

A Summary of Input from Climate Change Consultations



What We Heard

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Message from the Minister

Climate change is one of the greatest social and economic challenges facing the world. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we are already experiencing the impacts of the warming planet and the Provincial Government is committed to ensuring that a plan is in place to minimize the risks and harness the opportunities that climate change brings.

This document summarizes the input gathered from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on the development of a plan to guide provincial action on climate change. Consultations began on June 17, 2016, and over the three months that followed, we heard views and perspectives from individuals and organizations about the direction the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should take on climate change. All of the ideas and suggestions expressed will guide the Provincial Government in developing the five year action plan.

I sincerely thank all people and groups who took the time to participate in the consultations. Your valuable contributions will help ensure that the plan reflects the unique needs and circumstances of the province and helps position us for economic, social and environmental success in the face of our changing climate.

Perry Trimper
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Introduction

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed to developing a new climate change plan. Consultations were conducted between June 16 and September 16, 2016, to gather public and stakeholder input on ways to address climate change in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Climate change is expected to bring weather that is warmer and stormier to our province, with more intense periods of precipitation. Action is therefore needed to improve resilience to impacts such as coastal erosion and flooding. In addition, new initiatives are needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support clean growth. The greatest share of the province's greenhouse gas emissions comes from large industry which will be subject to new legislation (passed in June 2016) to reduce those emissions, followed closely by transportation. Burning fossil fuels to generate electricity and heat, and sending compostable waste to the province's landfills are also major sources of emissions.

Through the consultations, views and perspectives were expressed by individuals and representatives of community groups, municipalities, businesses, industry associations and other organizations. This document summarizes what the Provincial Government heard from these consultations.

Consultation Process

Consultations included three forms of engagement:

- public consultation sessions;
- written feedback; and
- meetings with stakeholder groups.

A dedicated consultation webpage was created (www.gov.nl.ca/TalkClimateChange) and included a discussion guide, a PowerPoint presentation, and relevant background information. Resources were also made available for groups wishing to hold their own discussion session. The consultations were promoted through radio interviews and call-in shows, posters, social media and letters written to almost 700 individuals, stakeholder groups and Aboriginal governments and organizations.

Public Consultation Sessions

Four in-person and three online public consultation sessions were hosted by the Department of Environment and Climate Change. All consultation sessions included a presentation to provide background information and context, followed by group discussions to share ideas and suggestions. Facilitators and note takers were present at each session to record the input of participants. No identifying information was collected, which ensured all input was anonymous.

Three further in-person consultation sessions were hosted by other organizations, with support from the Department of Environment and Climate Change:

- Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
- Harris Centre (Memorial University)
- Office of Engagement (Grenfell Campus)



The Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador hosted its own discussion session with over 30 youth, using the resources developed by the Department of Environment and Climate Change. In addition to these sessions, members of the Premier's Youth Advisory Committee were invited to provide input through the completion of an online questionnaire.

Written Submissions

In addition to the consultation sessions, individuals and groups were encouraged to submit their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions in written submissions, either by email, a dedicated online feedback form, or in hard copy. A total of 43 written submissions were received, as listed in the Annex.

Meetings with Stakeholder Groups

Department of Environment and Climate Change officials held meetings with stakeholders including advocacy organizations, businesses, and industry associations, as well as representatives from Aboriginal governments and organizations. Many of these organizations also provided written submissions which summarized their positions on the topics.

To help foster a structured dialogue on this complex issue, participants were asked to provide views and perspectives on three broad discussion questions that are important in addressing climate change:



Clean Economic Growth

What should the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador do to support clean economic growth?



Adapting to Climate Change

What steps do you think need to be taken to better adapt to climate change?



Government Leadership

How should the Provincial Government demonstrate leadership on climate change?

Comments, Suggestions and Ideas

The information collected from the consultation process forms the basis of this summary. All of the input received through the public consultation sessions and written feedback is available in unedited format at www.gov.nl.ca/TalkClimateChange.

A wide variety of views were expressed by participants. All input received was compiled by the Department of Environment and Climate Change and organized into 11 theme categories. Themes were created where many participants expressed the same or a similar idea or thought. However, the presence of a theme does not mean that the support for the ideas and positions noted was universal. Many different views were expressed through the course of the consultations. This document aims to identify areas where trends emerged.

As reoccurring themes emerged across all discussion questions, the below summary is organized by theme. To help identify which sections relate to which discussion questions, each section below is tagged with a relevant discussion topic icon.



