

June 2, 2006

Ms. Tamara Lorincz
Executive Director
Nova Scotia Environmental Network
via e-mail: nsen@web.ca

Dear Ms. Lorincz:

Thank you for the survey and the opportunity to respond as follows:
Preamble:

Our government believes that regardless of the communities in which we live, Nova Scotians share many of the same values. One of those shared values is the desire to enjoy nature, close to home, and to be able to pass that along to future generations.

Enhancing the environmental sustainability of the province has many benefits, including clean air, clean water, protected habitats, and healthy communities.

We recognize that governments - municipal, provincial or federal -- never appear to do enough with protecting or enhancing our environment to a level environmental organizations would view as being acceptable.

There is always work to be done, always room for improvement. Our government believes that we are making significant progress in overcoming financial and legislative hurdles in order to move forward.

We have already had many successes in finding innovative ways to meet this responsibility. The challenges of the future demand that we continue to innovate. But innovation doesn't "just happen"—it grows from a clear vision and a planned approach.

In June 2003, our Progressive Conservative government released A Green Plan, our commitment to sustainable environmental management for Nova Scotians.

This spring, the Progressive Conservative Government released Nova Scotia's updated economic growth strategy, Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity.

For the first time in modern history, Nova Scotia's economic growth strategy was inextricably linked to our environmental performance.

Managing the province's economy in a way that allows us to balance the priorities of Nova Scotians and live within our means is the way forward.

The better our economy, the more investment we can make towards having the Nova Scotia of our dreams.

Economic strength, for example, gives our province the ability to purchase more land to add to our protected areas and enhances our ability to partner with private sector and municipal partners towards new research and achieve our common goals.

- A Progressive Conservative Government will create Conserve Nova Scotia - a new Crown Corporation wholly funded by the Province, not the private sector
 - whose sole goal is to persuade Nova Scotians to decrease their environmental footprint, through a wide range of new and existing programs, to reduce energy consumption or become more energy efficient in their day to day activities. A Progressive Conservative Government will also adopt amendments to strengthen the Environment Act
- A Progressive Conservative Government will commence formal consultations with communities and environmental leaders to update and enhance Nova Scotia's Green Plan.
- We will renew the Smart Energy Choices program to help Nova Scotians make better energy choices, lower their energy bills, and reduce our province's reliance on fossil fuels;
 - support efforts to generate electricity from renewable resources;
 - continue to implement and build on the Green Plan: Toward a Sustainable Environment;
 - build on the Drinking Water Strategy with additional supports over the long term for people with well water and on-site septic systems;
 - help improve and upgrade Nova Scotia's septage treatment facilities;

1 If elected, will your party accelerate the process and complete the province's protected areas network by 2010?

Yes, a Progressive Conservative Government will continue to accelerate the process by continuing to work towards the comprehensive Network of Protected Areas target. We have added 12,000 hectares to Nova Scotia's protected land in less than two years and there is more to come. The province has authorized up to \$26 million over the next two years for the purchases, and will be looking at land with a variety of potential uses, but with an emphasis on conservation.

The Department of Environment and Labour designated four new nature reserves on Crown Lands, (a total of 1875 hectares), including Spinneys Heath and Great Barren and Quinan Lakes in Yarmouth County; Quinns Meadow in Shelburne County and Duncan's Cove in Halifax County.

Designation of Wilderness Areas on Crown Lands at Gully Lake and Eigg Mountain-James River have also been completed.

The Department also endorsed the UNESCO designation of the South West Biosphere Reserve.

Just within the past month an agreement between the province and Bowater Mersey Paper Company resulted in a significant addition to publicly owned land in the province. A portion of this land will be added to our protected areas as part of our Green Plan for a sustainable environment.

Most of these lands are significant eco-sites that the company has voluntarily set aside over the years and are now making available to the province for permanent protection.

The Department of Environment and Labour has consulted with the public on a Draft Management Plan for the Tobetic Wilderness Area and is proceeding with the release of the final plan.

Almost 70% of Nova Scotia is owned privately, so with so much land in private hands, the role of individual landowners in protecting our natural areas is extremely important. The Department also designated 24.5 hectares of private land as an addition to the MacFarlane Woods Nature Reserve in Inverness County.

