



A STRONGER TOMORROW

Our Five Point Plan





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OUR FIVE POINT PLAN

Newfoundland and Labrador is at a critical juncture. At no other time has it been more important for us to get our province back on track.

A New Liberal Government will deliver stronger leadership, better management, long-term planning, and an open government for a stronger tomorrow.

We will continue to listen to the more than 500,000 advisors we have across our province, because we know building a stronger tomorrow for Newfoundland and Labrador starts with working together with you.

We know the future for Newfoundland and Labrador is bright. The Liberal plan will deliver the change we need to move beyond today's challenges and on to a stronger tomorrow.

The Five Point Plan for A Stronger Tomorrow includes:

- Restoring Openness, Transparency, and Accountability
- Building a Stronger, Smarter Economy
- Improving Health and Healthcare
- Supporting Safe and Sustainable Communities
- Investing in Our Future Through Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	RESTORING OPENNESS, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	7
1.1	TAKE POLITICS OUT OF GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS	8
1.2	IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT AT NALCOR.....	8
1.3	RESPECT THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY	8
1.4	ENCOURAGE COOPERATION	8
1.4.1	Legislative Review Committees	8
1.4.2	All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform	9
1.5	RESPECT DIVERSITY.....	9
1.5.1	Promote Gender Diversity in Leadership	9
1.5.2	Respect Aboriginal Rights	9
1.6	PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES TO CABINET MINISTERS	9
1.7	HOLD TOWN HALL MEETINGS	9
1.8	REVIEW PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS	9
2.	BUILDING A STRONGER, SMARTER ECONOMY	11
2.1	REVERSE THE HST INCREASE	13
2.2	SIMPLIFY THE TAX SYSTEM	13
2.3	CAPITALIZE ON OUR ENERGY RESOURCES.....	13
2.3.1	Electricity Generation and Energy Security.....	13
2.3.2	Make Effective Use of Energy.....	14
2.3.3	Harness Our Energy for Domestic Use and Export	14
2.3.4	The Oil and Gas Industry.....	14
2.3.5	Create a Legacy Fund for Long-Term Prosperity.....	15
2.4	PROMOTE GROWTH IN MINING	15
2.5	FOCUS ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE.....	16
2.5.1	Implement Strong Fisheries Policy.....	16
2.5.2	Work with Federal Counterparts	16
2.6	SUPPORT GROWTH IN AGRICULTURE	16
2.7	REVITALIZE THE FORESTRY SECTOR.....	17
2.8	MAXIMIZE OUR TOURISM POTENTIAL	17
2.9	ARTS AND CULTURE	18
2.10	SUPPORT GROWTH IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR	18
2.11	IMPROVE THE PUBLIC TENDER ACT	18
2.12	DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION.....	18
2.13	SECURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN OUR ECONOMY	19
2.14	COMMUNICATIONS	19
2.14.1	Broadband Internet.....	19
2.14.2	Cell Phone Coverage.....	19
2.15	OPTIMIZE GOVERNMENT REAL ESTATE	19
2.16	IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO GROW OUR POPULATION	19

2.17	REVIEW MINIMUM WAGE	20
2.18	APPRENTICESHIPS	20
2.19	CREATE A NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR GLOBAL NETWORK.....	20
3.	IMPROVING HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE	23
3.1	A FOCUS ON PRIMARY HEALTHCARE	24
3.2	IMPROVE HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT	24
3.2.1	Review Current Health Outcomes for Future Improvements	24
3.3	HEALTH PROMOTION AND HEALTHY LIVING STRATEGY	25
3.3.1	Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Program	25
3.3.2	Innovative Youth Wellness Program	25
3.4	ALLOW HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO WORK TO THEIR FULL SCOPE OF PRACTICE	26
3.4.1	Implement Regulated Midwifery	26
3.5	EXPAND SENIOR CARE	26
3.5.1	Establish a Seniors' Advocate Office.....	26
3.5.2	Dementia Management Program	26
3.5.3	Supporting Independence for Seniors	27
3.6	STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS CARE	27
3.6.1	Raise the Profile of Mental Health	27
3.6.2	Enhance Community Support	28
3.7	IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE	28
3.7.1	Replace the Waterford Hospital	28
3.7.2	Construct a West Coast Regional Hospital	28
4.	SUPPORTING SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.....	29
4.1	EMPOWER COMMUNITIES	30
4.1.1	Host an Annual Premier's Forum on Local Government.....	30
4.1.2	Municipal Assessments	30
4.1.3	Leverage Crown Lands	30
4.1.4	Address the Municipal Infrastructure Deficit	30
4.1.5	Improve Access to Safe Drinking Water	30
4.1.6	Finish the Trans-Labrador Highway	31
4.1.7	Review the Fixed Link to Labrador	31
4.2	PROVIDE SUPPORT ON ABORIGINAL ISSUES	31
4.2.1	Implement Truth and Reconciliation Report Recommendations	31
4.2.2	Repatriate Beothuk Remains	31
4.3	SERVE JUSTICE AND PROTECT SAFETY	31
4.3.1	Expand Family Violence Intervention Court	31
4.3.2	Mandatory Reporting of Deaths and Critical Incidents to the Child and Youth Advocate	32
4.3.3	Implement a Multi-Agency 911 Approach.....	32
4.3.4	Highways.....	32
4.3.5	Strengthen Consumer Protection.....	32

4.3.6	Review the Auto Insurance System	32
4.3.7	Develop Presumptive Cancer Legislation for Firefighters	33
4.4	IMPROVE SOCIAL SERVICES.....	33
4.4.1	Enhance Support for Persons with Disabilities.....	33
4.4.2	Make Youth Services More Responsive to the Needs of Vulnerable Youth	33
4.4.3	Develop a New Provincial Housing Strategy	33
4.4.4	Multi-Year Funding for Community Organizations	33
4.4.5	Protect Animal Welfare	34
4.5	PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT	34
4.5.1	Take Action to Address Climate Change	34
4.5.2	Work With the Federal Government on Environmental Issues	34
4.5.3	Protected Areas Planning	35
4.5.4	Develop a Provincial Wetlands Strategy	35
4.5.5	Hydraulic Fracturing	35
4.5.6	Enact Sensible Hunting Regulations	35
5.	INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION	39
5.1	IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES	40
5.1.1	Establish a Premier’s Task Force.....	40
5.1.2	Launch a Comprehensive Education Action Plan.....	40
5.1.3	Monitor and Report on Progress	40
5.2	INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE.....	41
5.2.1	Complete Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten	41
5.2.2	Improve Early Learning and Child Care Supplements.....	41
5.2.3	Extend Before-School and After-School Programs.....	41
5.2.4	Review the Voluntary Operating Grant Program for Child Care Centres	41
5.3	MODERNIZE LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT FOR THE 21 ST CENTURY	41
5.3.1	Improve Achievement in Reading.....	41
5.3.2	Review the Current Math Curriculum	42
5.3.3	Support Digital Learning Technologies in the Classroom.....	42
5.3.4	Support for Inclusive Education	42
5.3.5	Eliminate the Failed “No Zero” Policy	42
5.3.6	Expand Access and Opportunities for Co-op Education	42
5.3.7	Enhance Teacher Education	43
5.3.8	Improve Educational Facilities.....	43
5.3.9	Review Busing Distances.....	43
5.4	IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION	43
5.4.1	Maintain a Tuition Freeze for Newfoundland and Labrador Residents	43
5.4.2	Expand Research Funding and Programming to Foster Economic Growth	43
5.4.3	Partner with the Federal Government to Renew Post-Secondary Infrastructure	43
5.4.4	Develop an Adult Literacy Strategy.....	43





———— A STRONGER TOMORROW ————

**RESTORING OPENNESS,
TRANSPARENCY
AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. RESTORING OPENNESS, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Liberals strongly believe that government must be open, transparent, and accountable. The people of the province deserve to know how and why government decisions are made. When government is not open, transparent and accountable, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are denied their right to the democracy they deserve.

Dwight Ball and a New Liberal Government will restore openness, transparency, and accountability to government through the following actions.

1.1 TAKE POLITICS OUT OF GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Government is responsible for appointing senior positions at Crown corporations, public commissions, and other public agencies. Liberals believe that these positions should be filled based on merit, not politics. It's simply a matter of making sure the most qualified person gets the job.

A New Liberal Government will establish an Independent Appointments Commission to take politics out of government appointments. This nonpartisan commission will screen candidates, apply a gender lens, and recommend the most qualified people for appointments, adding a much-needed level of independent review to the appointment process.

1.2 IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT AT NALCOR

As the province's energy company, Nalcor belongs to every citizen in Newfoundland and Labrador. Liberals believe that appointments to Nalcor's Board of Directors must be open and transparent, and that the company must be accountable to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

A New Liberal Government will ensure that appointments to Nalcor's Board of Directors are based on the recommendations of the Independent Appointments Commission. A New Liberal Government will also review the operational structure of Nalcor to ensure accountability.

1.3 RESPECT THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Liberals respect the House of Assembly, and like all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, expect it to be open, transparent and accountable. A New Liberal Government will ensure that the House of Assembly functions properly by amending the House of Assembly Act to set a proper schedule for House sittings so important issues are raised and questions are answered in a timely fashion.

Other amendments will be required to schedule sessions in an election year and to ensure there are no obstacles preventing the House from sitting for longer periods when deemed necessary.

We will also implement a review of the standing orders of the House to reform any outdated standing orders and improve the functioning of the legislature.

1.4 ENCOURAGE COOPERATION

Liberals are committed to modernizing the province's legislative process and engaging elected representatives from all political parties. A New Liberal Government will make better use of existing committees and seek opportunities for further nonpartisan cooperation.

1.4.1 Legislative Review Committees

Legislative review committees are well-established in Canada at both the provincial and federal level. These committees review proposed legislation, offer amendments, and call expert witnesses to provide information. They are an effective way to strengthen the role of elected members and reduce unnecessary partisanship in legislative debates.