Emissions Targets



Targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are in place in provinces across Canada and countries around the world. Newfoundland and Labrador has targets for the years 2020 and 2050. Participants offered some considerations related to establishing targets:

- **Mid-term target** – A target should be established between the existing 2020 and 2050 targets to help measure and manage progress, and these should be revisited periodically.
- **Alignment across Canada** – A mid-term target for Newfoundland and Labrador should be aligned with federal and other provincial governments' targets to ensure consistency and fairness.
- **Actions to achieve targets** – While targets are helpful and necessary, some felt it was more important to focus on concrete actions to actually achieve emissions reductions.
- **Focus on key sectors** – To achieve its targets, the Provincial Government should focus on sectors with the greatest opportunities for emission reductions, including focusing on the province's largest sources (large industry and transportation).



Large Industry



At 36 per cent of the total, large industrial activity is the single biggest source of provincial greenhouse gas emissions. While these operations emit large quantities of greenhouse gases, they also generate important economic activity and employment. Participants shared a variety of thoughts on large industry:

- **Opportunity for reducing emissions** – Large industry needs to contribute to provincial efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Need for balance** – While greenhouse gas reductions are needed from the large industry sector, the Provincial Government needs to consider impacts on the economy and jobs in taking action.
- **Competitiveness impacts** – Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from large industry needs to be done in a way that accounts for the impact on competitiveness of large industrial operations located in Newfoundland and Labrador. Many of these industries are in trade-exposed sectors that are subject to global market forces.
- **Build on existing action** – The Provincial Government should continue action on reducing emissions from onshore large industry and explore opportunities to extend action to offshore large industrial emitters.



Transportation



Transportation represents 34 per cent of total provincial greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing these emissions is challenging in a province with a large rural and highly dispersed population. Participants offered their ideas on how to move people and goods around the province with a lower carbon footprint:

- **Support for electric vehicles** – Financial incentives should be provided to help encourage the adoption of electric vehicles in the province, and funding is needed for initiatives to roll-out electric vehicle infrastructure, such as charging stations.
- **Carpooling and car sharing supports** – Measures like designated carpool lanes, preferential parking, and carpooling/car sharing plans for employees should be used to help promote ride and vehicle sharing.
- **Walking/biking infrastructure** – Walking paths and bike lanes should be developed and enhanced to promote emissions-free transportation solutions and healthier lifestyles.
- **Public transit** – Public transit services should be improved through investments in transit system infrastructure, measures aimed at making these services more attractive to use, and solutions to help address the challenges of delivering public transit in lower-density rural areas.
- **More efficient vehicles** – The efficiency of cars and trucks on provincial roads should be improved through financial incentives for trading in older vehicles and/or buying more fuel-efficient ones, or through higher registration fees for inefficient vehicles.



Electricity & Alternative Energy

Electricity generation is responsible for 11 per cent of provincial greenhouse gas emissions. Participants shared ideas on how to reduce emissions and grow the green economy in this sector:



- **Net metering and/or time-of-use pricing** – Individuals, companies, and communities should be able to sell power to the provincial electricity grid through net metering programs in order to reduce demand and build a more diverse, resilient electricity grid. Some felt that different electricity rates could be applied at different times of day to reduce peak demand.
- **Alternative energy** – The Provincial Government should invest in and encourage the development of alternative energy sources, including biofuels, biomass (e.g. wood), wind, solar, tidal, wave, waste energy, and small-scale hydroelectricity.
- **Power exports and Muskrat Falls** – The Provincial Government should capture the benefits of Muskrat Falls hydroelectricity and the fixed link to the North American electricity grid by encouraging energy-switching for domestic purposes (e.g. electric instead of gasoline vehicles) and through clean power exports. The link between climate change and energy efficiency in the electricity sector will be reduced once Holyrood is no longer generating electricity and 98 per cent of electricity consumed in the province comes from renewable sources.
- **Isolated diesel systems** – The carbon footprint of the province's isolated, diesel-powered communities should be reduced through targeted energy efficiency and retrofit programs and support for transitioning to cleaner energy sources, such as wind and solar power. Measures to improve access to wood and energy-efficient wood stoves would be beneficial for northern and isolated areas and enhance their energy security.
- **Energy efficiency** – More energy efficient products and services should be made available through financial incentives and support (e.g. for heat pumps) or through mandatory energy efficiency standards.