- Our government will continue working in the development of legislation and programs to facilitate private land protection, including the Campaign for Conservation, a partnership formed in November 2000 to preserve ecological and natural areas in the province;

- We will continue to work in partnership with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust on a variety of conservation projects aimed at securing ecologically significant areas on private land. In addition to expanding the number of protected green spaces, a new Rodney MacDonald government will:

- Designate five new nature reserves
- Acquire more coastal land, as was done with Cape Split

2 Will your party commit to meeting these targets on schedule, through initiatives to reduce emissions from NSPI (one of Canada's top ten polluters) and funding for programs like Energuide for House? Yes, our party will commit to endeavor meeting these established targets on schedule to the best of our ability through a continued co-operative approach with the federal government agencies, the private sector, and municipalities. Although Nova Scotia's emissions represent

less than 3 percent of Canada's total, reaching this target will require significant effort from industry, government, and citizens.

We are all responsible for taking care of our air. Our Progressive Conservative government via the Department of Environment and Labour strives to monitor and protect our outdoor air quality through regulations and programs to reduce pollutants that lead to issues like smog, acid rain, climate change and the thinning ozone layer. Poor air quality can affect our health, lead to increased health care costs and also affect natural resources. We can all make a difference through our choices and actions.

On October 20, 2005, the Department of Energy released a green energy framework - Smart Choices for Cleaner Energy. The planning framework says that Nova Scotia should develop a vision for future energy use that relies more on energy efficiency, renewable and alternative energy, and cleaner energy technologies. Government is also proposing long-term programs to encourage more energy conservation by both individuals and by government, and to develop more sustainable transportation options for Nova Scotians.

Today, about 17 per cent of all energy use in Canada goes toward running our homes. In Nova Scotia, we have significant potential to increase energy efficiency in new and retrofitted homes.

Currently, Nova Scotia has some of the oldest homes in the country. About 60% of these houses are heated by oil. This combination provides a major opportunity to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in housing - perhaps by as much as 30 per cent per household.

Government wants to build on the recently announced Smart Energy Choices Energy Efficiency and Conservation Program and the federal government support for grants to help those on low-income improve energy efficiency.

Options for the long term, include:

- Energy efficiency improvements for low income homeowners and those in rental accommodations.
- Energy efficiency building improvements for non-profit organizations, especially social and charitable organizations serving the disadvantaged.
- Improvements in the energy performance upgrading of the province's 11,000 seniors and family housing units which have annual energy and water costs of \$14.5 million.
- Co-operation with the federal government to ensure all Nova Scotians have

access to information and incentives to reduce energy use over the longer term.

- Continued support and development of the R-2000 Home Program and EnerGuide for New Houses. By matching the federal EnerGuide for Houses grants, it will be possible to update 5,000 homes every year for the next five years, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by about 40,000 tonnes annually.

Air pollution does not stop at national or provincial borders, and our government also working with other jurisdictions on agreements and standards to address air quality. These long-term initiatives require both technological investments and societal changes with respect to our dependence on fossil fuels.

In April 2004, our Progressive Conservative Government revised the annual Industrial Air Emission Fees. Based on the polluter-pays principle, the government charges annual pollution fees to facilities in Nova Scotia that produce emissions to air above a threshold. The fees cover the costs of provincial programs for managing air quality issues in Nova Scotia.

Over the past year the Province partnered with the UNSM (Union of NS Municipalities) to create a "How-To" guide and brochure on how municipalities can reduce energy consumption while lowering their energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. The report was titled "Save Money, Save Energy, and Cut Emissions: Quick and Easy Steps for Nova Scotia Municipalities." The report was well received at the 2005 UNSM Annual Conference. As a follow-up to this report, UNSM will form a joint municipal/provincial committee to address a broad range of environmental issues impacting municipalities in addition to greenhouse gas emission reduction.

Our Government will also look at ways to increase production and consumption of Nova Scotia produced bio-fuels like the biodiesel made by Ocean Nutrition in Mulgrave, NS, and now used in some transit buses and government buildings.

We will also help Nova Scotians make the right transportation choices by encouraging fuel efficient vehicle purchases and encouraging participation in other environmentally responsible transportation options.

- We will continue to work with the federal government to increase support to encourage industry compliance with lower emissions from sulphur dioxide, mercury and nitrogen oxide.

A Progressive Conservative Government will also:

- Support the conversion of major public facilities to natural gas, starting with the Nova Scotia Hospital, Dartmouth General Hospital and the Nova Scotia Community College.

