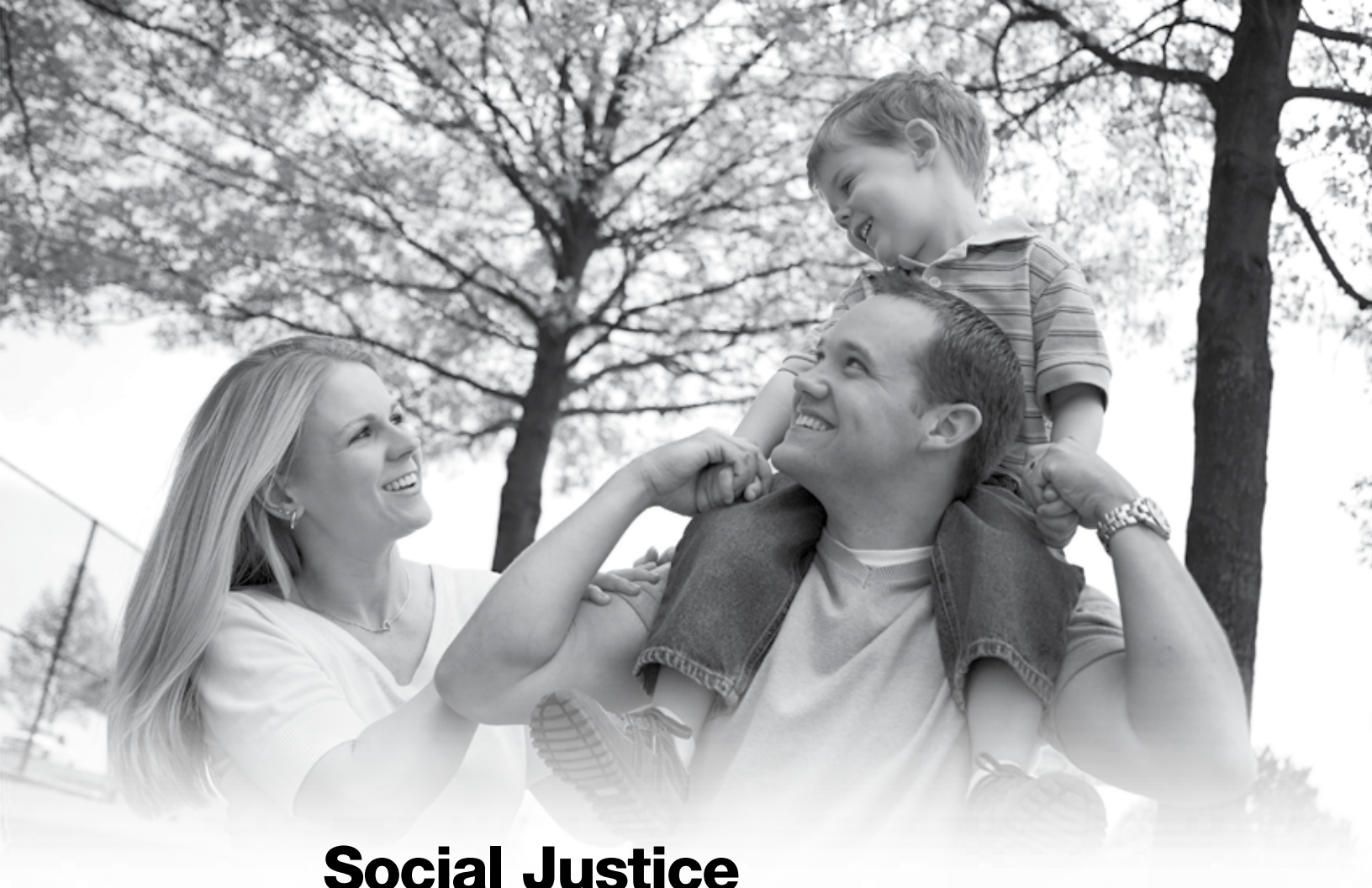
Under the Conservatives, activity in Nova Scotia’s offshore oil and gas sector has largely ground to a halt. Across North America, the need for secure energy sources has never been greater. Our offshore should be a hive of activity - creating jobs and driving economic growth. Some of Nova Scotia’s confirmed oil and gas reserves have been left undeveloped for decades.

*A Liberal government will implement a “use it or lose it” policy to ensure companies holding discovery licenses actively commercialize those sites where significant oil or gas reserves have been found. If a site has not been developed five years after its significant discovery license was granted, the license will be revoked. Other companies will then be given the option of bidding for it.*

### **Provincial Energy Advisor**

The premier of our province must have access to the highest level of expertise and advice in order to move Nova Scotia forward into a more stable, sustainable and prosperous future.