1.4.2 All-Party Committee on Democratic Reform

A New Liberal Government will form an all-party committee on democratic reform. This committee will consult extensively with the public to gather perspectives on democracy in Newfoundland and Labrador, and make recommendations for ways to improve. The committee will consider a number of options to improve democracy, such as changing or broadening methods of voting to increase participation in elections, reforming campaign finance laws to cover leadership contests, and requiring provincial parties to report their finances on a bi-annual basis.

1.5 RESPECT DIVERSITY

1.5.1 Promote Gender Diversity in Leadership

Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions. Barriers to equal participation in leadership roles mean our province is losing out on valuable insights and expertise. As part of a comprehensive strategy to address this important issue, a New Liberal Government will:

- Work with women's organizations to address barriers for gender diversity in leadership;
- Implement family-friendly policies to promote gender diversity in the labour force. Liberals recognize the importance of affordable and accessible child care, and have committed to making improvements on this issue;
- Host a biennial conference on the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. A cornerstone of the conference will be to facilitate networking and mentorship opportunities with leaders in the community, academia, business, and politics.

1.5.2 Respect Aboriginal Rights

Liberals recognize Aboriginal people's longstanding use and occupancy of the lands and waters of Newfoundland and Labrador. Liberals believe that the province must be governed in a way that respects this history, and that existing land claims agreements must be fully respected. We are committed to open communication, consultation, and collaboration with Aboriginal communities.

These principles are important when it comes to development decisions that affect land and resources. A New Liberal Government will work with Aboriginal people, in concert with the federal government, to ensure development decisions are made with openness, transparency and accountability, incorporating the concerns and interests of Aboriginal communities.

1.6 PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES TO CABINET MINISTERS

The PC Government is the only government in Atlantic Canada that pays its MHAs to be parliamentary secretaries to cabinet ministers. The five parliamentary secretaries in our province have cost taxpayers over half a million dollars since the last election. A New Liberal Government will demonstrate its commitment to financial prudence and transparency by eliminating compensation for parliamentary secretaries.

1.7 HOLD TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Liberals believe that every citizen in Newfoundland and Labrador deserves to have their voice heard. We believe that people living in communities throughout the province can provide valuable insight into the issues that really matter in their lives. Guided by these beliefs, a New Liberal Government will host regular town hall meetings in communities throughout the province to engage citizens. These meetings will open avenues for dialogue with residents so government policy better reflects the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

1.8 REVIEW PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

A New Liberal Government will work with the Joint Trusteeship of the Public Service Sector Pension Plan to address any and all remaining issues with the plan.

A New Liberal Government will also reverse the PC Government's request for pensioners to pay back overpayments they received through no fault of their own.





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**BUILDING A STRONGER,
SMARTER ECONOMY**



2. BUILDING A STRONGER, SMARTER ECONOMY

Newfoundland and Labrador is rich in potential given our natural resources, the beauty of our landscapes, and the uniqueness of our communities. Our businesses are innovative and diverse. Our people are hardworking and adaptable. With all this potential, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians know our provincial economy should be performing better.

The PC Government's fiscal record includes mismanaging \$25 billion in offshore oil revenue, and failing to diversify the economy. As a result, almost every important provincial economic indicator is moving in the wrong direction.

Liberals strongly believe that the answer to building a stronger, smarter economy is through diversification, job creation, and growth. A New Liberal Government will implement the following policies to support a stronger, smarter economy that captures the full potential of our province's many riches.

2.1 REVERSE THE HST INCREASE

In the 2015 budget, the Davis Government announced a two point increase in the HST. An increase in the HST will leave the people of the province to pay for the PC Government's fiscal mismanagement. Liberals understand that this increase will hurt consumer confidence and hurt business. It will also negatively affect people on fixed incomes, including seniors, who cannot afford price increases for everyday goods and services. An increase in the HST will be felt by everyone throughout our economy, and will slow economic growth.

A New Liberal Government will immediately reverse the HST increase.

2.2 SIMPLIFY THE TAX SYSTEM

A New Liberal Government will complete a comprehensive independent review of the tax system, including tax expenditures. The review will identify ways to simplify the tax system and reduce costs for both government and taxpayers. This type of fiscal due diligence is long overdue.

The objective is to ensure the tax system is competitive and fair. Liberals understand it is critical for our province to remain competitive if we are to position Newfoundland and Labrador as an attractive place to live and work. A more competitive and less cumbersome tax system will attract investment and provide an incentive for young families and businesses to put down roots in Newfoundland and Labrador. Liberals will ensure the tax system is fair to all residents of the province, including seniors and people living on fixed incomes.

2.3 CAPITALIZE ON OUR ENERGY RESOURCES

2.3.1 Electricity Generation and Energy Security

Newfoundland and Labrador's tremendous hydro resources mean the province has an enormous capacity for electrical generation. This potential ranges in scale from megaprojects to community hydro developments and home-based systems. A New Liberal Government will capitalize on this potential to ensure energy security and reliability in Newfoundland and Labrador for generations to come.

2.3.1.1 Sell Surplus Power to Reduce Energy Bills

Liberals believe that, as the primary stakeholders, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians must be the primary beneficiaries of the Muskrat Falls Project. A New Liberal Government will work to mitigate potential increases in electricity rates. Revenue generated from the sale of surplus power will be used to offset power rates for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

2.3.1.2 Open the Books on Muskrat Falls

Liberals recognize that completion of the Muskrat Falls Project is now at a pivotal point in our province's future. This project is costing far more than Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were told when the PC Government sanctioned it. With billions of dollars already spent and committed to the project, Liberals are committed to minimizing its burden on ratepayers and taxpayers and ensuring the best use of its power.

Liberals have always insisted that details surrounding a project of such importance, funded through taxpayers' dollars, must be made fully available to the public.

A New Liberal Government will open the books on the Muskrat Falls Project and make public the details of how taxpayers' money has been spent.



2.3.1.3 Establish a Cabinet Committee on 2041

In 2041, control of Churchill Falls will return to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. While that date is decades into the future, a New Liberal Government will establish a cabinet committee to begin planning on how best to incorporate this critical asset into a long-term vision for the province.

2.3.1.4 Encourage Distributed Energy Generation

In order to expand into more diverse sources of energy generation, a New Liberal Government will seek out opportunities to develop wind farms and small-scale hydro. As part of these efforts, a New Liberal Government will prioritize communities that are isolated from the primary power grid, including coastal regions of Labrador, for wind and small-scale hydro developments.

2.3.1.5 Implement Net Metering Programs

Net metering allows individuals and businesses to generate their own electricity through small-scale renewable sources of energy, including solar, wind, biomass, and geothermal. Any surplus power is fed back into the distribution system, and customers are able to use it to offset the cost of electricity they draw from the system.

The PC Government first committed to net metering in 2007, and a policy framework was finally announced in 2015. However, there are several remaining steps before net metering programs are implemented. New regulations must be drafted, and utilities must develop and submit net metering programs for review and approval.

A New Liberal Government will work with utilities to set timelines to develop and implement net metering programs within the province. We will keep the public informed as we advance towards the implementation of net metering.

2.3.2 Make Effective Use of Energy

To improve the use of energy and generate savings, a New Liberal Government will:

- Develop Pay-as-You-Save programs for residential, commercial, and industrial energy retrofits that generate net benefits. These programs will include performance testing before and after a retrofit is undertaken. Liberals will also explore new opportunities to partner with municipalities to retrofit subsidized housing; and
- Increase the energy efficiency and environmental performance of government-owned buildings by pursuing BOMA BEST certification, the Canadian standard for commercial building environmental performance.

2.3.3 Harness Our Energy for Domestic Use and Export

Newfoundland and Labrador's vast energy resources provide a competitive advantage in attracting industrial development, and a valuable commodity to capitalizing on export markets through energy marketing. A New Liberal Government will act to maximize the net benefits from in-province use of energy and energy export by:

- Intensively marketing cost-competitive electricity generated by wind and hydro to regional, national, and international markets;
- Encouraging investment and innovation in electrical power generation projects; and
- Seeking opportunities to develop the Gull Island Hydro Project, which will include identifying potential markets and scouting potential access routes.

2.3.4 The Oil and Gas Industry

2.3.4.1 Develop a Long-Term Vision for the Industry

A New Liberal Government will create an Oil and Gas Industry Development Council, housed in the Department of Natural Resources. The Council will consist of government officials and industry stakeholders for the purpose of determining the long-term vision for the province's future in the oil and gas sector. The Council will be mandated to create a transparent energy policy with a focus on developing a more sustainable and competitive industry. We will ensure that project benefits agreements align with those long-term vision and goals.

2.3.4.2 Develop Local Skills and Expertise for Long-Term Sustainability

One key to ensuring a more competitive and sustainable local oil and gas industry is building expertise and skills within Newfoundland and Labrador.

A New Liberal Government will conduct and publish a labour market analysis to address the skills mismatch. We will identify employment opportunities and the associated skills, qualifications, and training required by industry. We will collaborate with industry and labour organizations to develop and implement local participation provisions that ensure meaningful involvement for workers and businesses in oil and gas projects. Leveraging participation in the offshore industry is vital to expanding industrial capacity within this important sector.

2.3.4.3 Ensure Effective Monitoring and Oversight

A New Liberal Government will apply their commitment to openness and transparency by ensuring effective cooperation and communication between its departments and agencies, regulatory bodies, and industry stakeholders. A New Liberal Government will negotiate strong benefits agreements, and ensure that the regulatory bodies have the resources they need to enforce these agreements.

2.3.4.4 Position the Province as a Global Centre of Excellence for Deepwater Oil and Gas Development

Newfoundland and Labrador's unique location in the North Atlantic presents an opportunity for the local industry to develop techniques and technologies to become a global leader in deepwater exploration and development. The province is an ideal setting for research and development on Arctic technology, including exploration and development in cold, harsh, corrosive, and ice-prone environments.

