

The party of the 21st Century!



green
Party of Nova Scotia

Healthy Economy
Healthy Communities
Healthy Environment

Platform Document
Nova Scotia Election 2013



Nova Scotians are looking for political leadership. They are seeking a party that is willing to take some risks, a party that understands that the 20th century has come and gone, and that outdated models of governance are no longer relevant to 21st century issues.

The Green Party of Nova Scotia believes that a bright future for Nova Scotians hinges on a doctrine of a Healthy Economy, Healthy Communities, and a Healthy Environment. All three are essential ingredients for a sustainable way of life. Ignore one and the other two fail. It's time we started viewing our lives, our communities, and our natural surroundings as inextricably linked, and implement effective policies that recognize this fundamental truth.

We hear a lot of talk from other parties about the *Green* economy, *Green* energy, *Green* jobs, *Greening* the workplace. *Green* has become a generic buzzword now freely used to describe a concept of something new and desirable, yet somehow, remains ephemeral and mysteriously indescribable.

Mainstream politicians understand that *Green* means good and this means votes, but they have no effective implementation strategy. The best they can offer is to shave the square peg down to fit into the existing round hole. Greens say that's not good enough, and many more Nova Scotians have come to understand this as well.

It's time to vote for the 21st century party that understands the changes we need to implement to secure a healthy economy, healthy communities, and a healthy environment for all Nova Scotians – now and in the future.

Welcome to the 21st century! Welcome to a Green future!

John

John Percy, Leader

Healthy Economy

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. Greens insist that 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 concedes that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has its place as one type of measure of the economy; however, it is not useful in measuring progress or sustainability. We once again state our commitment to full cost accounting using the Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index. The Green Party shares the goals outlined in the province's Environmental and Sustainable Prosperity Act to value natural, human, and social capital as well as built and financial capital.

However, Greens do not agree with the treatment of these values as commodities to be traded against each other. Far too often, the term "balance" in decision-making has meant a trade-off, seriously undervaluing the natural, human, and social considerations, to push built and financial capital.

Many key social and natural assets are not valued in conventional balance sheets and a much broader range of real benefits and costs need to be included in our economic accounts. Full-cost accounting tracks produced material and financial capital as in conventional economic accounts, and in addition, it explicitly values human, social, and natural capital, recognizing that all these forms of capital require re-investment to maintain and enhance their value.

The integration of environmental goals with the economy is at the heart of a green economy and it is policy development with this focus that will generate green jobs across multiple sectors by stimulating existing businesses, initiating new businesses, and providing savings to individuals, industry and business while ensuring sustainable environmental benefits.

Some of the sectors with job creation potential in the green economy that we have identified in policy and position statements are energy; water security; construction/renovation; manufacture; small business; infrastructure including transportation and urban planning; food; education/job training; and research and development.

Green Jobs

For effective policy, GPNS would develop a strategy that includes

- planning through the environmental goals applied in each of the various sectors of the economy to assess the potential contribution of that sector to the green economy
- estimating the job creation potential in each sector that supports the green economy
- setting priorities based on the potential for environmental benefit, potential for job creation, and social considerations
- formulating supportive policies and regulations to stimulate that job creation
- To offset layoffs in industry, the Green Party encourages job sharing programs bolstered by Employment Insurance funds to make up the wage shortfall.

Food Production

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

The Green Party approach for supporting our agriculture and fishing sectors will involve

- establishing a more comprehensive food security strategy
- establishing 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
- placing 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
- developing with farmers and fishers innovative ways and means by which these businesses can gain a fair share from the local and export markets
- supporting the harmonization of federal and provincial regulations to better meet the needs of local producers. To this end the Green Party recognizes that federal and provincial meat inspectors do work of equal quality and no preference should be given to meat from either federally or provincially inspected abattoirs.
- supporting measures to ensure seed security and varietal diversity including heritage seed varieties.
- giving greater support to sustainable models of land-based aquaculture

Energy

The Green Party recognizes that we must move to a much more ecologically integrated energy strategy, drawing on energy sources in ways that do not damage ecosystems or compromise the capacity of our natural resources to meet the needs of current or future generations. GPNS energy policy for Nova Scotia would shift away from the strategy of expanding supply through energy megaprojects and focus more on managing demand and development of renewable, alternative sources of a scale appropriate to the integrated environmental and social goals.

