

Green Party of Nova Scotia

2009 Platform

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Message from Green Leader Ryan Watson

The Green Party has a vision for Nova Scotia: prosperity and abundance, community strength, and ecological wealth far into the future. We have a vision of a unified province, thriving through the challenges of the 21st century, and we champion the practical policies that will make this vision a reality, one step at a time.

Being Green is not just about the environment. Being Green is about our families and communities. Being Green is planning for our future. When you think about doing more for your world, you are thinking Green. When you take that extra step to do something well, with precision and intelligence, you are acting Green. When you reach out a helping hand to your neighbours and friends in tough times, you are living the heart of what the Green Party strives for.

This Green Party platform offers a comprehensive approach to the issues affecting the lives of Nova Scotians. It is based on sound principles and holistic thinking. It does not make unrealistic claims. This platform speaks the truth.

We're in the middle of a global economic crisis, yet wonderful opportunities are right in front of us. We can bring new industry and thousands of green jobs to Nova Scotia. We can follow through on our commitments to sustainable prosperity.

We need a clear-eyed realism from government as we invest our resources for the good of Nova Scotia. We need to rapidly increase our production of renewable energy, strengthen the local farming sector, and build our green industries. While we grow our sustainable economy, we must also move to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, reduce our consumption, and reduce our waste.

We can do more for ourselves, our communities, our province and our world. But we must work together. It's time to come together with a unified voice: a Green voice for a vibrant, prosperous Nova Scotia.

With hope for our future,

Ryan Watson
Leader, Green Party of Nova Scotia

Green Party Strategies

The Green Party of Nova Scotia recognizes the intricate connections of a healthy environment, conservative use of our natural resources, thriving communities, and a sustainable economy. We consider that people's needs are best served in community where they are cared for and connected to each other.

The Green Party welcomes the 2007 *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* and the *Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index (GPI)* as consistent with our goals. We will incorporate full-cost accounting, using the *GPI* as a primary measure and a planning guide for economic progress, recognizing that further work on the *GPI* is planned to include other key dimensions important to the Green Party, such as arts and culture, housing, and governance.

Progress toward sustainable long-term prosperity and well-being requires protection and strengthening of social and environmental assets and termination of damaging activities. The Green Party is committed to work toward reduced exposures to hazardous chemicals and to minimize additional ionizing radiation for all Nova Scotians. The Green Party will apply the precautionary principle with respect to potential exposures for workers, the public, and ecosystems of the province, for their protection and the protection of future generations.

The Green Party platform presents strategies for prosperity through ecological and community well-being and addresses some key issues for Nova Scotians

Natural Resources Utilization and Protection

The Green Party is dedicated to the establishment and maintenance of a focus on the respectful, efficient, and conservative use of our natural resources. A healthy environment is fundamental to healthy communities and a secure livelihood.

Developments and broadly based utilizations of our natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, need to be evaluated within a comprehensive provincial strategy, incorporating environmental, social, and economic considerations. The acceptability of the utilization of a natural resource at a given location must be evaluated from both the technical and social perspectives.

The Green Party will

- ❖ work with Nova Scotians to effect a comprehensive provincial strategy on natural resources which
 - uses the Genuine Progress Index as the economic tool for assessment and planning,
 - incorporates recent progressive programs and interdepartmental cooperation,
 - ensures meaningful citizen participation

- ❖ plans and works toward clean air, water security, food security, energy security, and reduced exposure to hazardous chemicals and minimize additional ionizing radiation for all Nova Scotians
- ❖ sets a priority on completion of a protected areas network and protection of species at risk
- ❖ investigates opportunities to buy Nova Scotia's natural spaces, and where Crown ownership exists Crown ownership would be retained
- ❖ endeavors to increase Nova Scotian's input and encourage Nova Scotian companies to participate in developments that are consistent with the comprehensive provincial strategy
- ❖ works to establish strong links across provincial government departments to ensure that the policy framework and the regulations relevant to natural resource utilization and to management plans for protected areas address biodiversity, water, soils and other natural resources in an holistic manner as well as the resource specific considerations.
- ❖ works with federal and municipal governments to improve the manufactures' responsibility for the lifetime stewardship of their products
- ❖ pressure the federal government to review international trade agreements and remove Canada from those that limit how we are permitted to use capital or natural resources; or limit our ability to use our governance and economic institutions to more adequately care for one another and our environment

The Green Party will work to ensure that:

- the province's resource utilization policies clarify the provincial needs, the export intent, and the options and priorities as they relate to the comprehensive provincial strategy, including the benefits of the resources in their natural form and place
- regulator requirements must protect human and non-human life, and not be minimized to meet the feasibility limits of the technology associated with a development
- the values of the local community are respected and included in the principles that guide decisions in rural development
- the social and economic needs of rural communities are fairly addressed by an equitable provincial sharing and no area is open to the pressures of accepting an unwanted development because of economic desperation.
- new and existing utilizations of natural resources must have broad public support
- policies are supported by adequate enforcement

- a process is established whereby citizens can call for an existing utilization to be assessed for ethical, social, environmental, and technical compliance
- any new project would be developed within a sound ethical and social assessment framework; as well as scientific and technical assessment.

The Green Party will require that **any development** must be evaluated from environmental, social, and economic considerations to ensure:

- priorities within the comprehensive provincial strategy are met
- protection of the environment, with the precautionary principle applied
- enforceable responsibility for mitigation and repair of any environmental damage
- equitable sharing of economic benefits
- efficient and conservative use of our natural resources
- responsibility to future generations, including consideration of long-term and cumulative impacts
- evaluations based on a sufficient baseline of information, requiring evaluation of interrelations of factors
- meaningful citizen participation in decision-making
- cooperation and information sharing
- accountability of those in positions of power.

