



OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

PO BOX 726
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
B3J 2T3

January 21, 2025

Dear Mr/Mrs,

It is cliché to say that we live in interesting times, but we truly do live in interesting times. The national, provincial and international political mood has changed in a dramatic way.

As a country we will welcome not one but, most possibly, two new Prime Ministers during the next few months. Each new Prime Minister brings their own ideology and beliefs to the position, all of which have a direct impact on the provinces and territories.

If you wonder what these changes could possibly mean, remember that the Western part of the country is already questioning the fairness of the transfer payment system. What happens to our ability to deliver services if the next Prime Minister reduces transfers to Nova Scotia?

At the same time, as we work through what will be an evolving relationship with Ottawa, our country will be working through an evolving relationship with the United States. The United States is our largest trading partner and President Trump's policies will impact us in dramatic and sometimes unforeseen ways. In particular, the Trump tax will not only make Nova Scotia products more expensive and less attractive to American consumers, they will make all Canadian products more expensive and less attractive. This single policy has the potential to send our entire country into a prolonged recession, which would obviously have a significant, detrimental impact on both our provincial and national budgets and, potentially, provide an excuse to reduce those aforementioned federal transfer payments.

The economic threats are real but, thankfully, Nova Scotia has the ability to navigate these choppy waters. As much as there are things outside of our control, there are many within our control.

We must become more self-reliant to mitigate the risk that outside forces can throw us into economic turmoil. Fortunately, we can. We are blessed with countless opportunities.

These opportunities exist today as untapped opportunities primarily because governments before ours lacked the courage to act on them. They bowed to special interests. The changing world demands that we must now convert the "possible" into reality.

In doing so we can ensure that Nova Scotia is a generational economic success story.

This, of course, starts with our traditional industries of fishing, farming and forestry. They will always be critical to our provincial economy. We must support them and help them grow.

In recent years, we have also made a name for ourselves in the start-up and technology spaces and now it is time for the next step: truly realizing the potential of all of our natural advantages. It will take grit, determination and political capital but together we can stand up significant industries:

Like hydrogen. Nova Scotia is on the verge of becoming a world-wide hydrogen powerhouse. This is projected to be transformative for our economy and our environment, with completely greenhouse gas-free energy contributing \$5 billion to Nova Scotia by 2032.

Like Wind. We are blessed with incredible onshore and offshore wind speeds. Now is the time to use it to our advantage. Our offshore wind sector is projected to be a \$4.6 billion industry within seven years.

Like Mining. We are lithium rich. And the demand for lithium is expected to grow 43 times over 2020 levels to supply the battery value chain. Early projections have one single opportunity alone valued at \$6 billion.

These three alone tally approximately \$16 billion in potential new growth and jobs. For perspective, our GDP today is about \$45 billion.

And I haven't even mentioned the opportunities from natural gas, coalbed methane, uranium or tidal energy from the Bay of Fundy.

Regarding uranium, quite simply, even Prime Minister Trudeau has stated the obvious by saying that meeting energy needs means more nuclear reactors, big and small. And what more can I say about the Bay of Fundy other than it can be a game changer for our Province. Remember: If you added together the force of every river in the world, it still wouldn't match the tidal power of the Bay of Fundy. This incredible resource is, to date, untapped.

As it becomes more and more obvious that Canada as a country has to do more in the energy and critical minerals sectors, other jurisdictions would long for these opportunities. We are blessed with in-demand resources. The potential to grow our resource economy and create a more sustainable Nova Scotia is remarkable and we must send the message that we can do resource projects and get shovels in the ground.

If we capitalize on these opportunities, they will have generational impacts and could ultimately alleviate our reliance on federal transfer payments.

The jobs that come with these opportunities are the best solution to poverty. They will change the lives of those who work on these projects and the communities around them.

Moving them forward requires a new mindset. We must take the “no” out of Nova Scotia. Special interests have captured too many parts of our economy and have had an out-sized voice in policy creation. That must end.

Outright bans of entire sectors are lazy public policy and we will reverse bans and focus on meaningful, mature discussion. The days of it taking ten years to get projects approved or rejected must end. It is not always “yes,” and it is not always “no,” but we have to stop the “maybes” and decide yes or no.

Don’t accept that it can’t be done. I remember how the opposition and others tried to stop the PC Caucus’ push for common sense credentialing of healthcare professionals. Despite their opposition, today it’s happening! In fact, the North American-leading “physician assessment clinic” would never have happened if we didn’t clear hurdles and pave the way.

It took political will but we made it happen so now the Province will see upwards of 45 new doctors every year from this one clinic.

In every situation, our government will lead by asking, “What is in it for Nova Scotia?”

Unleashing our full potential will require a Government-wide focus and our team will be judged by our ability to capitalize on these opportunities.

We have the plan to drive the Province forward and navigate the choppy waters but it will take your buy-in and support.

We live in an incredible province. We are surrounded by 13,000 km of unique coastline, never more than 30 minutes from the water, including picturesque fishing villages and remarkable beaches. We have our own Napa Valley of the east and can easily access some of the best golf the world has to offer.

These are things we take pride in. In many ways, they define what it means to be Nova Scotian.

We can and must do more to showcase this beauty to the world, without jeopardizing our way of life, while also building and promoting other sectors. It’s not enough for just one region or industry to thrive, I believe in a Province that is prosperous across many sectors, and therefore boundaryless with respect to the success of our varied constituencies.