A New Liberal Government will encourage and fund research and design efforts in areas such as subsea resource extraction, ice management and operating in extreme weather, corrosion mitigation, enhanced oil recovery, logistics and maritime transportation, and other fields that foster the innovation needed to overcome the challenges of oil and gas extraction in similar locations.

2.3.4.5 Create Conditions for Increased Offshore Exploration and Development

Regulatory certainty and maintaining an attractive and stable business environment for operators and investors is critical to the long-term success of the industry. A New Liberal Government will:

- Streamline all processes for regulatory approval and certification;
- Establish a generic royalty regime, in consultation with stakeholders, that applies to all future developments. This will provide greater certainty around fiscal terms associated with developments in our jurisdiction and provide much-needed stability to operators; and
- Pursue options for the exploration and development of our offshore reserves of natural gas.

2.3.5 Create a Legacy Fund for Long-Term Prosperity

Newfoundland and Labrador has large untapped resources of offshore oil and gas, but they are finite. We have a responsibility to use our resources to not only benefit the present generation, but future generations as well.

A New Liberal Government will bring fiscal balance to our province, and when the financial situation improves, we will establish a Legacy Fund. At that time, a proportion of total oil revenues will be invested in a diversified wealth fund with the goal of compounding our oil wealth for the future. The Legacy Fund will be bound by strict investment and operational rules, with a view to disciplined and prudent financial management for long-term stability.

2.4 PROMOTE GROWTH IN MINING

Despite challenges associated with fluctuating commodity markets, the mining industry remains a valuable contributor to the provincial economy with strong potential for recovery and growth in the coming years. Liberals believe in continued development through industry partnerships and innovation, while also ensuring that benefits are maximized for local economic regions where mining operations take place.

To promote growth in this important sector of the economy, a New Liberal Government will:

- Encourage the expansion of mining operations in both Labrador and on the Island by increasing the annual investment in the Junior Exploration Assistance Program to \$1.5 million;
- Hold steady on funding for prospector grants throughout Newfoundland and Labrador;
- In consultation with industry, consider creating a new Venture Capital Fund for Mineral Exploration and Development. This could be done using existing funding sources and programs; and
- Review the current mining tax regime to ensure that it is competitive.

2.5 FOCUS ON FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Liberals view the province's fishery as a fundamental pillar of the economy – a crucial renewable resource, a vital source of rural economic development, and a sustainable engine of wealth generation for our province with enormous potential for growth.

2.5.1 Implement Strong Fisheries Policy

- A New Liberal Government will establish a Fisheries Advisory Council consisting of representatives from all sectors of the industry, including harvesters, processors, research experts, and the general public, to inform and influence provincial fisheries policy on an ongoing basis, including the creation of sustainable small-scale fisheries. The Fisheries Advisory Council will be immediately asked to create a strategic action plan on cod revitalization, focusing on environmental sustainability, harvesting, processing, quality, innovation, and marketing;
- In partnership with industry players, a New Liberal Government will establish a Seafood Marketing Council, whose mission will be to promote the Newfoundland and Labrador fishing industry globally, and to secure and expand market opportunities worldwide; and
- A New Liberal Government will work in cooperation with operators in the aquaculture industry to support research and development opportunities in this growing field, including waste management issues.

2.5.2 Work with Federal Counterparts

A New Liberal Government will advocate strongly on the province's behalf to the federal government on issues pertaining to fisheries. We will:

- Pursue joint fisheries management with the federal government;
- Finalize an agreement with the federal government on the CETA Fisheries Fund;
- Advocate for a new, fair arrangement for Northern shrimp quotas;
- Call for full annual scientific assessments of Northern shrimp resources and a plan to study the impact of climate change on the species and its ecosystem;
- Work with the federal government to re-establish the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre in Newfoundland and Labrador; and
- Call for an expanded recreational food fishery.

2.6 SUPPORT GROWTH IN AGRICULTURE

Despite the availability of funding programs by the federal and provincial governments over the last decade, several factors have seriously impeded the capacity of agriculture to reach its full economic potential. Liberals understand the value of this industry and recognize its potential.

A New Liberal Government will promote economic growth in this sector by:

- Conducting an updated economic analysis of the agriculture and agrifoods sectors to better understand the full economic potential of this industry;
- Working with local producers and the new federal government to develop a food security and agriculture growth strategy that sets benchmarks within established timeframes, including increases to local food production and improved provincial food security;

- Working with farmers to make more Crown land available for agriculture uses. Measures to achieve this include implementing a land registry, reviewing options to put idle land into farm production, and simplifying application processes for Crown land, especially in areas that have been zoned for agriculture;
- Working with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, a New Liberal Government will provide support for a funding coordinator position to maximize opportunities for development. Liberals are aware that capacity issues in human resources have been a barrier for growth in the agriculture sector, particularly when it comes to funding applications. The mandate for this position will be to facilitate funding applications to ensure that the provincial agriculture sector takes full advantage of federal and provincial programs; and
- Exploring new opportunities for partnerships with the federal government to leverage funds for agriculture development.

2.7 REVITALIZE THE FORESTRY SECTOR

It's clear that forestry has not been a priority for the PC Government for many years. Under their watch, two pulp and paper mills have closed, sawmills have downsized, and vast timber resources remain underutilized.

To allow the industry to grow and modernize, a New Liberal Government will:

- Implement the Sustainable Forest Management Strategy (2014-2024), with particular emphasis on environmental protection, sustainability, and community involvement;
- Invest in research and development to support diversification of the forest industry in the areas of bioenergy, biorefining, and engineered wood products; and
- Work with researchers at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic to explore innovation in fibre allocation and transportation.

2.8 MAXIMIZE OUR TOURISM POTENTIAL

Liberals know tourism is a vital component of the economy, with linkages to many other sectors. Particularly in rural areas, the importance of tourism in supporting jobs and businesses is clear.

To encourage tourism growth, A New Liberal Government will:

- Focus tourism marketing on the province's natural and cultural heritage. Liberals believe our tourism marketing should focus on what makes our province special to visitors: our culture, our environment, and our people.
- Strengthen connections between tourism and other sectors. Working with the outfitting industry, Liberals will ensure that regulatory red tape does not impede growth in fishing-based and hunting-based tourism. We will also seek opportunities to develop agritourism and fisheries tourism.
- Work with industry stakeholders to develop a highway signage solution that is sensible and consumer friendly. The PC Government's stalled implementation of Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) has led to confusion for tourism operators and visitors.
- Conduct a new visitor exit survey to gather up-to-date traveler data on visitor perceptions and preferences. The last visitor exit survey was conducted in 2011, and much has changed since that time.
- Study the economic impact of important recreation activities for tourism. For example, we will work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Snowmobile Federation and other snowmobile associations to conduct an economic impact study of snowmobiling in our province.
- Work to ensure that transportation infrastructure is in place to support the tourism industry. Liberals recognize that consistent, reliable transportation infrastructure is critical to the success of the industry.
- Provide focused support to promote regional and community events to offer improved tourism products to visitors. Working with the tourism industry, we will enhance the availability of tourism attractions throughout the year, including winter tourism and shoulder seasons.

2.9 ARTS AND CULTURE

Artists are essential to the preservation and progression of our cultural identity as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The role of artists in expressing and reflecting on culture is often overlooked and undervalued. Their role in creative economic development is underestimated and underutilized.

A New Liberal Government will work with stakeholders to develop a Status of the Artist Act. We will collaborate with the arts community to review funding mechanisms and identify innovative models here and abroad to help improve the social and economic status of professional artists in our province.

2.10 SUPPORT GROWTH IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

The manufacturing sector in Newfoundland and Labrador generates \$6.2 billion in annual sales, accounts for 30% of our exports and employs 14,000 people. While companies in the manufacturing sector also belong to other industries, pooled together, they have common challenges for growth. A New Liberal Government is intent on helping the sector grow its manufacturing output and value-added exports.

A New Liberal Government will work with Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters to revamp government support programs for the recruitment and retention of employees.

2.11 IMPROVE THE PUBLIC TENDER ACT

The Public Tender Act sets the procurement guidelines and procedures for the Government Purchasing Agency. The current Act was drafted in 1990, with the last amendments being undertaken in 2009.

A New Liberal Government will review the Act to examine barriers to Newfoundland and Labrador businesses bidding on public works, with a goal of removing obstacles and strengthening local opportunities. In consultation with industry, we will look for ways to improve the overall system and ensure an open and competitive bidding process for all procurement.

2.12 DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION

Liberals recognize that growing a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation presents tremendous economic potential for Newfoundland and Labrador. Economic diversification is the outcome of actions we, as a province, take to drive innovation; develop knowledge-based industries; and transform, generate, and capitalize on knowledge in existing industries.

To encourage innovation and diversification, a New Liberal Government will:

- Develop a new provincial innovation strategy in collaboration with industry and innovation partners to drive growth. A critical requirement will be to ensure timely, effective and flexible government funding and support, underpinned by transparency and accountability;
- Expand business incubation in affiliation with Memorial University. Entrepreneurial success depends on the ability to hire top talent, secure startup funding, and create strong networks of connections in the industry. Too often, great ideas are encumbered by these challenges, but those challenges can be overcome with the right assistance.
- Establish a Young Entrepreneur Retention Program. This program will encourage innovation in our youth and provide an incentive for them to stay at home, invest here, and build businesses and stable careers;
- Encourage a culture of innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador's schools by increasing options for co-operative education. We will also consider introducing entrepreneurship into the K-12 school curriculum earlier by reviewing the success of similar initiatives in other jurisdictions;
- Work with post-secondary institutions to assist with the development of an intellectual property policy that allows for more flexibility, and results in more innovation and interaction with the private sector;
- Create an attractive business environment by cutting red tape. A New Liberal Government will undertake a thorough regulatory review to ensure the regulatory burden to business is minimized to increase productivity and enhance economic growth. Liberals will also support business by providing labour-based tax incentives for emerging industries; and
- Foster social enterprise to support innovation and diversification in the not-for-profit sector. Social enterprises

combine business innovation with social, cultural, and environmental outcomes. A New Liberal Government will consult with stakeholders in the not-for-profit sector to develop a social enterprise strategy with the aim of enhancing the benefits of this valuable sector for the provincial economy.