The Green Party will require that ***new projects involving innovation*** must:

- be thoroughly evaluated with the precautionary principle applied
- present modeling based on sound science and realistic data
- include thorough and participatory scenario analysis
- be considered in comparison with the risk, costs, and benefits of other options, including the benefits of the resources in their natural form and place
- be advanced by a stable and trustworthy proponent
- be overseen by a trustworthy regulator
- be proven sufficiently robust and flexible to meet regulator requirements
- be assessed on their capacity to be incremental and reversible
- include transparency about the uncertainty and lack of knowledge
- be assessed by communities of concern, including civil society to determine the social acceptability of an innovation, including the “acceptability” of the level of risk that the technical assessment forecasts, and individual rights must not be abused; further this process needs to acknowledge that promotional propaganda is not education and citizen rejection does not equate to ignorance
- include required payment of royalties by the proponent of innovative projects on Crown land
- include a requirement of adequate fees, set to a level sufficient for remediation (including a trust fund reflecting the uncertainty and mitigation), research as appropriate, compensation for those most directly affected by a share of harm or damage, and support systems for start-up of local associated businesses and training for local jobs where appropriate

- ensure government agencies regulating innovative products or project are clearly independent from the developers and that government regulation ensure that innovative technologies are not used as a tool for increasing corporate control over essentials, like food and water. In particular, the poor and marginalized must be protected from negative consequences of employing innovative technologies or products.

Community Health and Prosperity

The Green Party of Nova Scotia understands that in order to build and sustain a self-reliant and prosperous province, the basic needs of every Nova Scotian must first be met in their own communities in equitable and inclusive ways. We embrace social justice and respect for diversity as two of our six core principles; and in that, we acknowledge that effective social policy cannot be implemented using a one-size-fits-all framework.

The Green Party will

- ❖ start a dialogue with Nova Scotians to formulate a comprehensive social strategy which
 - ensures that their basic health, education, and economic needs are met within or near their home communities
 - considers the geography, population, and natural resource base of their communities
 - incorporates successful non-governmental programs and recommendations from grassroots community organizations
- ❖ plan and work towards a comprehensive housing and poverty-reduction strategy, a decentralized health care system, a modernized education plan, and a community advancement program which nurtures self-reliance and cultural competency
- ❖ explore opportunities to invest in local innovation, agriculture, and infrastructure
- ❖ endeavor to engage Nova Scotians in participatory action and self-advocacy within their home communities
- ❖ work to establish an intra-governmental network to reduce duplication of services, confusion of departmental responsibility and bureaucratic processes which often interfere with the effective and efficient delivery of government social services
- ❖ collaborate with federal and municipal governments on issues which cut across all three levels of governance.

The Green Party will work to ensure that:

- the province's social strategy recognizes that before we can achieve 'sustainable prosperity' as laid out in the *Weaving the Threads* document, the basic needs of the citizens must be met and secured. Before we can ask Nova Scotians to invest their "individual capacity" into their communities, we must first ensure that they have secure access to affordable shelter, nutritious food, clean water and air, and a fair wage.
- local and imported cultures are respected and included in the principles that guide decisions in community development
- the delivery of social services and resources to rural communities are equitably and directly distributed to those communities

- the wage gap between men and women is closed so that wages are determined by their true market value, rather than by the politics of gender
- Nova Scotians who receive post-secondary training have a multitude of employment options within Nova Scotia, which are as enticing as those offered outside of the province
- a process of two-way communication is established using internet technology whereby citizens can monitor and participate in the political decision-making process at the provincial and local level.

In an effort to enrich our understanding of our communities, the Green Party recommends:

- implementation of a broad and intensive needs-assessment for every community in Nova Scotia by gathering and analyzing demographic, epidemiological and geographic data
- conducting a cost-benefit analyses on existing mechanisms of social service delivery to determine whether or not they are the best ways to do so.

Key Issues

Aboriginal Affairs

The Green Party of Nova Scotia recognizes that the Aboriginal peoples have suffered historic injustice as a result of the colonization of Nova Scotia and dispossession of their lands and resources, and that injustices continue to this day.

The Green Party acknowledges a responsibility to repair relationships and address the continuing inequities relating to prosperity and community well-being, including support for health, housing, education, language, culture, economic opportunities, and access to and control of resources and positions of power.

❖ The Green Party supports

- comprehensive action on issues affecting the Aboriginal communities, with the direct participation and empowerment of Aboriginal communities through processes designed by those communities, on an on-going basis
- the rights of Aboriginal Self-determination
- allocation of government funding to Aboriginal communities, for the purpose of managing those areas of land and the waters to which they are connected, with the administration of these funds to be based on the principles of self-determination and conservation
- up-dated heritage protection legislation and funding to protect Aboriginal heritage
- recognition of the Aboriginal ownership of cultural property on land and within institutions, and ensure Aboriginal control and management of that cultural property
- the inclusion of Aboriginal history and culture in the core program in Nova Scotia's schools, and the introduction of courses that include both Western and Aboriginal perspectives in science and other subject areas
- new opportunities for economic and cultural development within Nova Scotia's Aboriginal community
- the right of Aboriginal peoples to be involved in the design of and the management of the delivery of their health, justice, and education services
- respect for Aboriginal communities' treatment, prevention, and healing programs

- a dedicated unit within the provincial government, to ensure social justice principles are employed by all government departments in policy formulation and service provision, with special reference to the needs and interests of the Aboriginal communities
- processes whereby the conservation movement, farming community, fishers, developers, and others consult with and work with the Aboriginal communities on resource utilization issues
- pressure on the federal government to accept the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Agriculture

The Green Party of Nova Scotia understands that the corporate ethic of ever-increasing profit is untenable, and will focus on sustainability with a reasonable level of profit security for farmers through a program of investment in the broadest sense.

Nova Scotia needs to support its agricultural sector, ensuring that producers, harvesters, and food processors are able to make an adequate livelihood, and that agricultural production, harvesting, and food processing can be environmentally sustainable. Agriculture is an important part of our economy through direct, indirect, and induced benefits to Nova Scotia.

The Green Party places particular emphasis on organic production. We know that investment in organic food production triples, as it is also an investment in a healthier environment and a healthy population.

There is more value in a local food item than the price tag on a product. There is confidence in the control of the safety and quality of the product, the contribution to food security, reassurance of observance of human rights, support for ecologically sound agriculture, and participation in sustainable communities in Nova Scotia. The Green Party will support these values of agriculture in Nova Scotia as a priority over a multi-national profit margin.