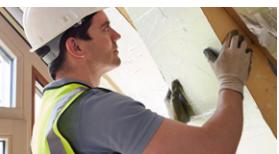


Waste Management



Waste accounts for eight per cent of provincial greenhouse gas emissions, mostly from methane produced by organic waste decomposing in landfills. Participants shared ideas on how improved waste management practices could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance overall environmental stewardship:

- **Composting supports** – Funding and financial supports should be enhanced for individuals, businesses, communities and non-profit organizations to pursue composting initiatives. Easy-to-use programs that include education components are also needed.
- **Access to recycling facilities** – More facilities that can recycle a wider variety of materials are needed across the province, particularly in smaller, rural communities.
- **Make people use existing facilities** – Stricter requirements for waste disposal should be established and enforced to ensure that people use the waste management facilities that do exist. The approach to waste management in the Province should be revisited and costs to users reduced.
- **More sustainable products** – Products that last longer and have a reduced impact on the environment should be encouraged, such as through adopting “cradle-to-cradle” practices.



Energy Use in Buildings



The use of fuel oils in buildings, mostly for space and water heating, is responsible for nine per cent of provincial greenhouse gas emissions. Participants expressed a variety of suggestions to reduce the carbon footprint of energy used in buildings across the province:

- **Energy efficiency/retrofit programs** – Funding for energy efficiency programs, rebates and training should be made available and should include buildings that are not heated by electricity (e.g. those that use heating oil). Retrofit programs should be implemented where costs are paid back through savings, and supports should be provided for efficient technologies like heat pumps.
- **Sustainable building practices and codes** – More sustainable building practices should be promoted and made mandatory, either through the adoption of internationally-recognized standards or those developed within the province. Building codes should

be updated more frequently, include more stringent energy requirements, and address challenges with their application in northern climates.

- **Fuel switching from oil** – Recognizing that the province's electricity grid is moving towards largely emissions-free power, the transition to all-electric building systems should be accelerated through financial incentives.



Local Food



Most food consumed in the province is imported. Considerations related to local food production were raised in the context of both reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transporting food and adapting to climate change. Participants expressed a number of suggestions:

- **Community gardens/greenhouses** – Financial supports for community gardens and year-round greenhouses are required to help individuals and organizations produce more local food and test the viability of growing new crops, like corn, in the province given the changing climate.
- **Support for local food producers** – Information and supports, including subsidies, are needed to help local farmers and aquaculturists identify and develop high-value farmland to produce more food within the province.
- **Food security** – The Provincial Government should strengthen access to an adequate supply of safe, nutritious food and gain a better understanding of the links between food security and physical and mental health. Mechanisms are needed to improve access to culturally-appropriate food, especially in northern areas where climate change impacts threaten traditional food sources.



Engagement and Outreach



Informing, engaging and connecting people and organizations on how they can take action to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate was a recurring theme across all discussion topics. Participant suggestions included:

- **Partnerships and collaboration** – All levels of government, local organizations and businesses, and the academic community should work together towards shared climate

change goals. Ideas included regionalized services/governance, learning from other jurisdictions, and engaging experts and industry.

- **Education** – A stronger focus on climate change is needed at all levels of the province's education system, where tomorrow's leaders are cultivated. Education initiatives should also include those who are beyond school age to ensure broad coverage.
- **Public awareness** – Climate change awareness must be raised and more work is needed to change attitudes and behaviour. The Provincial Government should start a dialogue, communicate issues in plain language, and convey the positives and local success stories. Social media should be used more to engage residents and raise awareness.



Carbon Pricing



Carbon pricing is about putting a cost on carbon pollution to encourage individuals and organizations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Many of Canada's provinces and territories, including Newfoundland and Labrador, are implementing carbon pricing while others are exploring options. Participants expressed a variety of thoughts on the pros and cons of pricing carbon in Newfoundland and Labrador:

- **Carbon pricing approach** – If implemented, carbon pricing should be in the form of a carbon tax (similar to British Columbia) rather than emissions trading, since the latter is too complex, too bureaucratic, and less transparent. Some noted that a carbon pricing approach was already in place for large industry under new provincial legislation.
- **Revenue use** – Carbon pricing revenues should be used to reduce other taxes and/or support climate change initiatives rather than for general revenues.
- **Impacts on vulnerable households** – Carbon pricing may unfairly impact low-income individuals who are least able to pay and those living in isolated communities. Both groups have limited access to low-carbon alternatives. Rebates, exemptions, or tax relief would help avoid undue hardship.
- **Tax burden already high** – A new tax would be a significant burden in the current fiscal and economic context.
- **Business impacts** – Carbon pricing could negatively impact local industries with high greenhouse gas emissions and exposure to global competition and commodity prices.