3 If elected, will your party commit to adopting legislation for Standard

Offer Contracts for all renewable energy projects under 10 megawatts in Nova Scotia?

Nova Scotia's Energy strategy set a voluntary target of 50 MW for renewable energy and committed to follow up with a mandatory target. These commitments were reaffirmed in the report of the Electricity Marketplace Governance Committee.

In the fall of 2004, the Department of Energy introduced the Electricity (2004) Act. This legislation established a mandatory renewable portfolio standard (RPS).

That means a minimum amount of a seller's electricity must come from renewable resources such as wind. The new legislation encourages growth of renewables by ensuring markets for the renewable power developed by independent power producers.

Our planning framework "Smart Choices for Cleaner Energy...the Green Energy Framework," released in October commits the province to developing a vision for future energy use that relies more on energy efficiency, renewable and alternative energy, and developing cleaner energy technologies.

- Nova Scotia's proposals include an additional 280 megawatts of new wind power generation, in addition to the 100 megawatts already planned for the province. The document also says it is possible to develop a 20 megawatt biomass-fueled generating facility in northern Nova Scotia; and to realize an additional 50 megawatts of energy by adding heat recovery capacity to Nova Scotia Power facilities. A further 50 megawatts of energy demand could be met through a community heating and electrical co-generation project in Halifax Regional Municipality.

- We are offering an Energy Efficient Tax Credit, which is a non-refundable tax credit equal to 25% on eligible capital investments on renewable energy sources or energy efficiency investments made by the corporation up to 50% of the Large Corporations Capital Tax payable in a given year.

4 If elected, is your government willing to divert revenues normally spent

on highways and bridges toward an integrated transportation plan that includes active transportation and public transit?

Yes, if elected, our government will continue to support revenues directed towards developing better quality, sustainable transportation options for Nova Scotians.

Our party is proud of our record of increasing our budget for our province's roads highways and bridges for safety, economic and tourism considerations that go above and beyond encouraging private automobile use by Nova Scotians.

Our government was also the first to urge the federal government to establish a long-term national transportation strategy that allocates a great share of federal tax dollars to Nova Scotia Highways. While we continue pursuing this avenue, progress is being made by the recent recognition of Highway 103 as being part of the national highway system and therefore now eligible for federal funding.

We will continue to press our case in Ottawa, for establishing this framework helps us to both include and broaden our focus on additional priorities to protect what Nova Scotians value.

Transportation accounts for about 30 per cent of Nova Scotia's energy consumption - second only to the electricity sector.

- Our government will work with the federal government and interested municipalities to increase the capacity of public transit services - by bus, ferry or rail - in high traffic or remote areas.

Not every Nova Scotian has access to public transit, but we encourage building on existing municipal transit systems to expand services so more Nova Scotians can take the bus. To help Nova Scotians make better transportation choices, government proposes a number of initiatives, including:

1. Developing better quality transportation options for Nova Scotians to increase ridership and public acceptance.
2. Creating the right environment for establishing better links between urban systems and outlying communities. We will encourage building on successes like the Halifax Regional Municipality's Bus Rapid Transit Program - a \$10 million award winning project that is part of Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase - and building on existing municipal transit systems in Kings County and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.
3. Creating alternatives to driving private vehicles in more Nova Scotia communities.

Our Government will also help Nova Scotians make the right transportation choices by encouraging fuel efficient vehicle purchases and encouraging participation in other environmentally responsible transportation options.

- Our government will dedicate new resources to developing a comprehensive province-wide trail system connecting many of communities - resulting in 500 kilometres of new trail over the next four years. In October 2004, Metro Transit announced switched

5 Will your government commit to ceasing the application of Non-Agricultural Organic Wastes on agricultural land?

Currently, the land application of biosolids is relatively limited in Nova Scotia. In 2004 our government adopted some of the toughest land application and storage rules to be seen in North America.

Yes, a Progressive Conservative government will commit that the application of biosolids on land in Nova Scotia will continue only where the practice and safety of it is supported by science.

Studying the science of waste management made Nova Scotia world leaders in recycling and composting. In addition, studying the science of biosolids will help us address this waste challenge.

6/

Insects, diseases and aggressive weeds can destroy valuable crops and be a real nuisance in lawns and gardens. But to reduce health risks and maintain our delicate ecosystems, our party believes we must manage them responsibly.