- ❖ The Green Party approach for supporting our agricultural sector will involve
 - establishing a more comprehensive food security strategy (see Food Security in this document)
 - reversing some historic and recent trends
 - building on existing successful policies and programs
 - introducing innovation at many levels.

- ❖ The Green Party will work to
 - address provincial policies and urge changes in federal policies to ensure that policies and programs subsidize, support, and promote the family farm as central to a successful agricultural program, a vibrant sustainable agricultural community, a healthy province, and a healthy country

 - establish a food policy council, with broad representation, as an advisory body to the Premier on the many food related issues that cross various provincial departments and related issues that are influenced by federal policy and programs

 - ensure that policy and the level of support reflect the value of the primary food producers as the foundation of the agricultural sector

 - in consultation with the farming community, build on existing provincial programs such as *The Farm Investment Fund* and *the Environmental Farm Plan*, *Select Nova Scotia* and the *Direct Marketing Community Development Trust*, *Strategic Infrastructure and Department of Agriculture Infrastructure*

- set provincial economic assistance to more justly meet the needs of primary food producers and pressure the federal government to alter their economic assistance to multinational corporations involved in food production, processing and distribution which has led to corporate concentration and control in the marketplace and disempowerment of the primary producers
- have supply management and orderly marketing plans that are designed for and supported by primary producers, with fair treatment of the smaller producers
- look at alternative economic directions and examine funding models and assistance models already in place in other countries which could ensure a reasonable return for farmers productive activities and opportunities to recoup costs for good land stewardship, food security, the rural cultural landscape, and other ecological goods
- reverse the trend that has taken processing and value-added food products away from Nova Scotia communities and have the value-added processing done in the province
- ensure humane treatment of farm animals and take action to reduce distress, injury, and mortality resulting from long transport to abattoir by supporting investment in local slaughter facilities, including facilities capable of handling meats for specialty markets
- place the priority on the local, provincial, and regional markets and work regionally to buffer the Atlantic agricultural community from the market forces exerted from outside the region
- consult with the agricultural community to determine the steps needed to encourage and facilitate the entry of young people into the agricultural sector, and take those steps
- maintain and improve services and infrastructure, and invest in infrastructure for processing, storing, and distributing food
- ensure better supply management for food security, including affordable grain and plant based animal feed; establish an “agricultural land for food first not fuel” policy in the province
- bring food providers and consumers closer together to facilitate building connections, a strong community culture of celebrating food, and greater resilience in farm communities
- explore and establish protection mechanisms province wide for the agricultural land resource to preserve and restore the land, including more support for

environmental stewardship of the land, legal protection from non-agricultural development, and the option of an agricultural land trust as a public investment

- require an evaluation of the soil and property and an assessment of the use of the property in the food security strategy before allowing non-agricultural use of marginal agricultural land
 - assist farmers to successfully transition to new products or new markets, especially organic products and integrated farming with crop and livestock production, and support transition away from water intensive crops to sustainable crops in the face of climate change
 - develop with farmers innovative ways and means by which farm businesses can gain a fair share from the local and export markets
 - provide incentives and feed-in tariffs to support transition to renewable energy on a local level combined with farming
- ❖ To further stimulate the local marketing, the Green Party will support
- hands-on agricultural education in the public school system.
 - school cafeterias supplied with local foods, and a buy-local purchasing priority for all institutional food services
 - more investment in and support for organic farming, cooperative marketing initiatives, community supported agriculture and local farm markets
 - expand the marketing programs which endeavor to encourage and facilitate the purchase of local products
 - consumer education about the importance of access to secure, safe, sustainable, wholesome, locally grown food
 - effective local food networks that support local production, processing, distribution, and consumption locally and regionally
 - a moratorium on the use of bio-solids for application on farmland until it is proven safe in a public assessment process and demonstrated not to influence the public acceptance of food grown on land treated with bio-solids.
- ❖ The Green Party will pressure the federal government to
- stop permitting produce and products into Canada that would not meet Canadian standards and requirements had they been produced in Canada, including safety, environmental, and human rights standards; this trade practice puts our farmers at a market-price disadvantage and puts the citizens at risk.
 - fund and promote public agricultural research, ensuring that food varieties and related research developed with mainly public resources remain public property; and that agricultural communities are part of the pre-commercial R&D team and supported financially as team members.

Clean Air

The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports the right of human and other biological communities to clean air. While acknowledging the limitations for effective provincial control due to the regional and global impacts on air quality, the Green Party recognizes that we can do more in this province.

- ❖ The Green Party will work toward a comprehensive strategy for clean air that incorporates intergovernmental cooperation to meet the goals for air quality set out in the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*.
- ❖ Toward this goal of clean air, some of the specific actions supported by the Green Party principles include:
 - respect the role of vegetation, land forms, and aquatic systems in our air quality and reflect their value within cost-benefit assessments and relevant legislation and regulations
 - acknowledge the key role in air quality played by natural forests and take corrective action through regulations on forestry practices and promotion of protection on private and Crown land
 - initiate corrective actions in biologically impoverished areas to promote healthy plant biodiversity
 - promote conversion of inanimate surfaces to healthy vegetation through education on options for residence, business, and institutional properties
 - reduce our electricity reliance on fossil fuels through energy efficiency, energy conservation, and the increasing utilization of appropriate applications of renewable energies
 - take steps to reduce the impact of our transportation system on air quality
 - require industrial users to meet higher standards of air quality prior to exhausting or otherwise distributing their gaseous and particulate wastes
 - educate Nova Scotians on radon issues and have testing and remediation services identified; test for radon and take corrective action in all government buildings, schools, and institutions
 - take an airshed approach to air quality and co-operate regionally, nationally and internationally toward clean air.

Climate Change

The Green Party recognizes that both misuse of the living surfaces of the planet and energy choices play a significant role in the present climate instability. The *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* requires that the province reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a level at least 10% below 1990 levels by 2020. While a number of gases contribute to global warming, the situation with carbon dioxide is of particular concern.

The carbon cycle, one of life's sustaining systems, is out of balance. We need carbon dioxide in our atmosphere but the concentration is elevated and continuing to rise, with planetary consequences. We have released too much carbon dioxide, particularly through the use of fossil fuels, at the same time as we have reduced Earth's ability to absorb carbon oxide by our destruction of plant communities, particularly forests.