2.13 SECURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN OUR ECONOMY

Engaging with Newfoundland and Labrador youth and supporting their growth and development is vital for the province to thrive in the long term. As part of a broader focus on instilling a spirit of innovation in the next generation, a New Liberal Government will work with Newfoundland and Labrador youth by:

- Conducting and publishing a labour market analysis to forecast job opportunities and coordinate with post-secondary institutions to ensure appropriate skills training programs are available;
- Supporting young entrepreneurs through a mentorship program with industry leaders;
- Holding competitions at the grade school and post-secondary levels that reward new ideas. Rewards would include scholarships and startup funding; and
- Developing the next generation of industry leaders by consulting with youth and employers to ensure that young people have access to the proper training and education they need to assume this role.

2.14 COMMUNICATIONS

2.14.1 Broadband Internet

Liberals consider access to high-speed broadband internet to be essential infrastructure. As the world gets smaller due to the advances in instant communication, the importance of the internet for jobs, education, and commerce becomes even more critical for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

A New Liberal Government is committed to working with the private sector and community-based organizations to expand broadband throughout the province through the best and most appropriate technology available.

2.14.2 Cell Phone Coverage

An effective and reliable communication network is critical to economic growth and public safety. Telecommunications infrastructure is deficient in many areas of our province, leaving rural businesses at a disadvantage, and limiting residents' ability to access emergency services.

A New Liberal Government will work aggressively with the private sector and community-based organizations to provide expanded infrastructure and improved cellphone coverage throughout the province.

2.15 OPTIMIZE GOVERNMENT REAL ESTATE

Liberals see inefficient use of taxpayers' money in the amount of vacant or unnecessary office space that is currently being paid for by this government. As of March 31, the value of all government real estate holding was \$3.2 billion, of which \$1.2 billion was utilized by core government departments. A New Liberal Government will undertake a comprehensive review of government's real estate portfolio and determine how best to enhance its public value.

2.16 IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO GROW OUR POPULATION

Population growth is critical to the future of our province, and Liberals consider it a top priority. A New Liberal Government will focus on building a stronger, more diversified economy that supports business growth and job creation. Liberals will also ensure public policy is targeted at attraction and retention of qualified working-age people and their families, including Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and newcomers to our province.

In order to grow our economy, we need to grow and sustain our base of working-age people. The Liberal plan for population growth is to create economic conditions for more jobs through diversification and innovation, combined with policies to attract and retain qualified people and their families.

A New Liberal Government will develop and implement an immigration strategy to attract and retain new people and families to our province. We will also create a recruitment strategy to encourage ex-patriot Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to return home.

Population growth objectives will be reinforced by policies in a range of areas. These include economic policies such as the young entrepreneur retention program, and policies to improve employment opportunities for youth, women, and persons with disabilities. The Liberal plan for population growth will also be supported by family-friendly policies such as improving the availability and affordability of child care.

Liberals understand that population growth isn't an issue unique to our province. Recently, Atlantic Canada's provincial Liberal Party Leaders met to discuss population renewal from a regional perspective. Recognizing this as a priority for the region highlights an opportunity for regional cooperation focused on the attraction and retention of expatriates and newcomers.

2.17 REVIEW MINIMUM WAGE

Liberals believe everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador deserves to share in the province's prosperity. In view of this, a New Liberal Government will consult with labour organizations and employers to establish a consistent minimum wage formula that is reflective of changes in the cost of living. This will help both employers and employees with budgeting and business planning processes.

2.18 APPRENTICESHIPS

A diverse economy depends heavily on being propelled by a skilled and educated workforce. A New Liberal Government will conduct a labour market analysis to forecast upcoming job opportunities. Working with industry, labour organizations, and post-secondary training institutions, we will strengthen apprenticeship programs to build a qualified workforce with skills to match these opportunities.

A New Liberal Government will consult with industry to assess areas of demand and offer tax incentives for employers in the skilled trades who increase the number of apprentices they take on. A greater number of apprenticeship spots throughout the province will not only give young people a role in Newfoundland and Labrador's diverse economy, but will help stem the flow of skilled workers to other jurisdictions.

2.19 CREATE A NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR GLOBAL NETWORK

There are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on every corner of the world map. But every Newfoundlander and Labradorian, no matter where they might be, feels an unbreakable connection to our province. Liberals recognize this essential part of the Newfoundland and Labrador identity and will create a global network designed to connect Newfoundlanders and Labradorians no matter how far away they live from our shores. This network will enable Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to share and leverage their global experience, knowledge and opportunities. It will connect Newfoundlanders and Labradorians living away and enable them to be advocates and champions for their home province.







———— **A STRONGER TOMORROW** ————

IMPROVING HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

3. IMPROVING HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

Healthcare plays a central role in the lives of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our province's healthcare system must evolve to face many challenges, including a rapidly aging population, and the fiscal realities of providing services throughout our large and sparsely populated province. Despite these challenges, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians still deserve access to quality healthcare whenever they need it. Liberals have a plan to improve health and healthcare that is dedicated to better access, better outcomes, and better health for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Despite spending almost 40 cents of every dollar on healthcare, Newfoundland and Labrador has a poor record on health outcomes. We need to take a smarter approach to managing and delivering healthcare in our province. A New Liberal Government will take the following actions to improve the health and well-being of people in our province and build a more compassionate and cost-effective healthcare system – a system that is focused on outcomes, is sustainable, and that always puts patients first.

3.1 A FOCUS ON PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Improving health outcomes in our province starts with embracing a holistic concept of health. It requires a greater focus on primary healthcare as a philosophy and a service delivery model.

Effective primary healthcare is a more integrated and interdisciplinary community-based approach to health promotion and chronic disease management. Primary healthcare keeps at the forefront the role that social determinants of health, like education, income level, and housing stability, play in one's overall well-being. It acknowledges these health inequities, thereby helping tackle health concerns at their roots. Primary healthcare strives for a seamless continuum of services. The existing lack of system integration was summed up nicely by one stakeholder: "It is as if we have built a city without roads."

Primary healthcare responds to the complexity of people's lives with teams of health-related professionals.

A New Liberal Government will work with primary healthcare stakeholders to develop regional primary healthcare teams. We believe primary healthcare teams can help address recruitment and retention of family physicians who want to work in this environment.

Liberals believe that an efficient and innovative primary healthcare approach can maximize healthcare dollars, help address recruitment and retention in more rural and remote regions, and improve health outcomes, resulting in a healthier population.

3.2 IMPROVE HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT

Liberals will enhance the capacity of the healthcare system to be more responsive, effective, and efficient. Better outcomes can be achieved and we will provide strong leadership, competent government management, and common sense thinking to achieve those outcomes.

Liberals believe that there are smarter ways to help increase the value of healthcare spending in our province and improve patient care.

3.2.1 Review Current Health Outcomes for Future Improvements

Among all Canadian provinces, Newfoundland and Labrador spends more per capita on healthcare, yet ranks last in health outcomes. Addressing this disparity involves fully evaluating our outcomes, and setting higher standards and measurable goals for the future. Providing better management also requires having the best information and health analysis available to guide smart decision making.

To improve province-wide health outcomes, a New Liberal Government will:

- Conduct a thorough review of health outcomes in all areas of our province's health system and set meaningful and measurable goals for improvements in the future;
- In consultation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, provide support to the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI) to complete the electronic health record system for the province and full implementation of the patient electronic medical records system in doctors' offices. NLCHI will also be supported to expand its data collection and analysis of the healthcare system and identify new health information systems to improve patient care; and
- Support a cardiovascular centre of excellence.

3.3 HEALTH PROMOTION AND HEALTHY LIVING STRATEGY

Our province has some of the highest rates of chronic disease and mortality due to chronic disease among provinces, including lung cancer, diabetes, respiratory disease, and circulatory disease. Contributing to these poor outcomes is the province's poor track record on rates of smoking, physical inactivity, obesity, alcohol consumption and fruit and vegetable consumption.

A New Liberal Government will work to lower the rate of chronic diseases through a health promotion and healthy living strategy. This will include investment in health promotion, healthy living programs, and early intervention, which will reduce acute healthcare costs in the longer term and achieve a healthy population in our province.

Understanding that a healthy population is in everyone's best interest, a New Liberal Government will ensure people have access to the programs and tools needed, especially at the community level, to facilitate healthier lifestyles.

A New Liberal Government's comprehensive plan will include measurable goals and milestones, and a strong emphasis on public reporting and accountability.

The health promotion and healthy living strategy will focus on the following two key areas, and include a number of actions:

3.3.1 Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Program

- Enhance early detection and screening, as well as treatment by primary healthcare teams working on the front lines of chronic disease management;
- Implement a Diabetes Prevention and Management Program within regional health authorities and their primary healthcare teams. This process will start with the implementation of a province-wide Diabetes Database to enable tracking of up-to-date health statistics and evidence-based decision making;
- Require regional health authorities to measure the health indicators of people in their regions and report to government. Existing efforts will be fine-tuned for better effectiveness and oversight;
- Promote healthy eating habits through a combination of awareness campaigns and community outreach; and
- Improve diagnostic services and timelines to reduce wait-lists for detection and diagnosis of cardiovascular disease.