In Nova Scotia pesticides are regulated by the federal, provincial and in some cases (such as the Halifax Regional Municipality) by municipal governments. In the Supreme Court's landmark Hudson case, the court ruled that a municipality has the right to protect the health of its citizens.

Further, industry in Canada has also been proactive in responding to needs and choices of consumers by not selling toxic pesticides.

Yes, our party acknowledges facilitating the increase of using alternatives to harmful pesticides. We support the continuing co-operative approach to how a sustainable framework can be accomplished across Nova Scotia by partnering with the Department of Environment and Labour, the Department of Health, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and the federal government's agency, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Fortunately several municipalities are already moving forward with their own initiatives towards this end. Our government applauds and respects their leadership. These municipalities serve as examples to others and help contribute to a knowledge-base of policy framework and alternatives.

Just over seventy municipalities across Canada are involved in or moving toward municipal bylaws, which means that nearly one-third of the population of Canada is now protected or soon will be protected from landscape pesticides.

For example, the Town of Wolfville has been moving toward an abatement of cosmetic use of landscape pesticide. It manages its own recreation grounds and street side weed control virtually without pesticides.

The Town also established its own Working Group on Pesticide Use, which developed a strategy aimed at reducing the use of lawn and garden chemicals on Town and privately - owned properties. This strategy is largely based on the development of an Integrated Plant Health Care (IPHC) Program. There is now a pesticide bylaw committee that is gearing up to work toward creating further and greater awareness about the issues surrounding cosmetic use of landscape pesticides and the lessons to be learned from work which has gone on in other jurisdictions that either have in place or are working toward pesticide bylaws.

Further, Pesticide Management taskforce with representatives from the Town, Acadia University, Sierra Club of Canada, and the Regional Health Authority to consider background, issues, stages of development of pesticide bylaws in Canada and other municipalities in Nova Scotia and a possible process for moving toward a pesticide policy within the Nova Scotia context.

- In consultation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and the Government of Canada, our government will focus new infrastructure dollars towards community basics, such as clean water and sewer.

7/

Our forests provide significant economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits to Nova Scotians, and the best available scientific knowledge must be used for their sound management.

Yes, the Progressive Conservative Party is committed to the stewardship and sustainable management of our natural resources and Crown lands using environmentally responsible approaches to resource management and land use planning. Through sustainable management we provide support to the provincial economy and encourage economic growth, while meeting our protection related responsibilities. In addition, revenue generated from the resource sector (both directly

and indirectly) helps to fund our health and education systems, and other important public services.

The Department of Environment and Labour designated four new nature reserves on Crown Lands, (a total of 1875 hectares), including Spinneys Heath and Great Barren and Quinan Lakes in Yarmouth County; Quinns Meadow in Shelburne County and Duncans Cove in Halifax County.

Our government supports partnerships with a number of private and non-profit stakeholders, such as the Nova Forest Alliance, to research different forest practices and how they are applied in Nova Scotia. Through these partnerships and our own initiatives via the Department of Natural Resources, we also have access to decision support tools to help land managers decide what the best harvest practice is for any particular forest area, including providing managers access to training and updated information.

Additional steps include:

- Finalizing a long-term strategy covering mining, forestry, parks and biodiversity consistent with Nova Scotia's Green Plan.

8/

Our government is committed to environmentally responsible development of its natural resources, both onshore and offshore. In the offshore, the federal and provincial governments rely on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and its processes in assessing the environmental risks associated with proposed offshore activity. In addition, the provincial government is committed to DFO's ESSIM (Eastern Scotia Shelf Integrated management initiative) as an important mechanism by which the various uses of offshore resources can be evaluated in a way that allows for the mitigation of the potential for damage to offshore ecosystems. Therefore, the Government of Nova Scotia believes that the regulatory checks and balances are in place to address proposed activities in all areas of the onshore and offshore.

9/

On July 14, 2005, the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of the Environment for Canada and the Honourable Kerry Morash, Minister of Environment and Labour for Nova Scotia established a Joint Review Panel to conduct an environmental assessment of the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens Sites Remediation Project.

The Panel's responsibility was to identify, evaluate and report on the potential environmental effects to the federal Minister of the Environment and the Nova Scotia Minister of Environment and Labour. In conducting the environmental assessment, the Joint Review Panel will take into consideration a number of factors, as outlined in the Joint Panel Agreement.