It’s not enough to live in a beautiful community. Nova Scotians rightfully demand that the government respond to their day to day challenges.

The truth is that the inflationary period over the last few years has been hard. Young people, families and seniors often struggle with the cost of food, gas, heat, housing, rent, clothes, education, health services, etc. They face an incredible burden every day. If we can improve the quality of their lives, our economy will benefit.

As a compassionate government we do what we can to support people. We must support them at the same time as we work to control government costs, attract capital and create better jobs. There are many moving parts to balance but success on these scores will increase revenue without taxing people more - and ideally will lead to lowering taxes.

We also must act on critical infrastructure initiatives that are fundamental to improving the livability of our province. For many, like rail, if they are not done now, they will never be done. Imagine trying to build a nation-wide railway today.

It is critical that we get to work on the art of the possible as regards rapid transportation in and out of HRM. This will be a game changer for all Nova Scotians.

We need to think big and reach.

I am 100% convinced that the election delivered the team best equipped for the challenges and opportunities of today. Nova Scotians could see that only our team was best able to build upon past successes to further improve the lives of those we serve, whether that means getting them access to primary health care, finding housing or making life just a little bit more affordable.

You are an important part of not only the largest caucus ever elected, but also the deepest and brightest Caucus ever elected.

This is a team of persistent, intelligent, thoughtful and caring individuals. If we can't get things done, there is no one on the horizon who can achieve the success that Nova Scotians have a right to expect. We are the team for this moment in history.

I have tremendous confidence in our team and in you personally. We are well equipped to lead the Province forward.

And, most importantly, we are not alone. There are over one million Nova Scotians cheering for our Province's success and willing to be part of the solution. By engaging with them, listening carefully to them and staying true to our core PC and Nova Scotian values, much success awaits our Province.

There are two types of politicians - those that want to burn things down and those that want to build things up.

The PC party always strives to build up. That is why it is incredibly important that you do your part as the eyes and ears of government policy by staying grounded in your constituency through community meetings and outreach. Seek out feedback and fresh, bold, new ideas from all corners.

Never forget the people you serve. They are always the top priority.

Our policy decisions must stay true to our PC and Nova Scotian values:

- Take responsibility - provide good government that spends tax dollars as if it were their own;
- Be accountable - always be quick to answer for the decisions we make;
- Encourage entrepreneurship – provide a climate where our best and brightest can succeed through hard work and initiative;
- Promote self-reliance – support people and do what you can to help them become independent;
- Lead with compassion – care for those in society who, through no fault of their own, need support;
- Be a good steward – strive to pass on a natural environment to future generations that is the same or better than the one we inherited;
- Show patriotism – take pride in our cultures, our communities and our province as part of a strong, united Canada; and
- Always be respectful – treat all citizens equally, regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, language or sexual orientation.
- Ground yourself in these core values as you assess the ideas and opportunities before you. We can change our policies but we should never change our principles.

By holding true to our values, we will achieve important, long-lasting accomplishments just like those PC governments that came before us that:

- Modernized the highway system - PCs Initiated the 100 Highway system.
- Enacted seat belt legislation- a PC government made them mandatory.
- Capped property taxes to protect rural tax payers from increasing assessments.
- created the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.
- Legalized same sex marriage - under a PC government Nova Scotia was only the 9th jurisdiction in the world to legalize same sex marriage.
- Opened the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs - the first office of its kind in Canada.
- Created the Community College System (NSCC).

There is much to be proud of and we can make it happen just like those before us.

As I write this, I am mindful of the fact that Prime Minister Trudeau is departing. He must realize that his signature environment policy - a failed carbon tax - will quickly be dismantled by his successor. Why? The Prime Minister failed to adjust public policy positions based upon facts, circumstance and need. He was not grounded.

We can use his failure as a reminder to always respect Nova Scotians and focus on what matters to them.

In our first mandate we stayed true to PC values, listened to and respected the wishes of Nova Scotians. It was out of this discipline that we were able to:

- Attach over 100,000 Nova Scotians to a primary care provider.
- Launch an app that gives everyone instant access to health care.

- Provide nutritious meals to every student in the Province.
- Begin to develop the N.S. Guard structure that will be there to support Nova Scotians in times of natural disasters.
- Lower taxes, both on income and sales, making life just a bit more affordable.

All of these initiatives will evolve as we listen and learn but time will show them to have been consequential initiatives. Who will come behind us and dismantle these accomplishments?

We made the most of our first mandate - and I could go on with the list of accomplishments - but that is all in the past and now only tomorrow matters. Make no mistake - what we do matters. What you do matters.

When government succeeds, Nova Scotians succeed; but we can't do it without you.

You are part of something significant.

There will always be opposing voices. It is also often true that 2% of the population soak up 98% of the airtime. Remember that the issues and priorities of this 2% are often not those of the 98%. Your job is to make sure that our public policy aligns with the values - the bread and butter concerns - of the 98% while still respecting the 2%.

That will require, as a friend once said to me, the ability to "pin your ears back, grow thick skin and do the right thing."

You will never be loved by everyone; it is a political impossibility. You don't need to be. You do, however, need to be trusted and respected by your constituents and by our colleagues.

Be fair and consistent but not afraid to bite back when necessary.

We have a shared commitment to Nova Scotians who depend on us. It is a privilege to serve in Government and have the power to deliver change.

I urge you to rise to the challenge and use our time in office to do something worthwhile.

It is my honour to serve with you.

Yours truly,

Premier Tim Houston