3.3.2 Innovative Youth Wellness Program

- Establish health risk assessments and wellness coaching in schools, beginning with kindergarten children;
- Empower schools to be available for after-school physical education programming;
- Provide support to children with autism beyond grade three through Applied Behaviour Analysis;
- Implement an anti-smoking program, including support for organizations that offer smoking cessation programs; and
- Establish regional adolescent health clinics that offer preventative care services, sexually transmitted infections testing, treatment for acute health issues, and counselling for physical and mental health in such areas as bullying, sexual orientation, eating disorders, and unhealthy relationships.

3.4 ALLOW HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO WORK TO THEIR FULL SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Liberals believe that allowing healthcare professionals to work to their full scope of practice provides an optimal opportunity to enhance a patient's access to care. It improves the management of our services and use of our resources. Maximizing the skills and training of healthcare professionals and allowing them to work to their full scope of practice will enhance the benefits of their expertise to patients. We must harness the full capacity of healthcare professionals and keep our province in line with emerging best practices across the country.

- A New Liberal Government will conduct a thorough review of all legislation and regulations covering health professionals to identify ways to allow healthcare professionals to work to their full scope of practice. Changes resulting from this review will streamline primary care, improve patient care, and build a more efficient system.

3.4.1 Implement Regulated Midwifery

Around the world, midwives are recognized as experts in normal birth, and serve an integral role in the public healthcare systems of seven provinces and two territories.

The PC Government failed to implement midwifery regulations, as provided for under the Health Professions Act.

The implementation of regulated midwifery has the potential to improve maternal health access and outcomes while optimizing the team of healthcare professionals.

Liberals believe that part of growing our population is making sure primary maternity care is patient-centered and emphasizes access, outcomes, and choice. That is why a new Liberal Government will work with midwives and other health professionals to implement regulated midwifery in the province.

3.5 EXPAND SENIOR CARE

By 2025, one in four Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be seniors. Liberals understand the challenges our province faces with a rapidly aging population, and we have a plan to ensure we are prepared for the demographic change.

Through smarter spending and sustainable investments, Liberals will provide the best care possible for our seniors and respect their independence. This will be achieved through the following measures.

3.5.1 Establish a Seniors' Advocate Office

To ensure seniors have the strong voice they deserve, a New Liberal Government will introduce legislation to create a Seniors' Advocate Office, which will be the third of its kind in Canada. The Seniors' Advocate will be independent of government, and will report to the House of Assembly instead of a Minister.

The Seniors' Advocate Office will improve the health and well-being of seniors by:

- Advocating on behalf of seniors and their families, investigating individual complaints;
- Working collaboratively with other seniors' organizations and service delivery groups to identify and address issues impacting the health and well-being of Newfoundland and Labrador's seniors;
- Advising on policy and program changes to improve services and support for seniors, thereby improving health outcomes amongst this population; and
- Serving as a navigator, providing seniors and their families with the information they need to access government programs and services in a timely manner.

3.5.2 Dementia Management Program

Alzheimer's and other dementias affect over 8,600 people in Newfoundland and Labrador, and that number is expected to double in the next 15 years. Demonstrating our commitment to making a difference in the lives of people with dementia and their families, a New Liberal Government will create a Dementia Management Program.

This program will be a collaborative effort through primary healthcare teams, community programs, and regionally-based professional teams specializing in the care of dementia patients, to allow timely identification and assessment of individuals with dementia, and ensure that effective treatment and care plans are in place to support them and their caregivers.

3.5.3 Supporting Independence for Seniors

Helping seniors maintain their independence is central to their quality of life. The majority of seniors want to live in their own homes, communities, and close to friends and family for as long as possible. A New Liberal Government will provide the necessary supports that will help seniors remain in their homes and their communities.

Specifically, a New Liberal Government will:

- Provide healthy living assessments for seniors aged 70 years and older at no cost to them. Healthy living assessments will be voluntary, in-home, annual assessments conducted by qualified healthcare professionals. These assessments will help keep seniors healthier through preventative measures and education, allowing them to stay in their homes longer while reducing costs on the healthcare system;
- Create a home support program that is flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of seniors throughout the province. Liberals believe our seniors deserve to get the quality of care they require in their homes, and will make this happen by ensuring regular access to a wider range of healthcare professionals through home care and home support programs;
- Provide more support for low income seniors through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing programs. There is a great demand for affordable housing for seniors, and the need will continue to grow. We will also ensure targeted investments in cooperative housing units and shared living arrangements; and
- Work with communities to improve transportation options for seniors so they can not only access healthcare services more readily, but participate more fully in their communities - running errands, visiting family and friends, and taking part in leisure and volunteer activities. A New Liberal Government will also modernize the existing Medical Transportation Assistance Program.

3.6 STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS CARE

One in five people in Newfoundland and Labrador experiences a mental health or addictions issue in any given year. Liberals believe this issue must be tackled openly and head-on. As part of that commitment, under a New Liberal Government, replacing the Waterford Hospital will happen as a priority project and without delay. We will ensure those affected by mental health and addictions challenges get the respect, support, and services they need and deserve.

Dwight Ball and a New Liberal Government will show true leadership on this important issue by implementing a comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. The strategy will focus on enhancing access to mental health and addictions services.

Our Mental Health and Addictions Strategy will set us on the right path to delivering a stronger mental health and addictions system to meet the growing demand for services and build a healthier province overall. This will be accomplished by the following actions.

3.6.1 Raise the Profile of Mental Health

- A New Liberal Government will ensure that mental health receives the same attention as physical health;
- The Liberal Party was instrumental in implementing the All-Party Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and we will ensure the work of the committee continues;
- We will ensure a more coordinated, integrated, and responsive approach across government departments and agencies when addressing mental health and addictions needs;
- We will review all relevant mental health legislation to ensure our province is keeping pace with emerging best practices in the fields of mental health and addictions;
- A New Liberal Government will strengthen provincial policies to show the importance placed on mental health within our healthcare system; and
- A New Liberal Government will work in consultation with stakeholders to establish an adult inpatient unit for the treatment of eating disorders.

3.6.2 Enhance Community Support

- A New Liberal Government will work with community partners and schools to ensure coordinated and seamless approaches to mental health and addictions;
- We will boost the province's high school curriculum to include a mental health and addictions course tailored to meet the needs of students, and raise awareness about mental health and addictions; and
- Liberals will encourage and support employers around the province to assist employees who are coping with mental health and addictions issues.

3.7 IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving healthcare infrastructure plays a key role in strengthening the efficient delivery of quality care within the healthcare system. Facilities that are outdated and lack the capacity to meet our growing healthcare needs can impede the progress of healthcare delivery. A New Liberal Government is committed to making strategic infrastructure investments that will give us the best value for our healthcare spending, and enable us to provide the best healthcare possible in areas of the province that need it most.

Based on consultation with healthcare providers, patients' representatives, and residents, Liberals are committed to two major infrastructure projects:

3.7.1 Replace the Waterford Hospital

The replacement of the Waterford Hospital is critical to advancing mental healthcare in our province. Opened in 1854, the hospital is outdated and unable to provide the care that people need and deserve. We need a modern facility designed to facilitate a recovery model of care.

The current PC Government decided to indefinitely postpone this much-needed replacement, but Liberals recognize that this new, improved facility is needed now, and delays are only costing us more. Under a New Liberal Government, the construction of a new mental health facility will take priority and proceed without delay.

Liberals are committed to a well-planned, well-executed approach to achieve the best value for construction of the new mental health facility. In 2016, we will plan and define the scope of work so construction can begin in 2017, taking advantage of the available local skilled workforce that will be finishing work on other large projects at that time.

We will engage in a project planning process that will involve finding the right tool for the design, construction, financing, and possible maintenance of the project, including traditional delivery and performance-based infrastructure.

3.7.2 Construct a West Coast Regional Hospital

Liberals believe people in Western Newfoundland have waited too long for a new hospital. The Western Memorial Regional Hospital in Corner Brook is a badly outdated facility serving 82,000 people. Despite the promise of a new hospital since 2007 by the current government, there has been very little movement on the project. In view of this, a New Liberal Government will immediately begin the replacement of the Western Memorial Regional Hospital with a new regional hospital.



———— **A STRONGER TOMORROW** ————

**SUPPORTING SAFE AND
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

4. SUPPORTING SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians share a strong connection to our communities. The places we call “home” are important to us all. Liberals understand that government has a crucial role in guiding and supporting sustainable community development. Working with local councils, the provincial government can empower communities through a strategic approach to the delivery of services and infrastructure, and protection of public safety. Liberals believe that the province and its communities are one and the same – if our communities are prosperous, so is Newfoundland and Labrador.

A New Liberal Government will work to empower communities and provide the services and infrastructure needed for them to thrive. Through the following actions, we will make real, positive changes to the places in which Newfoundlanders and Labradorians live, making them safer and more sustainable.

4.1 EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

4.1.1 Host an Annual Premier’s Forum on Local Government

A New Liberal Government, under the leadership of Dwight Ball, will host an annual Premier’s Forum on Local Government. Working in cooperation with Municipalities NL, we will invite community leaders to discuss issues of concern to their towns and cities on an annual basis. Implementation, including how municipal leaders are selected to bring matters of importance to the forum, will be completed by working in conjunction with the Municipalities NL Board of Directors, the Combined Councils of Labrador and the Department of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs.

4.1.2 Municipal Assessments

The property assessments issued by the Municipal Assessment Agency (MAA) for the 2016 taxation year have caused concern among many municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador. We recognize that assessments are the responsibility of the MAA, and municipal councils have the authority to set mil rates on residential and commercial property. However, the level of concern over the recent assessments indicates there is room for improvement.

A New Liberal Government, in partnership with the MAA and Municipalities NL, will immediately initiate a review of the Assessment Act, 2006 that will address the timing of assessments, assessment criteria, and implementation of the associated mil rate.

