

Turning the corner
to a better future

Speech from the Throne 2013

His Honour
Brigadier-General
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to reduce the HST to 14% in 2014 and 13% in 2015.

Despite the worst world-wide economic downturn since the Depression, my government has kept faith with workers and their families by seizing extraordinary opportunities for sustained economic growth that extend to all parts of the province. Securing these unmatched opportunities means that Nova Scotia is turning the corner toward a better future for families.

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My government adopted Canada's first Emergency Department standards. Nova Scotia's Collaborative Emergency Centres—CECs—a national first, greatly minimized emergency room closures while providing same-day or next-

they need in the right place. The plan's first step is the new ER coverage program, which matches doctors with ERs that would otherwise close.

That physician resource plan and the focus on better care sooner means new primary care clinics in Bridgewater, Shelburne, Pugwash, Richmond County, Guysborough, and Digby. These clinics provide care close to home in modern facilities that attract

This is the first time ever that two Atlantic provinces have cooperated in this way to stand proud and improve the destiny of this region for generations to come, by

collaborative effort with municipalities. Recognizing the effects of climate change, my government is ensuring that there will be improved preparation for extreme weather events.

My government will soon announce Nova Scotia's first ever sustainable transportation strategy. It will be a comprehensive strategy to encourage people to drive less and to travel actively and more efficiently. The strategy is starting with Nova Scotia Moves, a pilot program of support for community-based initiatives.

For the first time ever in Nova Scotia, my government will provide a steady and reliable

around the world.

My government, in partnership with the farm community, is undertaking the first ten-year strategy for agriculture, called Homegrown Success. This strategy means more exceptional-quality food products. Nova Scotia is now the only province in Canada where both the number of farms and farm gate receipts are growing.

Nova Scotia's first Domestic Violence Action Plan, developed in partnership with dozens of community-based groups, is now being implemented. Nova Scotia's first

jobsHere economic plan—

extending access to training programs to small and medium-sized businesses, particularly in rural areas. For example, my government recently signed an agreement with the Construction Association of Nova Scotia to allow Gold Seal training of their members through video conferencing and online courses.

The Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy is led by five eminent Nova Scotians who know that local economies can do much more than survive, they will thrive. The Commission is asking Nova Scotians how to actively shape our future. My government encourages all Nova Scotians to become involved in that discussion.

In every corner of Nova Scotia:

My government brings a new commitment to environmentally sustainable, innovative, profit-making, and job-sustaining opportunities in forestry, fishery, farming, tourism, and culture.

This year, my government will support the commercial fishery by promoting training, skills development, and safe practices and by assisting fishers in their efforts to create the Fish Harvesters Registration and Certification Board.

Aquaculture has a future in Nova Scotia as an economic base for coastal communities with hundreds more jobs where they are most needed, provided it is well managed and regulated. As outlined in Nova Scotia's first aquaculture strategy, my government will develop comprehensive regulations and set the highest standards for fairness, efficiency, and environmental safeguards in Nova Scotia aquaculture.

With a new five-year federal-provincial agriculture agreement, the province's efforts, in partnership with farmers, will be directed to innovation, competitiveness and market development, and industry adaptation and transition.

My government will work to attract new entrepreneurs to farming and food-related ventures, and support efforts to make small farms more economically viable and

environmentally sustainable.

“Buy Local”



ensure that Mi'kmaq interests in the land and a Mi'kmaq forestry initiative are part of that better future.

The new forestry innovation centre in Liverpool will further Nova Scotia's position as a leader in cleaner energy, bioenergy, and forestry innovation. The ideas and plans developed through the community transition committee are the foundation for that area to emerge stronger from the closure of a keystone industry.

Today, just over 9 per cent of provincial land is protected from development. When the United Nations established 12 per cent as the global goal two decades ago, many said Nova Scotia could never do its part. My government is about to prove them wrong. Nova Scotia's new parks and protected areas plan will exceed the UN goal and protect more than 13 per cent of the province.

This province is a leader in renewable energy and in waste management, and now Nova Scotians are proving themselves to be leaders in protection of the natural world itself.

While moving toward a balanced budget, my government invested more than one billion dollars in highway projects and improvements. This record investment is providing Nova Scotians with safer roads, businesses with improved access to markets, and visitors with a better impression of our province. More local roads are being improved and maintained because my government is paving more while paying less.