Conservation is by far the cheapest and most doable step. There is also great potential in energy efficiency. For commercial operations, co-generation offers energy and economic gains, where energy, especially heat that would normally be wasted, is recovered for use.

The Green Party would increase 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
- improved public and alternate transportation
- The Green Party does not support onshore gas production by drilling and hydraulic fracturing or further investment in off-shore oil and gas. We oppose the fluid waste from hydraulic fracturing in other provinces coming into NS for treatment, storage, or disposal.
- helping Nova Scotians increase the energy efficiency of their homes through programs that subsidize efficiency renovations, particularly for lower income Nova Scotians
- helping renters to access options to increase their home energy efficiency
- supporting the transition to renewable energy sources
- creating a strategic heating oil reserve for heating emergencies while we transition towards sustainable heat sources
- promoting solar for hot water
- requiring improved energy efficiency in new provincial building construction (to meet the most current recognized certification).

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. Poverty is a

systemic problem that arises from low minimum wages, a precarious job market, a shortage of social housing, reductions in benefits and cuts in social programs. The Green Party acknowledges the efforts of government departments and non-governmental organizations towards the relief of poverty in Nova Scotia. 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 the causes of poverty. The traditional strategies of applying band-aid solutions to a patient requiring major surgery are counter-productive, inefficient, and not cost effective.

Everyone can agree that our consumer-based economy can only thrive when there is money to spend. With income inequality widening it becomes more difficult for citizens to contribute to our economic well-being beyond the basics of food and shelter. 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 supports:

- the concept of guaranteed annual income, the cost of which is much less than what poverty is costing society, whether traditional or full-cost accounting figures are used.
- addressing the complex housing needs of those living on the streets, including those suffering from mental health issues and our veterans
- the CMHC definition of affordable housing and will work to bring affordable housing in line with this threshold based on the actual average earning of low-income Nova Scotians

Healthy Communities

In thriving communities the social, economic, and environmental realities are inextricably linked. Greens support holistic measurement of our true wealth, and that includes living standards, population health, education, time use, community vitality, and environmental quality.

The Green Party 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.

Greens recognize that the prosperity of complex communities needs to be considered beyond simple measurements of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Nova Scotia has renewable resources, creative entrepreneurs, and an educated and capable

workforce. A prosperous and bright green future for Nova Scotia is well within our reach.

Transportation

The Green Party will support action to increase the security of our transportation by:

- increasing funding for public transit to the Canadian per capita average
- investing in rebuilding our rail system for cross province travel and movement of goods
- improving public and alternate transportation
- working with the other Atlantic provinces in reducing the conflicting and duplicated regulatory requirements for cross-border shipping.

Immigration

The Green Party recognizes that in order to hold the line on taxation and government borrowing while maintaining program service levels, Nova Scotia needs to increase the tax base upon which it draws. As such we have a long-standing policy on increasing the provinces' population to one million people by the mid-2020s. We understand that our current provincial nominee threshold is woefully inadequate and we will

- vigorously negotiate with the federal government to increase the nominee quota dramatically
- expand the current program of entrepreneurial loans for new immigrants across the banking sector, especially when locating outside major urban areas.

Arts and Culture

The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports arts, crafts, cultures and heritage as essential to the well-being of individuals, communities and the whole province, and will work with the arts community and all citizens of Nova Scotia to establish a provincial strategy that includes

- arts, culture, craft, and heritage activities as essential elements in provincial policy across many departments, including education, economic development, and health
- establish an interdepartmental committee to facilitate effective support for arts, culture, crafts and heritage within departments and to assist the community in a coordinated manner
- review the consolidation of schools using full-cost accounting that values the benefits of local schools to individual, family, and community well-being

Education

We understand that educating youth to succeed in the 21st century economy requires the development of innovative curriculum and investment in 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 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 extracurricular activities, and provide many important services to their communities including space for vibrant community events.