*A Liberal government will appoint a Provincial Energy Advisor - an expert who will report directly to the premier. This person will be the premier’s primary counsel on all matters relating to energy issues in Nova Scotia.*



# Social Justice

## Reducing Poverty

Reducing poverty is about more than improving the well-being of Nova Scotians struggling to afford basic necessities. It is also about improving our economy and promoting an inclusive society. Poverty is directly linked to increased costs for health care, community services, corrections and education.

*A Liberal government will ensure the Interdepartmental Ministerial Committee on Poverty falls under the leadership of the premier and endorses the recommendations of the Poverty Reduction Working Group. This committee will be supported by representatives of outside stakeholder organizations.*

Liberal initiatives which address poverty include:

- Early childhood learning initiatives and a commitment to work towards the reinstatement of the National Early Learning and Child Care Plan
- A community-based Early Learning Support Grant
- Reinstating the \$30 cap on the seniors' pharmacare co-pay
- The development of multi-year service agreements with community service partners
- The development of a fund to help communities establish recreational infrastructure and programming
- A province-wide school-based mental health program
- The establishment of a drug recycling program to help families pay for high-cost prescription drugs.





## **A More Diverse and Inclusive Nova Scotia**

### **Premier's Multicultural Advisory Committee**

Nova Scotians proudly maintain the traditions of their ancestors. These traditions assist Nova Scotia's entry into global markets and help to promote our province as a preferred destination around the world. Multiculturalism is not only vital to our growth and development; it is an inherent feature of Nova Scotia's society.

*A Liberal government will appoint a Premier's Multicultural Advisory Committee which will develop a multicultural policy to promote cultural expression, acknowledge the contribution of cultural diversity and further cross-cultural understanding.*

## **Africville**

Members of the African Nova Scotian community have developed a proposal to recognize the historical significance of Africville that will keep its memory and spirit alive. Liberals believe we have a responsibility to secure the place of Africville in our collective history and move forward in a spirit of understanding.

*A Liberal government will work in partnership with the African Nova Scotian community and other levels of government to implement the proposal for the rejuvenation of the Seaview look-off lands. This proposal will see the development of a church and an Africville Interpretive Centre for the economic and social development of the area.*

## **Creating a More Accessible Nova Scotia:**

### **Accessibility Works Program**

Government must foster an environment where people with disabilities have equal access to services, programs and opportunities.

*A Liberal government will commit \$50,000 to research and develop an Accessibility for Nova Scotians with Disabilities Act. We will also commit \$250,000 to create a new program to make businesses more accessible.*

### **Disability Navigator**

Navigating through government programs and services is complex. A Disability Program Navigator can provide people with disabilities assistance they need to gain accurate information and appropriate referrals.

*A Liberal government will work with the disabled persons community to create and provide funding for a Disability Navigator.*





## **Volunteer Sector**

Socio-economic stability in our province finds its foundation firmly footed by three separate silos – the government sector, the private sector and the community non-profit sector. While they operate in isolation, they are in fact interconnected.

The volunteer sector has been stressed by years of government neglect and financial instability. There are approximately 5,820 not-for-profit organizations in Nova Scotia contributing \$2 billion worth of services to our provincial economy. Nearly 400,000 Nova Scotians contribute their time and talent to programs and services that enrich our lives.

Liberals recognize that the non-profit sector and government cannot achieve their individual goals without a constructive working relationships built on mutual understanding, respect and cooperation.

*A Liberal government will work with the Nova Scotia Volunteer Advisory Council and community service providers to develop an action plan on the implementation of multi-year service agreements. We recognize that multi-year funding enables organizations to plan, grow and innovate.*



# Making Government More Accountable

*A Liberal government will enhance accountability for the management and expenditure of taxpayer's money.*

Over the past three years, the Conservative government has forced our province's legislature to sit for the fewest number of days of any jurisdiction in Canada. A Liberal government is committed to providing the province with more substantive debate and action on the issues that face Nova Scotia by sitting in the legislature significantly longer than the current government. Sitting for a mere 40 days a year is simply not enough.

*A Liberal government will introduce the following government accountability measures:*

- Remove politics from the decision making process when lending financial assistance to companies and organizations within Nova Scotia. We will look at investment through a business lens, not a political one.
- Lower the fees associated with applications to access government and personal records under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Freeze user fees.
- Establish fixed election dates.
- Establish fixed budget and legislative session dates while retaining the flexibility needed for lawmakers to respond to crisis.
- Create an All-Party Committee on House of Assembly Reform and Renewal to engage the public and recommend changes to the practices of the Nova Scotia Legislature.
- Require the Auditor General to audit the provincial finances prior to an election to ensure Nova Scotians receive an open and transparent financial picture.