An important factor in the rising carbon dioxide levels is the loss of biologically diverse vegetation to biologically impoverished or inanimate cover. Failure to protect terrestrial and aquatic flora communities from toxins, over-use, and destruction has significant impacts on carbon dioxide levels as well as other negative impacts on all life cycles.

Carbon dioxide from our use of fossil fuels for energy has been identified as a major contributor to the carbon cycle imbalance. However, evaluating energy choices is not just about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As well as addressing climate change issues, the goal is to reduce the environmental, health, and security risks of our energy choices. Also, our energy options must be assessed from starting materials to waste products.

❖ The Green Party supports dedicated efforts toward

- energy conservation, co-generation, and improved energy efficiency
- increased development and use of sustainable, renewable energy
- a decentralization of electricity production to increase individual and community self-sufficiency in power
- absolute caps on Nova Scotia Power
- improved public and alternate transportation
- regulations for lower fuel consumption and emissions for new vehicles
- improved energy efficiency and lower water consumption in buildings (LEED certification)
- development of plans and tools for adaptation to climate change with
 - proactive support to communities for mitigation of climate instability
 - land use regulations for coastal areas that address the impacts of climate change
 - preparedness for “100 year events” to happen with greater frequency
 - a provincial agency established to research and co-ordinate adaptation across provincial government departments, and with municipalities and the federal government

- ❖ The Green Party
 - would not permit electricity generated by nuclear power to be imported under the Climate Change Action Plan
 - has serious concerns about bio-fuels and would promote agricultural land use for food first not fuel
 - considers the suggestion in the Climate Change Action Plan of the use of forest biomass for electricity generation as counterproductive in addressing climate change
 - supports the establishment of an independent efficiency agency to administer the demand side management for electricity

- ❖ The Green Party respects the dedicated work of a great many Nova Scotians that lead to the Climate Change Action Plan, however, that Plan does not address corrective action for damage to ecosystems that resulted in the province's reduced capacity to absorb carbon dioxide. The Green Party includes corrective action for the loss of plant communities under several Key Issues. Some of the actions include:
 - relevant legislation and regulations that reflect the value of forests, diverse vegetation, and aquatic systems in countering climate change through their role in the carbon cycle
 - the inclusion of this value within cost-benefit assessments, environmental assessments, and measures of progress
 - conversion of biologically impoverished areas and inanimate surfaces to healthy diverse vegetation, including options for built structures, private lots, and Crown land
 - protection of a connected network of biologically diverse habitats, including significant stands of maturing forests.

Creativity

In this time of rapidly changing social, economic, and technological circumstances, creativity is essential in order to flourish in any field. New technologies and industries will require creative thinking, and artists can provide new and imaginative perspectives that can lead to more innovative approaches.

The Green Party recognizes that

- artists make significant contributions to our culture, to the aesthetic aspects of the built environment, and to our economy
- enjoyment of others' arts and outlets for our own creativity are essential to our mental health and well-being
- schools have been a traditional center for music, theatre, and other creative community activities and that vibrant community life is compromised with the loss of local schools.

Therefore the Green Party supports

- a dependable fund for the Nova Scotia Arts Counsel
- a budget for art in the planning of any public building project
- programs to select and maintain examples of our built heritage
- funding for visual art, music, dance, and drama as classes in the school curriculum as well as the integration of creative thinking and expression, across the curriculum at all grade levels
- review of the consolidation of schools using full cost accounting that values the contribution of local schools to individual, family, and community well-being.

Education

The Green Party of Nova Scotia is committed to the principles of lifelong learning. From preschool through post-secondary to Seniors, we recognize the importance of education for providing the stimulation and tools for everyone to participate successfully in society. Education is one of the building blocks for a prosperous sustainable future.

We understand that educating youth to succeed in the 21st century economy requires the development of innovative curriculum and investment in new technologies for classrooms across the province. We also understand new technologies in the classroom need to be paired with professional development for teachers, to ensure they are acquainted with the best practices for using these high-tech tools. These requirements put a demand on smaller local schools

The Green Party is concerned that the benefits of these local schools are not being fully valued in closure decisions. Schools are at the heart of a community. Local schools provide better integration of educational programs with parents and caregivers, facilitate access to extra-curricular activities, and provide many important services to their communities including space for vibrant community events.

The Green Party recognizes that growing numbers of Nova Scotia children and youth require additional assistance in their classrooms and communities. We believe the school should be a place of whole-child development. In addition to traditional curriculum, children and youth require training in social, emotional and psychological literacy. By establishing a formal interdepartmental strategy involving the social services, health, and education departments, educators will be provided with the support required to address more of their students' needs.

- ❖ The Green Party calls for a comprehensive public education strategy that:
 - upholds the principles of lifelong learning, and addresses the educational needs of all citizens
 - supports teachers and public school administrators in rural, urban, and suburban community schools
 - addresses the challenges of implementing standardized curriculum with diverse populations of learners and in varied facilities
 - engages children and youth with their communities in meaningful ways.

Such an education strategy would:

- be developed through broad consultation with parents, teachers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, academics, psychologists, *and students*
- be an inter-departmental strategy which weaves together education, health and community services to nurture whole-child development and learning
- encourage excellence among teachers, school administrators and paraprofessionals who are, themselves, committed to lifelong learning and professional development

- explore alternative models of educating children with special learning needs and developmental disorders, toward discovering curriculum options designed to maximize their potential for healthy and complete integration into the community
- be designed to ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to education within or near their home communities
- ensure the equitable distribution of resources and technology among all schools in the province
- ensure that all new schools being built are energy and water efficient
- work to creatively and meaningfully engage children and youth with their communities through school sponsored volunteerism and programs which cultivate respect for cultural and biodiversity
- utilize online collaborative technology to encourage parents, students, and teachers across the province to communicate, connect and share their best practices, creative endeavors and cultural realities.

The Green Party of Nova Scotia also calls for a full evaluation of post-secondary student financing which would encompass:

- the effects of student debt on the long-term financial security of graduates and the province
- a cost-benefit analysis of additional funding directed to lower tuition at Nova Scotia's universities.