The Green party will

- review the consolidation of schools using full-cost accounting that values the benefits of local schools to individual, family, and community well-being

The Green Party supports 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
- a system of student loans for which parental annual income is not a criteria
- a strategy for debt reduction for Nova Scotian students with post-secondary education who continue to work in the province for a set number of years after graduation

Governance

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.

The Green Party supports

- a comprehensive study into electoral systems used around the world that are proportional and fairer than our current system
- the distribution of adequate information and educational opportunities on the

- various types of election processes
- the establishment of a Citizen's Assembly to determine models of proportional electoral systems suitable to Nova Scotia
 - opportunities for meaningful citizen engagement in determining these models
 - the judicious use of attrition to reduce the size of the civil service
 - a full evaluation of the regulatory processes entrenched in legislation
 - removing the responsibility for regulatory enforcement from individual ministries and turning that over to the Department of Justice
 - greater economic and regulatory cooperation with the other two Atlantic provinces
 - overhauling the Departments of environment and natural resources.

Healthy Environment

The Green Party of Nova Scotia recognizes the intricate connections of a healthy environment, conservative use of our natural resources, thriving communities, and secure livelihoods in a sustainable economy.

The Green Party is dedicated to the establishment and maintenance of a focus on the respectful, efficient, and conservative use of our natural resources and adequate levels of protection for the environment. Progress toward sustainable long-term prosperity and wellbeing requires protection and strengthening of social and environmental assets and termination of damaging activities.

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 of Nova Scotia views issues through the lens of social and environmental goals merged with goals for sustainable prosperity. Such a view puts environmental protection and social considerations at the heart of policy across all departments. GPNS sees the elevation of the role of the Department of Environment and the inclusion of environmental protection in the thinking strategies of all departments as necessary outcomes of a government's real commitment to the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*.

A Green government will

- take action toward food security, clean air and water security

- address the key issues related to climate change and energy security
- work with the forest dependent industries and woodlot owners to increase the ability of our forests to perform their wide range of 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
- take corrective action on issues in extractive industries using a comprehensive approach including full-cost accounting that recognizes the value of healthy ecosystems, vibrant communities, and a clean environment
- ensure meaningful citizen participation in decision-making and continued responsiveness to the wisdom of Nova Scotians
- seek a right relationship with the Mi'kmaq First Nation to cooperatively address natural resources issues in a manner that respects the *Peace and Friendship Treaties*, the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* entrenched in Canada's *Constitution Act*, the rulings of the Supreme Court, and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*
- require that environmental protection policies and regulations are supported by adequate enforcement
- establish a process whereby citizens can call for an existing utilization to be assessed for ethical, social, environmental, and technical compliance
- ensure that any new project would be developed within a sound ethical and social assessment framework; as well as scientific and technical assessment
- 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

How Much Will All This Cost?

Many of you reading this probably will have turned to this page first. While we recognize that costing is an important function of any traditional platform document, it is difficult without access to detailed government spending, and an accurate assessment of costs is really just a guessing game for any opposition party. Indeed, one of the opposition party platforms calls for a full audit of the provinces' finances, but then goes on to spend more money. We feel it is irresponsible to commit to funding models without knowing how much is truly in the bank.

That being said, we firmly believe that all of the ideas expressed here in our platform document are revenue neutral at worst and will actually reduce spending in many cases. Attrition rates in the public service are currently in the 6-7% range and the savings there alone could more than cover any changes to program delivery. Our poverty reduction program is significantly less expensive than maintaining the status quo of the "poverty industry."

Maintaining the status quo is unsustainable and no longer an option, even in the short term. We are well into the 21st century and Nova Scotia needs a government that is committed to utilizing 21st century ideas and solutions.