4.1.3 Leverage Crown Lands

Liberals recognize the increasing demand being placed on municipalities to engage in a more direct manner of economic development, either within a single municipality or within a region. The provincial government currently maintains title to a large amount of Crown land, which Liberals believe has significant value as a local economic development tool.

A New Liberal Government will work with Municipalities NL to review how Crown land is sold. Land transfer options currently not available for municipalities, such as long-term leasing and lease-to-own arrangements, will be discussed.

4.1.4 Address the Municipal Infrastructure Deficit

Liberals recognize the severe infrastructure deficit in communities throughout our province. But we also understand the necessity of balancing these needs within the province’s fiscal reality.

A New Liberal Government will work with Municipalities NL and other stakeholders, including the federal government, to develop a strategic plan for addressing the infrastructure gap in our province. A committee comprised of representatives from the Department of Municipal Affairs, Municipalities NL, and the Professional Municipal Administrators will work together to bring forward recommendations to address this pressing need.

A New Liberal Government will also provide municipalities with infrastructure funding under a multi-year framework. This will allow municipalities to better plan, manage, and complete infrastructure projects.

4.1.5 Improve Access to Safe Drinking Water

There are currently over 200 boil water and non-consumption advisories in our province.

Liberals understand how this issue has had a major effect on people and our communities, and will work in conjunction with local governments to reduce and, where possible, eliminate long-term advisories.

A New Liberal Government, working with communities and the federal government, will develop a province-wide water quality action plan. This plan will address quality, infrastructure, expertise, and technology to ensure our water systems are safe and sustainable.

4.1.6 Finish the Trans-Labrador Highway

The Trans-Labrador Highway is a vital piece of infrastructure in our province.

Liberals started this project, and Liberals will finish it.

A New Liberal Government will complete the paving of Phases 2 and 3 of the Trans-Labrador Highway.

Many Labradorians believe that the Trans-Labrador Highway will not be complete until it reaches the North Coast of Labrador. A New Liberal Government will consult with the Nunatsiavut Government and the Innu Nation on the feasibility of extending the Trans-Labrador Highway into Nunatsiavut and Natuashish, and will seek opportunities for federal funding.

4.1.7 Review the Fixed Link to Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador is geographically large, with great distances between our communities, regions, and services. Liberals believe that it is time to update the decade old study on the fixed link between Labrador and the island of Newfoundland. At this point in our history, with a need to grow and diversify our economy, we need to once and for all get a firm handle on the costs associated with this nation-building project.

A New Liberal Government will establish an open Request for Proposals process for a full feasibility study on this project.

4.2 PROVIDE SUPPORT ON ABORIGINAL ISSUES

4.2.1 Implement Truth and Reconciliation Report Recommendations

The federal Truth and Reconciliation Report makes recommendations that are important to addressing the abuse and neglect Aboriginal children suffered while attending residential schools across Canada, including the five schools in this province. A New Liberal Government will recognize the residential schools' history of Newfoundland and Labrador and work with all parties to determine an appropriate resolution in support of reconciliation.

We will implement those recommendations from the report which are applicable to the provincial government.

4.2.2 Repatriate Beothuk Remains

The federal Truth and Reconciliation Report emphasizes the importance of correcting past injustices in the treatment of Aboriginal people in Canada. In our province, the extinction of the Beothuk following European settlement remains a tragic injustice and irrecoverable loss.

In 1819, a Beothuk woman named Demasduit was captured by European settlers. Her husband, Nonosbawsut, was killed while trying to protect her. The remains of Demasduit and Nonosbawsut have been in storage at the National Museum of Scotland for many years. The Liberal Party strongly believes the remains of these two people should be returned to Newfoundland and Labrador and laid to rest with dignity in the home of the Beothuk. A New Liberal Government will support efforts to repatriate their remains, and will work with the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom to ensure there is no further injustice to the memory of Demasduit and Nonosbawsut.

4.3 SERVE JUSTICE AND PROTECT SAFETY

4.3.1 Expand Family Violence Intervention Court

The Family Violence Intervention Court is a critical intervention in helping break the cycle of intimate partner violence. The Court cost \$500,000 a year - one dollar for every person in the province. Despite its merits, the Court was cut in the 2013 budget.

Liberals believe that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should have access to a court that provides accountability and programming to help break the cycle of violence.

A New Liberal Government will expand the Family Violence Intervention Court beyond St. John's, exploring site options and models for Western Newfoundland, Central Newfoundland, and Labrador.

4.3.2 Mandatory Reporting of Deaths and Critical Incidents to the Child and Youth Advocate

For years, the Child and Youth Advocate has been calling on the PC Government to make mandatory the reporting by all government departments and agencies of the deaths of, and critical incidents involving, children and youth receiving government services.

Liberals believe the Advocate shouldn't have to learn of children falling through the cracks through the public or the media. Mandatory reporting could save lives.

A New Liberal Government will legislate mandatory reporting of deaths and critical incidents to the Child and Youth Advocate.

4.3.3 Implement a Multi-Agency 911 Approach

Many rural parts of the province continue to be serviced by a call-forwarding system for emergency response that has proved inadequate. Liberals understand that any delays in first response can put lives at risk.

A New Liberal Government will implement a multi-agency emergency notification approach for 911 calls in Central, Western, and Labrador regions of the province. This approach will allow for coordinated notification among first responders for emergency calls in areas outside of the Northeast Avalon.

4.3.4 Highways

Long-distance road travel is a fact of life in Newfoundland and Labrador. Severe weather conditions that rapidly deteriorate road conditions complicate this travel. Coupled with the ever present risk of moose-vehicle accidents, highway safety is a major concern.

Liberals are committed to investigating all options for minimizing moose-vehicle collisions on provincial roadways. Such measures include fencing, brush cutting, and increasing hunting licenses.

Also, much of the provincial highway network, including bridges and culverts, is in need of repair. A New Liberal Government will undertake this work as part of a multi-year infrastructure plan. This will include multi-year and early tendering to allow companies to take full advantage of the short construction season.

A New Liberal Government will create a comprehensive transportation strategy and will make public a priority list of road maintenance based on a province-wide needs assessment.

4.3.5 Strengthen Consumer Protection

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there is little protection for consumers who have been victims of fraud or bad business practices. In fact, the PC Government's approach has been very much buyer beware. Liberals believe government can do more to help protect consumers in our province.

With this in mind, a New Liberal Government will establish an online searchable database to alert consumers of bad business practices. We will also explore the possibility of posting convictions and details of offenders of our provincial consumer protection legislation.

We will review legislation in other jurisdictions and make changes to ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are protected in common business dealings. Stronger consumer protection regulations will deter bad business practices and protect consumers.

4.3.6 Review the Auto Insurance System

A New Liberal Government will complete a thorough review of the automobile insurance system within the province. This review will include consultation with private-sector stakeholders and the public, with the goal of modernizing the system so the people of Newfoundland and Labrador see more benefits and better value.

4.3.7 Develop Presumptive Cancer Legislation for Firefighters

Firefighters constantly risk their lives, health, and safety to serve their communities. They put their lives on the line to help save ours, and are exposed to many hazards in the line of duty, including carcinogens. There is increasing evidence linking the occupational exposures of firefighting to various cancers. For almost 10 years, the PC Government has ignored the call for presumptive cancer legislation for career firefighters, and we are now one of just three Canadian provinces without such legislation. In fact, the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission review has twice recommended this legislation. A New Liberal Government will work with career firefighters, their municipal employers, volunteer firefighters and the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission to develop presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters in our province. We consider this a first step, and are committed to working with all stakeholders on this important issue.

4.4 IMPROVE SOCIAL SERVICES

4.4.1 Enhance Support for Persons with Disabilities

4.4.1.1 Focus on Inclusion

Liberals are committed to working with advocacy groups and community stakeholders to promote a more inclusive Newfoundland and Labrador. A New Liberal Government will review existing legislation and regulations in our province with the goal of enacting a new inclusion-based Disabilities Act, taking into account the success and effectiveness of such legislation in other jurisdictions.

To promote inclusion in the work force, we will also work with stakeholders to look for ways to improve supported and supportive employment for persons with disabilities.

4.4.1.2 Enable Supported Decision Making

Supported decision making is a crucial measure in ensuring persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others, as stated in Article 12 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Liberals are committed to ensuring all persons have the support they need to exercise their legal capacity, and will pursue, in collaboration with the community, the development of legislation to enable supported decision making.

4.4.2 Make Youth Services More Responsive to the Needs of Vulnerable Youth

Some young people need extra help as they transition to adulthood. The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) supports young people for a longer period of time if they were in the Department's care when they turned 16. Liberals believe youth services should not discriminate based on whether CYFS was involved in a young person's life on their sixteenth birthday. A New Liberal Government will review the Youth Services Program to ensure it is responsive to the unique needs of vulnerable youth.

4.4.3 Develop a New Provincial Housing Strategy

Liberals understand that housing continues to be a major issue in our province. This relates to both the affordability and availability of homes. These issues need to be addressed with a comprehensive strategy to solve related concerns, such as increased pressure on seniors and the problem of homelessness.

A New Liberal Government will develop a new provincial housing strategy. This long-overdue strategy will address the needs of provincial housing, paying particular attention to the housing needs of seniors and youth in our province.

4.4.4 Multi-Year Funding for Community Organizations

Liberals believe that the great work done by community organizations is fundamental to building safe and sustainable communities. It's well known that government support for these organizations is paid back to the province through the many socio-economic benefits that are realized through their efforts. Liberals realize that real change takes time and commitment. A New Liberal Government will develop multi-year funding arrangements for community organizations. This will allow organizations to work on important issues facing our province, rather than spending valuable time on funding applications every year. With multi-year funding agreements, community organizations can improve the effectiveness of their programs, and have a stronger basis for securing funding from other sources.

4.4.5 Protect Animal Welfare

A New Liberal Government will work with stakeholders to enhance animal health and protection legislation to provide greater protection for animals in our province. This will include revamping the current enforcement model and establishing an Animal Protection Account.