Electoral Reform

The Green Party of Nova Scotia sees that Nova Scotian democracy would benefit by reducing the financial barriers to running for political office, decision-making with meaningful participation of the citizens, and change to a voting system that more fairly translates people's votes into representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Green Party will support

- a comprehensive study with citizen participation into electoral systems used around the world to designing several models suitable to Nova Scotia that are proportional and fairer than our current system
- the distribution of adequate information and educational opportunities on the various types of election processes recommended through the comprehensive study
- ballot question to voters at the next provincial election on whether they want to change our voting system and which one of the options, prepared by the Citizen's Assembly, they prefer
- fixed election dates permitting political stability and fair elections
- a review of government ethical conduct and accountability mechanisms

Energy Security

Fossil fuel energy has been the driving force since the Industrial Revolution. With the environmental impact of rising levels of greenhouse gases and the level of dependence on insecure sources of fossil fuels in Nova Scotia, the time to transition to secure renewable energy is now.

Nova Scotia gets most of its electricity by burning imported coal. Not only does this produce greenhouse gases and other air contaminants, the importation does not give the province a secure source, and much of the coal is imported from mining companies associated with serious human-rights abuses.

Natural gas from Nova Scotia's Offshore is mostly exported to the New England States. Production from the Sable gas field is producing export royalties rather than being distributed widely to Nova Scotians. The Sable field is expected to play out in about 2012. The Deep Panuke field will carry the supply starting at about this time but will itself play out in approximately 2020. There is no security in these supplies. Millions of dollars have been invested and the Nova Scotia's 2009 Energy Strategy reports that plans are to continue to invest millions in Offshore petroleum and promoting Onshore petroleum, even though success in Offshore exploration is uncertain and Onshore gas production from unconventional fields like shale and coal is uncertain.

Transportation presents itself as a serious problem as it is the largest user of refined petroleum products in the province. The province does not have an affordable public transportation over much of its area and it offers little for safe, effective bike use.

The switch to alternate energy sources in Nova Scotia should begin as soon as possible. Conservation is by far the cheapest and most doable step. There is also great potential in co-generation, where energy, especially heat that would normally be wasted from a commercial operation, is recovered for use.

- ❖ The Green Party will work to promote conservation, energy efficiency, and co-generation as cost effective steps that can be taken immediately.

Tidal power is in its infancy. While we, like many are hopeful, assessment of tidal power has not been done yet to meet the standard set by Green Party principles.

- ❖ The Green Party will work to ensure that the potential development of tidal power meets the environmental, social, and ethical considerations outlined under the strategy "Natural Resources Utilization and Protection" including the additional requirements in that framework for *new projects involving innovation*.*

Wind can be one of our largest sources of secure energy. The wind is intermittent, however, Electric Thermal Storage can be an option for power storage as heat to be used in low wind conditions. Heat can be stored for long periods of time with this technology. It is imperative to address now the concerns that have been raised by citizens about present installations and

establish the conditions under which Nova Scotians will welcome wind developments, which are clearly different for a single installation than for a wind farm.

- ❖ The Green Party will require a comprehensive study using the assessment framework for innovative projects*, with public participation, on the environmental concerns, the risk of health impacts and other social consideration, and the levels of uncertainty in this data. The outcome of the study would establish policies and regulation, guided by precautionary principle.

Solar is a renewable energy source that can help replace fossil fuels. Developments such as vacuum tube collectors for solar hot water systems and round PV cells are advancing this technology. Solar is an intermittent power source. Advances in battery technology, and with passive solar, advances in thermal mass storage, will help with this problem.

- ❖ The Green Party will promote solar (passive, hot water, and photovoltaic) and support its development for building retro fits and new constructions.
- ❖ The Green Party will move decisively and work deliberately to increase the energy security of the province. We will support dedicated efforts to increase our electricity security:
 - stimulate our green energy industry by implementing feed-in tariffs that guarantee a fair price for local producers of renewable energy.
 - provide government guarantees for loans to reduce the cost of financing for qualifying* renewable energy projects, particularly wind and solar
 - upgrade transmission infrastructure to enable greater renewable energy capacity
 - decentralization electricity production to increase individual and community self-sufficiency in power
 - support the establishment of an independent efficiency agency to administer the demand side management for electricity
- ❖ The Green Party will work to increase our heat security:
 - help Nova Scotians increase the heat efficiency of their homes through programs that subsidize efficiency renovations, particularly for lower income Nova Scotians
 - help renters to access options to increase their home heat efficiency
 - support the transition to renewable heat sources
 - create a strategic heating oil reserve for heating emergencies while we transition towards sustainable heat sources.
 - promote solar for hot water
 - require improved energy efficiency in new provincial building construction (to LEED certification)
- ❖ The Green Party will support action to increase the energy security of our transportation
 - immediately increase in funding for public transit to the Canadian per capita average
 - investment in rebuilding our rail system for cross province travel and movement of goods

- improved public and alternate transportation
- regulations for lower fuel consumption and emissions for new vehicles

*See the development assessment requirements in this platform under the Strategy “Natural Resources Utilization and Protection.”

Food Security

The Green Party of Nova Scotia views food as more than just a commodity or a component for international agri-business. Food is a necessity! Yet Nova Scotia has the highest household food insecurity rate in Canada.