Community Planning



In Newfoundland and Labrador, community planning is a municipal responsibility. There are 276 municipalities with authority to control where and how their communities are developed, which can be an important task in the face of a changing climate. Participants expressed a wide range of suggestions:

- **Planning tools for communities** – Communities, particularly those in rural areas, need more and better tools to help with land use planning, community design, and asset management to both adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Regional cooperation** – Greater regional collaboration would build capacity in areas where people and infrastructure are more dispersed. Sharing services, setting up regional transportation systems, or establishing regional government bodies (like counties) could improve community resilience to climate change and deliver services more efficiently.
- **Useable and accessible climate information** – The Provincial Government's climate data and information resources should be enhanced and made more user-friendly, especially flood risk maps and climate, precipitation, and sea-level projections.
- **Integrating the Environment into Community Planning** – Engineered solutions are too often the only approach considered in community planning, even when natural solutions might be more appropriate. Green infrastructure should be encouraged, like managing water run-off with the planting and protection of trees.
- **Better planned communities** – Communities should be planned to be denser, more walkable, and with mixed-use neighbourhoods, to avoid the pitfalls of “urban sprawl”.
- **Resilient infrastructure** – In a changing climate, infrastructure should be designed according to projections, not past experiences. Financial support could help meet challenges to build and retrofit this infrastructure, supported by standards appropriate for all areas of the province.



Government Operations



The provincial public service is a significant consumer of goods and services and is the largest employer in Newfoundland and Labrador. Participants discussed ways to reduce the carbon footprint from the Provincial Government's operations:

- **Government buildings** – Provincial Government buildings should be built sustainably, with the environment and energy efficiency in mind. Green building certification programs should be used, such as the Canada Green Building Council's LEED® system, the Building Owners and Managers Association's BOMA BEST system, or a provincially-developed equivalent.
- **Government fleets and transport** – The Provincial Government should invest in more sustainable options to meet its transportation needs such as buying hybrids and electric vehicles, installing electric vehicle charging stations, and promoting car-sharing and carpooling for employees.
- **Use of technology** – Provincial Government operations should be made more efficient and less carbon-intensive through the use of technologies like web and teleconferencing, working from home, and online services that reduce employee travel needs and commuting.
- **Green procurement** – Provincial Government procurement processes should be changed to consider factors beyond lowest cost, such as availability of local suppliers, environmental impacts, lifecycle costs and end-of-life disposal.



Other Environmental Considerations

Participants also raised a variety of additional environmental considerations through the consultations:

- **Hydraulic fracturing** – The moratorium on hydraulic fracturing (or “fracking”) applications in the province should continue.
- **Environmental impacts of hydroelectricity** – The negative environmental impacts of hydro power, including its carbon footprint and impacts on marine ecosystems and traditional food sources, need to be recognized.
- **Land conservation** – Efforts regarding land conservation in the province should be enhanced, especially for high-value conservation areas that include wetlands and trees.
- **Plastic bags and bottles** – The negative environmental impacts of disposable plastic bags and bottles should be addressed through taxing or charging extra fees for these items, expanding recycling programs to these products, or implementing an outright ban.

Climate Change Talk – at a Glance

Some of the most common phrases and thoughts we heard during the consultation process

- We need bold action, now.
- Implement net metering – we’re one of the few places in North America not doing this.
- Develop other alternative energy sources, like wind, solar and tidal.
- Government needs to be brave enough to put a price on carbon.
- Need a positive focus – more carrots, fewer sticks.
- Electric cars will be a big opportunity when Muskrat Falls comes online.
- Don’t reinvent the wheel, look at success stories from around the world.
- We need more education and awareness to create a cultural shift away from oil.
- Partner with experts, communities, and local groups.
- Government needs to walk the talk and be greener.

What's Next?

Over the coming months, the Provincial Government will be developing a plan on climate change for Newfoundland and Labrador. The plan will consider all of the input described above, other ideas and suggestions received, and the outcome of discussions with the Federal Government and other provincial and territorial governments related to a pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change.

It is expected that the plan will be ready for public release by fall 2017.

Annex

List of Organizations Providing Written Submissions

- Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association
- Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
- Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses
- Canadian Home Builders' Association – Newfoundland and Labrador
- Canadian Independent Petroleum Marketers Association
- Canadian Propane Association
- Canadian Union of Public Employees
- Central Regional Service Board
- City of St. John's – Environmental Advisory Committee
- City of St. John's – Bike St. John's Task Force
- Clean Energy Canada
- Columbia Institute (British Columbia)
- Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Divest MUN
- Food First NL
- Gros Morne Cooperating Association
- Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador
- Insurance Bureau of Canada
- Iron Ore Company of Canada and Rio Tinto
- Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
- Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Industry Association
- Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, St. John's Centre, Inc.
- Sierra Club Canada – Atlantic

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