In early February 2006, The Joint Review Panel released operational procedures for public hearings. The purpose of the hearings was to allow all participants to provide information and viewpoints on the environmental impacts of the remediation project planned for the Sydney Tar Ponds and adjacent Coke Ovens site.

These public hearings concluded May 18, 2006. The Panel will now turn its attention toward preparing its report to submit before July 13, 2006.

Our party is confident that the project has been given an appropriate level of review, discussion and technical scrutiny. If elected, yes, our party will commit to protect the health of residents and the community, and towards a cleaner, greener future for Sydney, by turning our attention to implementing the report's findings.

10/

Yes, a Progressive Conservative government will continue our commitment to ensuring that public consultations are conducted by a third-party and are inclusive of the Nova Scotia public, being conducted in communities across the Province and open to everyone who wishes to participate.

Voluntary Planning is a citizens' policy forum that operates arm's length to the provincial government. Our mandate is to engage non-governmental volunteers and citizens in policy discussions important to the future of Nova Scotia. Members participate on task forces, project teams and sector committees representing many aspects of the economy and society. Policy advice and recommendations go forward through our Board of Directors to the Premier and Executive Council via the Minister of Treasury and Policy Board.

In carrying out their work, members and staff adhere to an approach and guiding principles that are based on Voluntary Planning's extensive public policy experience.

To this end, Voluntary Planning strives to include all Nova Scotians geographically, sectorally and socially; and to operate in the service of government's policy needs but at arms' length from government. Finally, the process is transparent so that it is fair, and is perceived to be fair, in representing the views of citizens. Further information on the Voluntary Planning mission and its principles can be found on <http://www.gov.ns.ca/vp/pdf/CitizenEngagementPrinciples.pdf>

11/

Yes, the commitment to review the Beaches Act that was made in the Green Plan is still on our government's agenda.

The department has an extensive legislative and policy framework that governs the department's areas of responsibility with respect to forests, minerals, parks, beaches, trails, wildlife, and Crown land. This framework is made up of approximately 30 acts, several hundred regulations, and numerous policies and procedures that are used to manage natural resources in the province and to administer Crown land.

Nova Scotia is fortunate to have such diverse coastal areas and broader coastal management issues need to be addressed in a larger framework than the Beach Act provides.

This larger framework must first be comprehensive, relevant, and up-to-date in order to ensure that the department is able to effectively manage the province's natural resources and administer our Crown land.

12/Game Sanctuaries

Yes, a report by the Department of Natural Resources on our province's Game Sanctuaries and Wildlife Management Areas shows that Nova Scotians want more wildlife management areas and improved habitat protection in the currently designated areas.

Public input was sought as part of a review of the province's existing 26 sanctuaries and wildlife management areas to help determine which areas should be maintained, have boundary changes, be reviewed or eliminated.

As a result of the review, that none of the existing areas would be de-listed and that major prohibitions for hunting and trapping will also be maintained.

The review showed there is broad public support for the creation of nine new wildlife management areas. Regulations will be developed and approved to establish the new areas while accommodating residents' concerns for continued traditional use of the areas.

Improved habitat protection for current sanctuaries and wildlife management areas was also identified as being important to many respondents. Department of Natural Resources wildlife staff will review existing regulations to ensure appropriate measures are in place.

13/

Yes, our party is aiming to resurrect the Round Table and will endeavor that there will be equal and inclusive representation from the ENGO's.

Our government via the Department of Environment and Labour is interested in exploring ways to better utilize the Environmental Trust to promote and support environmental sustainability.

In order to do so, several hurdles must be addressed through changes to the Environment Act. The current purpose is limited in scope and the Trust is administered by the inactive Round Table on Environment and Economy.

By removing the hurdles to the effective use of the Environmental Trust, it has the potential to become a viable mechanism to receive and distribute funds for environmental improvements.

Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Minister of Environment and Labour, tabled proposed amendments to the Environment Act in the Legislature on May 8, 2006. The changes will provide greater flexibility in how the department collects, distributes and administers the funds. The purpose of the Environmental Trust will be updated and an Administrator, on behalf of the Minister, will manage the Trust.

Amendments to the Act also include replacing the dormant Round Table on Environment and Economy with a Round Table to advise the department on issues related to environmental sustainability. This committee will have a more flexible structure to respond to a broad range of environmental issues.

A Terms of Reference will establish the mandate, membership criteria and operational details of this renewed Round Table.

Sincerely,

Rodney MacDonald
Leader, PC Party of Nova Scotia