❖ The Green Party welcomes the efforts of the Ministry of Health Promotion and Protection with several school-related policies to promote healthy eating and several programs to promote local foods, however we recognize that fundamental policies are missing that are necessary to correct the injustice of hunger and food insecurity in the province

❖ The Green Party principles call for an overarching strategy that addresses food issues across health, poverty prevention, agriculture, fisheries, and the environment. Such a food security strategy would

- be developed through broad consultation with all communities of interest
- be an interdepartmental program that integrates a sustainable food system with social equity, public health, economic vitality, and environmental health
- set out a comprehensive approach for analyzing issues and policy design which recognizes the inter-relation between different parts of the food system, environmental issues, and social considerations, and the need for coordination and integration of actions
- include a mechanism, such as a Premier's advisory council on food policy, for on-going broad-based input to all the departments that have an influence on or are influenced by food
- be designed to ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to and can afford sufficient nutritious, safe foods, and recognize that policies aimed at reducing poverty are critical
- ensure that all foods are harvested, produced, procured, distributed, and equitably-traded in ways that are environmentally sound, socially just, and sustainable
- establish programs that incorporate the role of food in disease prevention and healing, including the role of breast feeding and organic foods
- encourage, support, and promote local food production and consumption recognizing the importance of community self-reliance and economic development through innovative direct marketing and local processing methods
- protect the natural resource base to produce and sustain our food supply; ensure sustainable environmental, agricultural, and fishery practices; and require

assessment of food security impacts in development evaluations at municipal and provincial levels

- respect the knowledge of experienced local fishers and farmers and reject technologies that undermine or contaminate local food systems
- support secure fair livelihoods for and respect the work of all food providers
- provide assistance to primary producers including support to transition to new products and new markets;
- work with the federal government to correct the situation that grant programs for local foods are small in scale in comparison to those offered for industrial production
- seek to improve the energy efficiency in our own food system including investment in the infrastructure necessary to store and distribute local food production

Fisheries

The Green Party of Nova Scotia recognizes the complexity of the issues in the fisheries and the importance of the fisheries and marine resources to Nova Scotia's community life, food security, and prosperity. The Green Party supports policies and actions toward genuinely sustainable fisheries and healthy marine environments in Nova Scotia.

The Green Party supports:

- valuing experienced fishers' input into assessments of developments and competing uses of marine environments and respect for their rights
- providing assistance to fishers to transition to new products and new markets including converting to gear for sustainable fishing
- programs to encourage more young fishers and to address the inequity that fewer Nova Scotians are sharing in the increasing monetary output from Nova Scotia's fisheries
- increased promotion of the fisheries in buy-local initiatives
- protection of the remaining salt marshes and accelerated establishment of Marine Protected Areas
- an extended moratorium on oil and gas development on Georges Bank
- in cooperation with the federal department, rejection of destructive fishing practices and activities of other industries which damage fish habitat
- the use of the Genuine Progress Index to assess the sustainability of marine resource utilization and to guide appropriate policies and actions
- the cooperative development of a plan for sustainable management that will address among other issues:
 - the size and condition of fish stocks
 - the size, age, and species distribution in the catch
 - the impact of the catch on the ecological resilience in the marine ecosystems
 - marine species at risk
 - deterioration in the quality of the marine environment
 - the frequency and location of shellfish closures
 - the inequity in the monetary return for the fisher

Forestry

The Green Party of Nova Scotia is very concerned that Nova Scotia's forests have been degraded to the point that their ability is seriously compromised to perform a wide range of forest functions that protect our soils, watersheds, and climate, that promote biodiversity through habitat for species, that allow aesthetic and recreational opportunities, and that provide sustainable jobs and high quality, wide diameter, clear timber.

❖ The Green Party will work toward a comprehensive strategy to restore and protect the value of Nova Scotia's forests in meaningful consultation with all communities of interest, using the Genuine Progress Index as the measure for progress, incorporating interdepartmental cooperation, and ensuring full sharing of information including the Permanent Sample Plot data of the Department of Natural Resources.

❖ A comprehensive strategy consistent with Green Party principles would support

- the requirement that all Crown land in the province allocated for harvest is Forest Stewardship Council certified
- greater incentives to woodlot owners for investment in forest restoration including selective harvesting and forestry methods that restore the natural age distribution and species diversity in the forest
- support for private woodlot owner voluntary forestry certification standards
- sharp reduction in the volume of wood harvested annually and in clear-cutting, with no clear-cutting on Crown land
- incentives for the development of small-scale wood product industries, local manufacturing and value-added businesses to produce high-value wood products, and increase the number of jobs per unit of wood harvested
- immediate protection of all remaining old-growth forest, and of older forests with good potential to return to their old-growth state
- completion of an adequate network of representative protected areas in Nova Scotia in a manner that connects protected spaces, utilizing Crown land and land trust options to secure forestry habitats and encourage private land conservation

Health

The Green Party of Nova Scotia views health and wellness in a broad sense, emphasizing healthy communities, healthy lifestyles and a healthy environment, not just health care. Strategies to reduce toxins in our environment, address the social determinants of health, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices are important components of the Green Party's health plan.

The health of Nova Scotians is not only dependent on the health services they receive but on social policy that provides affordable housing, available employment, and accessible education. Health promotion is fiscally prudent and will lead to improved wellness and more affordable health care for Nova Scotians.

The Green Party strongly supports publicly funded health care, which should include both the removal of the financial barrier for the patient, and the reorganization and revamping of the health care social support system. The Green Party believes the Canadian single-payer system has the potential to be affordable, effective and provide care for all Nova Scotians. However, this system requires a change from the current reactive-focused health care system to the implementation of long-term strategies to promote health, prevent illness and build healthy communities.

The Green Party recognizes that in spite of large annual monetary commitments Nova Scotians are still facing several significant challenges to accessing the health care they need and want in their communities. Lack of family physicians, emergency room closures and long wait times, and high drug costs are all crucial challenges facing the health care system in Nova Scotia. The Green Party offers a vision to reform the current system, to tackle these issues and plan for viable, sustainable health care in Nova Scotia for generations to come.