4.5 PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians share a strong connection with the environment. The people of the province have a tradition of sustainable resource use that goes back centuries. Sustainable fishing, hunting, forestry, and farming were essential for survival, and formed the backbone of our traditional economy. For Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, a tradition of conservation has always been the foundation of our interactions with our environment.

Liberals believe that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want to see this attitude extended through government decisions that affect the economy and the environment. A New Liberal Government will advance the objectives of sustainable development for Newfoundland and Labrador through the following actions.

4.5.1 Take Action to Address Climate Change

Climate change is a global issue needing local action. It requires commitment and action from people and their governments throughout the world. It is arguably the greatest challenge of our time. A crisis like climate change can be viewed as an opportunity to diversify our economy here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Energy initiatives with economic potential, like net metering and retrofit programs, have been discussed under Building a Stronger, Smarter Economy.

The PC Government has failed to recognize climate change as a crisis or an opportunity to kick-start a green economy here in Newfoundland and Labrador. They have failed to fulfill their 2007 Energy Plan promise to create a culture of conservation. In particular, they have not met their commitment to publish greenhouse gas emission targets for large-scale industry, which contributes over half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the province.

Liberals understand that balancing economic growth and environmental conservation will require hard work and cooperation. A New Liberal Government will work with large-scale industry to develop emissions reduction targets, and will publish these targets as part of a greenhouse gas reduction strategy for the province.

4.5.2 Work with the Federal Government on Environmental Issues

Environmental issues cross jurisdictions – it's one of the things that makes environmental management challenging. Time and time again, whether it has been addressing the potential for an oil spill from the sunken Manolis L, or cleaning up abandoned drill sites in Port au Port Bay, we have seen the PC Government shirk its responsibilities. Liberals believe that when there is a serious environmental situation, it is not good enough for our government to simply say it is someone else's problem.

There needs to be more communication between the provincial and federal governments on environmental matters, especially when concerned citizens bring an environmental issue to their provincial representatives. Whether the situation falls under provincial or federal jurisdiction, the provincial government has a role to play in environmental protection and public health. A New Liberal Government will work with the federal government to address environmental issues in Newfoundland and Labrador.

4.5.3 Protected Areas Planning

Newfoundland and Labrador has a spectacular range of biodiversity that needs to be protected. From wilderness, wildlife and ecological reserves to sanctuaries, parks, and national historic sites, protected areas help preserve the natural beauty of our province. Advancing protected areas planning is central to environmental and cultural conservation, as well as to sustainable development. A well-governed and scientifically-based system for designating protected areas has the potential to benefit not only our environment, but our economy, through ecotourism and research endeavors.

The approach to environmental conservation to date has been patchwork, failing to grasp the ecological significance of protected areas. As a result, just 4.6% of land in Newfoundland and Labrador is protected – half the overall Canadian

percentage, and just one third of the international percentage. The need for a clearly defined system, including a list of new and planned protected areas, is clear.

The PC Government has let their stated goal of establishing and releasing a Natural Areas System Plan fall by the wayside. A New Liberal Government will finalize this plan and publicly release it.

4.5.4 Develop a Provincial Wetlands Strategy

Wetlands are a particularly valuable part of the Newfoundland and Labrador environment. They provide important habitat for fish, animals, and plants. They are also vital to ecosystem health in watershed areas. Healthy wetlands perform many beneficial functions, such as filtering natural water resources, regulating runoff to reduce floods, and storing carbon from the atmosphere.

A New Liberal Government will develop a provincial wetlands strategy to facilitate the preservation of these important areas. The strategy will guide development to avoid, or reduce, effects on wetlands. A series of recommended mitigation measures will be included to compensate for development impacts to the province's wetlands. The provincial wetlands strategy will provide a formal framework to support the wetland conservation work currently being carried out by municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

4.5.5 Hydraulic Fracturing

Liberals believe in making evidence-based choices when it comes to development decisions that affect our environment. We also believe in a cautionary approach. This means taking measures to protect against the possibility of environmental damage.

Liberals have been at the forefront of the hydraulic fracturing issue in Newfoundland and Labrador. We pushed for strong, industry-specific regulations, called for an external independent review, and asked government to expand its review panel to include more voices. Liberal Leader Dwight Ball has also said that the industry will not be able to develop without community support.

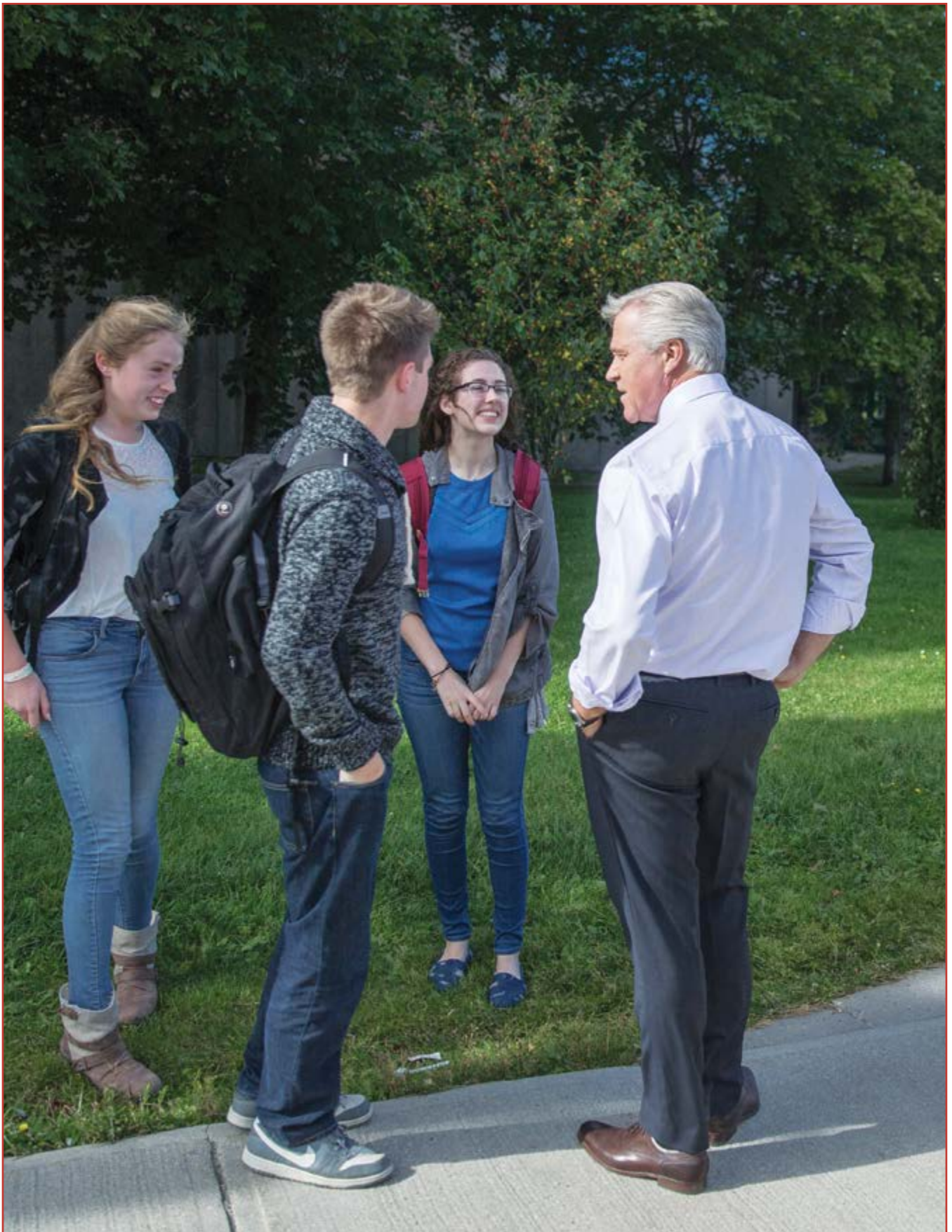
A New Liberal Government will base any future decisions regarding this industry on scientific evidence, and most importantly, a social license from the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who may be affected.

4.5.6 Enact Sensible Hunting Regulations

Liberals recognize that an important aspect of Newfoundland and Labrador's identity is partaking in hunting and fishing. For citizens with disabilities, the current legislation is discriminatory in that a hunting proxy must be within sight of the license holder at all times. This is impractical and out of step with the physical demands of hunting.

A New Liberal Government will review the regulations to make common-sense amendments so persons with disabilities can assign a proxy to hunt on their behalf without being in sight of the license holder.









———— **A STRONGER TOMORROW** ————

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION

5. INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION

Providing our children with high-quality education is one of the first steps towards a better future for Newfoundland and Labrador. The value of education in the development of each and every child in the province is clear. So is the connection between education and other benefits, such as improved health and wellness and a stronger economy. However, educational outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador are consistently below those in many other provinces. Liberals know that this does not reflect the potential of the students or the professionalism of their teachers, but rather, shortcomings in our province's education policies.

Liberals believe we need a 21st century education system that teaches critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity—skills that all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians need to succeed in today's knowledge-based economy. Our education system has to adapt and respond to cutting edge curriculum changes and shifts in resourcing priorities. It needs to listen to our students, parents, and teachers.

A New Liberal Government will invest in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador by implementing the following education policies.

5.1 IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

5.1.1 Establish a Premier's Task Force

A New Liberal Government will establish a Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes. This will be a nonpartisan group of key stakeholders, including teachers and parents, whose mandate will be to examine the K-12 education system and recommend improvements, including measurable goals and milestones. The Task Force will bring together stakeholders from the education system, as well as policy development experts and representatives from government, with the goal of improving educational outcomes dramatically.