My government established the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency to bring the industry and the government together in a cohesive effort to capitalize on Nova Scotia's vast tourism potential. This industry-led effort will support tourism growth through worker and operator training, infrastructure improvements, and easier access to the province by air and sea.

Nova Scotians know that arts, culture, and heritage reflect who we are and contribute to growing healthy and vibrant communities. Nova Scotia's Five-Point Plan for Arts and Culture is now fully underway. In the coming year, the province's new support for Nova Scotia's arts, culture, and heritage will bolster the creative economy.

Millions worldwide watched online as a Canadian icon, the Bluenose II, was rebuilt. This summer, the world will be reminded that "Ships Start Here" when Bluenose II sets sail again from Lunenburg Harbour.

Nova Scotia is powering up:

For the first time in history, Nova Scotians can secure a power supply that comes with a 35-year guarantee of price stability. The Maritime Link is the lowest-cost and most environmentally acceptable choice to meet Nova Scotia's power needs as Canada phases out the use of coal to generate power. The Link enables creation of the Atlantic Canadian power grid planned by the four provinces and the federal government. It will make possible more local energy development, including wind and tidal, achieving a more competitive power market without coal's volatile price.

Nova Scotia's energy plan has five key features: local, reliable, green, tax-free, and efficient.

Each feature of Nova Scotia's plan means the lowest, fairest power rates, ending the era of double-digit increases. Nova Scotians are saving hundreds of millions because there is no provincial HST on home energy, and efficiency programs are reducing power usage. These savings are particularly significant for seniors and lower-income families.

Record high offers for exploration rights off Nova Scotia tell us our offshore oil and gas sector is far from dead. The province invested heavily to develop a clear picture of the geology off our shores, and dedicated public servants used that analysis to revive interest in the vast potential of Nova Scotia's offshore. The best days of oil and gas production off Nova Scotia lie ahead.

Safe and secure:

It is the responsibility of government to provide for the safety of the citizens. This is a responsibility my government accepts and backs with action.

This year my government will complete its review and reform of automobile insurance to ensure that it remains fair, affordable, and stable.

Every family should be secure in the knowledge that when their loved one leaves for work, he or she will return home safely. Recent workplace accidents underscore the importance of health and safety on the job. After exten

through a new partnership with the province. Annapolis Valley/Glooscap, Eskasoni, Millbrook, and Paqtnkek will hire full-time staff to develop and implement physical activity plans.

In this session of the legislature, the Minister of Health and Wellness will detail the government's next steps to improve children's health care, recognizing the high priority that Nova Scotians place on better preventive care, particularly for children with chronic diseases.

As children move into the school system, my government will take new action that provides children with opportunities for success and growth.

This year Nova Scotia's schools are adopting a highly successful math curriculum to ensure that more students

My government increased student assistance to ensure that post-secondary education is more accessible regardless of the financial circumstances of students' families. Student debt has been capped, tuition increases will not exceed three per cent, and the non-repayable grant portion of student assistance is higher than ever.

Almost 20,000 of the lowest-income seniors no longer pay provincial income tax because my government ended this tax on these women and men who worked hard to make a good life for themselves and their family.

Beginning this year, my government adjusted the fee structure to save seniors from paying more for home care simply because their pensions have increased. Many seniors will now pay less for home care and home oxygen. More low-income Nova Scotians who need services such as the Caregiver Benefit, Personal Alert Assistance, and Supportive Care will now qualify. And the province will adjust the income levels that determine fees so seniors won't pay more for those services just because their pension goes up each year.

For seniors, and for many others in our communities, housing is the biggest worry and the most important determinant of their health and quality of life. My government will set a new direction for housing, one that stresses affordability, choice, partnership, and community-building.

My government is working with District Health Authorities and School Boards to identify more opportunities for Nova Scotians to benefit from shared administrative services, and to plan carefully how to make the necessary improvements. Money saved on administration is invested in better care, better classroom learning, and a better start in life. Nova Scotia is turning the corner to more sustainable public services.

My government will present a budget for the consideration of the members of the legislature. That budget will be balanced.

Turning the corner means better care sooner.

Turning the corner means no provincial HST on home energy and other family essentials, and more support for the most vulnerable among us.

Turning the corner means opportunities for thousands of new jobs, in a cleaner environment, with more control of Nova Scotia's destiny.

Turning the corner means balancing the budget, and keeping it balanced.

This is the time to keep headed toward a better future for Nova Scotia's families.

God bless Nova Scotia.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.