To achieve the goal of healthy communities and sustainable health care services the Green Party will work to:

- increase financial support and incentives for multidisciplinary clinics and practices that team doctors with nurses, nurse practitioners, dieticians, psychologists, counselors, physiotherapists and other allied health care providers
- increase funding to Primary Health Care and Emergency Health Services in the province and ensure implementation of over capacity protocols for Emergency Rooms.
- complete assessments to identify focus areas to target with an increase in the budget of the Department of Health Promotion and Protection; the high cancer rate in Nova Scotia must be addressed
- Create broad incentives for the establishment of community-based nonprofit long-term care facilities to displace profit as the prime motivator in long-term care facilities and ensure that new facilities are being planned ahead of time to deal with the increasing elderly population before demand problems develop

- ensure development of multi-level Long-Term Care facilities to decrease the current cruel practice of separating couples who have different care needs
- enable funding of informal caregivers who provide assisted daily living in the home, and increase funding of home care services, to help seniors to stay in their homes and to enable family and friends to provide basic, compassionate care for loved ones without completely compromising income
- legislate full and open disclosure of all public-private partnership (P3) agreements for future development of health care facilities and ensure all future health care buildings meet the Green Hospital Checklist proposed by the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care
- ensure that the composition of hospital boards adequately represents health care professionals to empowers health practitioners at the local level and on the front lines to be more involved in decision making
- provide financial incentives to encourage doctors to practice in under-served communities
- take steps to ensure that citizens requiring mental health support can access the care they need: by decentralizing mental health services; increasing the ease of access to psychological and psychiatric services by installing mental health care professionals in community clinics across the province; reducing the need for GP referrals to access mental health care; and increasing funding and resource allocation to mental health advocacy groups working directly with people with mental health issues
- initiate stakeholder consultations on the best practices for the implementation of preventive and primary health care by family doctors, and other primary health providers with an emphasis on resolving risk factors to optimize chronic disease management removing the burden from the acute care system
- immediately begin construction of affordable housing in communities across the province to meet the needs of Nova Scotians, which will alleviate two of the social determinants of health, employment and housing, by providing jobs and ensuring all Nova Scotians have a place to live
- assist Nova Scotians to make healthy food choices, and support local agriculture and food producers
- assist communities to provide outlets for cultural, artistic, and physical activity
- initiate a province-wide ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides, to be accompanied with education on the dangers and the safe alternatives, and the potential for municipalities to enact additional by-laws that complement the provincial ban

- launch research and feasibility studies to examine the institution of provincial pharmacare coverage and a province wide health formulary so that first line affordable medications are available to all Nova Scotians
- re-examine the current system of remuneration of family physicians in the province to shift the focus onto promoting health and optimally treating chronic diseases rather than the historical payment model that emphasizes quantity but not quality of care.

Job Creation

Building the green economy and creating green jobs is a powerful, sustainable, and achievable solution to the economic and environmental challenges we face. We can provide long-term employment for thousands of Nova Scotians through rapidly expanding our renewable energy sector, developing sustainable transportation options, and increasing energy conservation.

These times of global economic upheaval require a government that will manage Nova Scotia's finances with the utmost care and intelligence. To address this crisis, we need to focus on budgetary measures that:

- ◆ create long-term jobs and business opportunities
- ◆ strengthen and develop our sustainable green economy
- ◆ focus on local small businesses, industries, and farms, and local markets

With a commitment to sustainable industries, sustainable employment, and sustainable outputs, the Green Party plan will create thousands of green jobs for Nova Scotians.

Renewable energy

The Green strategy for renewable energy includes:

- Feed-in-tariffs to guarantee a fair price for producers of renewable energy and to encourage individual and community investment toward greater energy self-sufficiency and a reduction on the base-load requirement
- Loan guarantee program to reduce the cost of borrowing for qualified projects
- Infrastructure upgrades to increase the ability of the grid to manage intermittent renewable energy, including smart grid technology

Action from government to move these areas forward will create a thriving industry, providing business opportunities and jobs for entrepreneurs, manufacturers, engineers, farmers, financial professionals, researchers, and others.

Sustainable Transportation

Nova Scotia has an urgent need to develop sustainable transportation. The first step is a comprehensive provincial plan. This plan must examine all options, including urban and rural public transit, inter-city rail, light rail options within HRM, and even the potential for ocean based transportation along the coasts.

Funding for sustainable transportation is a Green Party priority. Nova Scotia's support should at least match the Canadian average for provincial per capita funding (\$21).

Rebuilding our rail infrastructure and upgrading our public transit systems will provide substantial employment in the construction and manufacturing sectors and improved transportation will support local industries and farms.

Conservation

There is much work to be done to upgrade the efficiency of Nova Scotia's homes, particularly when it comes to heat loss. The existing EnerGuide program moves us in the right direction, but we must move much faster.

The Green plan for home energy efficiency builds on this program with:

- immediate steps to significantly increase the number of technicians certified to do energy efficiency audits
- investment in education for trades people
- distribution of information to home owners on the combined federal and provincial funding opportunities for energy conservation and efficiency
- expansion of the provincial program to identify and support energy conservation and efficiency options for renters.

These measures will support jobs in a thriving construction sector, and in related businesses.

Prosperity

The Green plan for provincial prosperity brings green industries to Nova Scotia not only to create local jobs and wealth, but also to provide secure sources of energy to Nova Scotians. Reliable access to energy is a cornerstone for economic sustainability. As fossil fuel resources deplete and prices become unstable, we need to secure our future with strong local production of renewable energy, viable transportation, and an increasing local food supply.

Minerals

Minerals as *non-renewable* resources require particular attention. The Green Party principles necessitate that any development, including mining and quarries, must be evaluated from environmental, social, and economic considerations in a process that ensures meaningful participation of all communities of interest, and includes a full cost accounting that recognizes the value of healthy ecosystems, vibrant communities, and a clean environment.

❖ The Green Party will work to ensure that there is a review to modernize the legislation and regulation regime regarding mining and quarries, and that it incorporates meaningful citizen participation. The Green Party will use a comprehensive approach to address a number of key issues:

- out-dated laws on mineral extraction that undermine landowners' rights
- incompatible land uses
- lack of meaningful input of community in decision-making,
- loss of non-renewable resources to export
- chemical pollution from mining operations
- legacy of problems from abandoned sites, and
- the potential for extraction and distribution of highly toxic substances
- loss of non-renewable resources for the use of future generations.

❖ The Green Party will not support extractive industries within the impact zone of protected areas or acknowledged candidate areas for protection.

❖ The Green Party does not support the One Window process whereby companies meet with government officials over an extended period and are assisted through the regulatory process before the public is consulted in a formal way. Meaningful participation of communities from the beginning and throughout the process is required in the Green Party's comprehensive strategy* for approval of developments.