The Task Force will identify areas within the school system where opportunities exist for sensible long-term improvement. It will also identify school jurisdictions across the country in which these improvements have already been made, with a view of implementing them with the same level of success.

For Newfoundland and Labrador to increase its competitiveness in the global knowledge-based economy, changes in our education system need to happen now, and the system needs to adapt to changes as they come. For Liberals, putting systems in place to positively change educational outcomes is a top priority.

Liberals know that meaningful improvements can't be made without consultation with those who work on the front lines of education. The Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes will include experienced teachers who know Newfoundland and Labrador's education system first-hand. Through every stage of the review process, input from teachers will be solicited, and changes made to the system will reflect this input.

5.1.2 Launch a Comprehensive Education Action Plan

Driven by recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Educational Outcomes, a New Liberal Government will establish a comprehensive Education Action Plan to better engage students in learning, and to foster development of the 21st century skills and competencies they need.

Liberals recognize that the global economy is in transition. This shift is defined by the rise in technology seen in almost every sphere of life. Our children inhabit a world that is more connected than at any other time. To prosper, they will require strong science, technology, engineering, and math skills, in addition to overall literacy and critical thinking skills. Technology advances quickly, and so does tech education. The Education Action Plan will be designed to anticipate and accommodate these rapid advances.

5.1.3 Monitor and Report on Progress

Accountability is fundamental for Liberals. A New Liberal Government will establish measurable education system goals through the Premier's Task Force and in consultation with stakeholders. Liberals understand that monitoring progress is equally important to setting goals. If you can't measure progress, you can't manage it. Under a New Liberal Government, progress towards our K-12 education system goals and milestones will be tracked and publicly reported on an annual basis.

5.2 INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

5.2.1 Complete Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten

The benefits of full-day kindergarten will impact both our province's children and their parents. The growing consensus is that the more high-quality learning children receive in their earliest years, the greater their chance of thriving in later years. Research suggests that full-day kindergarten produces greater learning gains per dollar spent than any other early childhood educational intervention. A New Liberal Government will complete the implementation of full-day kindergarten in Newfoundland and Labrador, and explore additional options for growing education down to include the early years.

5.2.2 Improve Early Learning and Child Care Supplements

Newfoundland and Labrador's children deserve full access to high-quality early childhood education, no matter where in the province they live. Liberals will work to streamline all of the regulations associated with early childhood education in the province so all providers work from the same set of rules.

A New Liberal Government will increase the funding available as part of the Early Learning and Child Care Supplement to allow for a \$3/hour increase over three years for early childhood educators. This will help with recruitment and retention of early childhood educators in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

A New Liberal Government will review the roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators to recognize their professional designation and ensure their compensation is reflective of their training and contribution.

A New Liberal Government will also work with the federal government to provide for a national approach to Early Learning and Child Care, including funding to grow the early childhood educator profession and reduce costs to families.

5.2.3 Extend Before-School and After-School Programs

Many working families struggle with the financial burden of providing child care for their children. It is unfair for the province to encourage population growth without offering support to families to overcome these challenges.

A New Liberal Government will address this need by partnering with local child care providers to extend opportunities for before-school and after-school child care programs.

5.2.4 Review the Voluntary Operating Grant Program for Child Care Centres

Liberals understand that the current program does not reflect the true cost of operating child care centres, and most centres have not signed up for the voluntary program. A New Liberal Government will review this operating grant with stakeholders to make it more reflective of current needs, and to make child care more affordable to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

5.3 MODERNIZE LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

5.3.1 Improve Achievement in Reading

Reading is essential for student success in every aspect of school, and of life. Research indicates that students who do not read at grade level in early primary, and who do not receive appropriate instruction and intervention in those early years, are likely to experience longer-term problems in reading, in schooling, and in life. Student reading scores in Newfoundland and Labrador are lower than those in other provinces.

Reading programs in our province have not kept pace with research-based teaching and intervention practices. A New Liberal Government will undertake a complete review of reading curriculum and achievement in Newfoundland and Labrador. This review will include the examination of reading programs, as well as the teaching methodologies proposed by these programs. The review will also examine teacher education/training in reading, as well as ongoing professional development.

We are committed to all students receiving appropriate instruction and intervention in early primary and throughout schooling. Improved reading achievement in Newfoundland and Labrador will provide the foundation for success in schooling and enhanced opportunities in life.

5.3.2 Review the Current Math Curriculum

Math education is vital for success in today's technology-based global economy. Around the world, there is a major push to ramp up education in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The foundational knowledge for all of these fields is math.

And yet, test scores for Newfoundland and Labrador's students have declined significantly. On the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) exams in 2012, Newfoundland and Labrador's students scored below the Canadian average in math.

Liberals do not believe this is the fault of either the province's students or its teachers. A New Liberal Government will ensure schools in Newfoundland and Labrador have the resources they need to provide our students with high-quality math instruction. This will include enhanced teacher training opportunities, and a thorough curriculum review to ensure the province's approach is in line with current best practices.

5.3.3 Support Digital Learning Technologies in the Classroom

Over the past decade, tremendous advances have been made in educational technology. Today, there is a vast array of educational technology products on the market that have revolutionized digital learning.

A New Liberal Government will ensure the province's education system is positioned to take full advantage of cutting-edge technology. Schools will be provided with resources and training so that technology is front and center in Newfoundland and Labrador classrooms.

5.3.4 Support for Inclusive Education

Liberals believe every student in the province is entitled to a top-quality education. Yet, too few of our schools have sufficient resources to address the individualized learning requirements of all students. A New Liberal Government will ensure schools in our province receive the support they need in providing inclusive education. This will include more teacher training opportunities, as well as increased administrative support, so that all students get the best education possible.

A New Liberal Government will also develop a provincial autism strategy. This strategy will help address the lack of communication between government departments responsible for providing autism-related services. Additionally, we will eliminate the "IQ 70" standard by which autism and intellectual disabilities are measured, and, as part of the Innovative Youth Wellness Program, expand Applied Behaviour Analysis past grade three.

5.3.5 Eliminate the Failed "No Zero" Policy

Liberals believe soft standards, like the "no zero" policy, benefit no one. The key to a bright future for the province's children is a robust and challenging education. We will ensure that assessments reflect the quality of each student's classwork and homework. Schools will receive the full support of a New Liberal Government in administering more rigorous standards in the work assigned for our province's students.

A New Liberal Government will eliminate the "no zero" policy.

5.3.6 Expand Access and Opportunities for Co-op Education

A vital component of education is preparing young people to be productive, successful members of the workforce. For many jobs in this tech-driven era, employers are increasingly seeking candidates who have significant work experience. Co-operative education is an opportunity for young people to gain the practical, hands-on experience required to excel in the workforce. Co-operative education is also an opportunity to foster a spirit of innovation among Newfoundland and Labrador youth – a cultural shift that will be vital as the next generation enters the workforce.

Although the province has several co-op education courses on the books, enrolment in recent years has dropped to zero. A New Liberal Government will encourage participation in co-operative education. This encouragement will include training and re-training programs for teachers, expanded resources for schools, and an awareness campaign for students.

5.3.7 Enhance Teacher Education

Teachers have tremendous commitment and expertise. Research shows that the skilled and caring interaction between teacher and student is the most important factor in student success. However, teachers in the province and elsewhere have felt that their training does not fully prepare them for certain realities and demands of teaching. Important advances in teacher education have been made in other jurisdictions. These include providing much more time in schools and classrooms, increased roles for teacher mentors, enhanced school-university partnerships, and other initiatives to promote real-world experience.

A New Liberal Government is committed to working with Memorial University to enhance teacher training programs through innovative, research-proven initiatives.

5.3.8 Improve Educational Facilities

Liberals are committed to providing excellent learning opportunities in excellent facilities. Liberals understand that modern schools must be safe and healthy, and must provide exemplary learning facilities in science, the arts, physical education, and other instructional areas. Liberals also believe in developing school grounds as areas of learning and play, which can be accessed for outdoor learning. A New Liberal Government will work to address issues of aging facilities throughout the province.

5.3.9 Review Busing Distances

Current regulations deny bus service to children who live closer than 1.6 kilometres from the school they attend. This policy has raised safety concerns among parents, especially for younger children, and also affects the extent to which children are able to participate in extracurricular activities.

A New Liberal Government will review the distance criteria for school bus service eligibility, and implement a more flexible policy that meets the needs of students and parents.

5.4 IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

5.4.1 Maintain a Tuition Freeze for Newfoundland and Labrador Residents

Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic were founded in order to provide high-quality, affordable education to people in Newfoundland and Labrador. Recognizing that the province's future depends on having a well-educated population, a New Liberal Government will maintain the tuition freeze for resident students at both of Newfoundland and Labrador's public post-secondary institutions. Keeping tuition low means more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be able to access post-secondary education – and that is a critical priority for Liberals.

5.4.2 Expand Research Funding and Programming to Foster Economic Growth

Memorial University, Grenfell Campus, the Marine Institute, and the College of the North Atlantic are well known for being leaders in ocean technology, engineering, business, and other industries specific to our region. A New Liberal Government will provide support to Newfoundland and Labrador's public post-secondary institutions to expand research and educational programming in fields that foster economic growth for the province. The goal will be to increase the province's profile as a global leader in these industries, and to facilitate the development of a skilled workforce to support them.

5.4.3 Partner with the Federal Government to Renew Post-Secondary Infrastructure

Newfoundland and Labrador has a world-class post-secondary education system. But some of the facilities at campuses throughout the province are aging and in need of renewal. A New Liberal Government will work in concert with the federal government to secure the resources needed to refurbish the facilities at Memorial University and at the College of the North Atlantic.

5.4.4 Develop an Adult Literacy Strategy

The 2012 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) survey found that adults in our province scored below the Canadian and international average. No province scored lower in reading or mathematical literacy. Liberals believe in the merits of lifelong learning, and a New Liberal Government will develop an Adult Literacy Strategy.

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