❖ The Green Party principles support engaging the community in constructive dialogue in any review of and in the decision-making for any mining development. The province has deferred further approval of strip mining of coal in Cape Breton for three years pending review. The mining of coal is called into question based on the impacts of coal burning on air quality and climate change. The process of strip mining has its own set of particular environmental impacts. The Green Party supports

- a full review, by an independent panel with meaningful public participation, into the practice of strip mining in Nova Scotia, and
- a moratorium on considering new strip mining projects (i.e. no One Window preparatory proceedings during this period) pending the recommendations of that review.

❖ The Green Party understands that for quarry development, it is not only the size of quarry but also where it is located and what is to be quarried that influence the need for environmental assessment. The Green Party recommends revision of the 3.9 ha size limitation to require environmental assessment* on smaller developments based on the location and the resource.

- ❖ The Green Party will require that mine reclamation plans be assessed as part of the comprehensive assessment* of the mine proposal, and if the mine is approved, for full reclamation plans to be in place *before* active mining begins.

- ❖ The Green Party will encourage full recycling of metals and move to require life-cycle product stewardship of metals, shifting any subsidies to the mining sector into support for metal recycling within the provincial Waste Management programs.

- ❖ The Green Party principles support a legislated ban on uranium exploration and mining. Uranium mining could not pass the Green Party environmental, social, and economic assessment process:*

 - uranium exploration and mining, and subsequent milling involve immediate and long-term releases of radiation, and chemically toxic, radioactive substances which can contaminate air, soil, watersheds, and wells, and carry a risk of cancers, genetic damage, and other health damage to the workers, the public, and non-human life.

 - uranium mining is an issue within the complex of problems with nuclear power, including extremely hazardous nuclear fuel wastes, the risks of proliferation of military nuclear capability, and the military applications of depleted uranium that expose the environment, civilian populations, and military personnel to a radioactive, chemically toxic by-product of civilian nuclear power.

*See the Green Party full assessment strategy, “Natural Resources Utilization and Protection.”

Poverty

The Green Party of Nova Scotia recognizes that a plan to build healthy sustainable communities must include a comprehensive strategy that addresses all aspects of poverty in Nova Scotia – its causes and effects. Before we expect Nova Scotians to become active social and economic investors in their communities, we must first ensure that they have secure access to affordable shelter, nutritious food, clean water, and a fair wage.

The Green Party acknowledges the efforts of government departments and non-governmental organizations towards the relief of poverty in Nova Scotia. We support the initiatives highlighted in the document *Preventing Poverty, Promoting Prosperity*, however we recognize that fundamental policies are missing from this Poverty Reduction Strategy. While poverty reduction strategies are important for immediate relief, in a province wealthy with natural resources and social capital, we should be working towards the elimination of poverty.

Addressing poverty in our communities requires the collaborative effort of all government departments, along with thoughtful, considered policies and flexible service delivery.

- ❖ The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports a poverty strategy which:
 - is informed by multiple stakeholders from the public and private sectors, along with community organizations and the citizens affected by poverty
 - places affordable and suitable housing, food security, and equitable remuneration as the centerpiece
 - sets realistic measurable targets, timelines and budgets which is accountable through evaluation and results reporting
 - initiates policies informed by current research on the social indicators of health
 - creates an infrastructure of support in the home communities of those living in poverty
 - employs compassion and understanding as well as fiscal responsibility
 - works to address and respond to the effects of poverty on physical, mental and community health.

- ❖ The Green Party encourages the development of a housing strategy which:
 - works to reduce class divisions in our communities by the strategic integration of affordable housing units, and to avoid the clustering of poverty
 - is community-centred and integrates supportive and financial assistance into its plan

- recognizes the difference between providing shelter and providing suitable, secure housing
 - addresses the complex housing needs of those living on the streets and suffering from a multitude of mental health issues
 - recognizes the CMHC 30% definition of affordable housing and works to bring affordable housing in line with this threshold based on the actual average earning of low-income Nova Scotians.
- ❖ The Green Party supports a comprehensive food security program as outline as a Key Issue in this document. Such a program would include these aspects and more:
- be designed to ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to and can afford sufficiently nutritious and safe foods
 - encourage the development of rural and urban and community gardens
 - support local farmers markets as a source of affordable, nutritious food
 - promote breakfast programs and curriculum planning around the Canada Food Guide in our schools
 - directly support food banks and meal programs in rural and urban Nova Scotia
- ❖ The Green Party of Nova Scotia calls for an evaluation of wage standards which:
- examines wage inequities between male and female professionals
 - re-frames the concept of “minimum wage” into that of “living wage”
 - challenges employers to facilitate the healthy lifestyles of their employees
 - explores wage standards for Nova Scotians delivering essential services within our health and education systems

Water Security

The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports the right of human and other biological communities to clean water for all their diverse uses. Fundamental to water security is protection of surface water (fresh, brackish, and marine) and groundwater, and respect for the complexity of the water cycle and its primary role in maintaining life.

- ❖ The Green Party will work toward a strategy for water security that incorporates ecological integrity, sustainable management, equitable access, and efficient and conservative use.
- ❖ Toward this goal of water security, the Green Party principles support these actions:
 - set protection of watersheds as a priority
 - promote protection of riparian habitat as valued buffer areas around wetlands, water course and coastal water bodies through legislated requirements and education
 - take steps that ensure that shoreline communities and industries stop dumping untreated waste or insufficiently treated waste into rivers, lakes, and the ocean
 - establish legislation to prohibit the use of lakes and other water bodies as tailings impoundments
 - support a ban on bulk water export from Nova Scotia
 - promote water conservation and water efficient technologies
 - treat federal guidelines for drinking water quality as the minimum standards for secure clean drinking water; and require potable water be tested for chemical as well as biological standards as part of property sales
 - support the testing of wells for uranium as well as municipal water supplies
 - work with municipalities to improve infrastructure for water, and sewage and wastewater treatment
 - support municipalities to replace chlorination systems with oxygen-based systems, ultraviolet sterilization, sand filtration and other safe water purification systems
 - remove purchased bottled water from all government buildings and institutions, and install filtration on drinking water sources in these buildings to remove chlorine and chlorinated organics until municipal oxygen-based sterilization systems are installed
 - discourage water-wasting industrial technologies and move toward requiring that an industry's quality of exit water must equal or be better than the quality of its intake water
 - plan for water security and coastal protection in the face of climate change.