

together
 BECKY

PILLAR 2

A GOOD LIFE WITHIN REACH

BUILDING NOVA SCOTIA'S
FUTURE TOGETHER



A BETTER FUTURE, TOGETHER

Nova Scotia has so much to offer. Our job is to make sure that potential translates into a better life for people in every community.

This leadership platform sets out my vision for Nova Scotia, shaped by conversations with Liberals and Nova Scotians across the province. It reflects the challenges people are facing, the opportunities they see and what they expect from government.

These priorities are the foundation for our next general election platform. I've included examples of actions we could take, but we will develop the specific commitments together. Liberal members, EDAs and commissions will have a meaningful role, alongside

communities, people directly affected by the issues, and those with lived experience and expertise.

Together, we will turn these priorities into a practical plan we can deliver.

This vision is for a Nova Scotia built on trust and shared purpose. A province where government is accountable for results, public dollars are spent wisely, and we work together to create lasting opportunity, stronger communities and a good life within reach for everyone.

OUR VISION FOR NOVA SCOTIA: PRIORITIES AND IDEAS FOR ACTION

The healthcare you need

Every Nova Scotian should be able to get the care they need, when they need it, from healthcare providers who know them. We need a connected healthcare system that provides reliable access to primary care, urgent and emergency care, and mental health and addictions care, with services that reflect local needs and circumstances. Better coordination, prevention, management of chronic illness and disability and community-based services will improve care and reduce pressure on hospitals. We must also support the people who deliver care and make every healthcare dollar count.



Actions we can develop together

- **A healthcare home for every Nova Scotian:** Connect everyone with a team of healthcare providers, including family doctors, nurse practitioners and other health professionals, and expand access to urgent care.
- **Better care for those who have been overlooked:** Develop a Women's Health Strategy and Men's Mental Health Strategy, improve screening and prevention, and expand access to accessible, culturally appropriate care for underserved communities.
- **Healthcare solutions that work for communities:** Build on successful community-led models like the Clare Health Centre (Clare) and Our Health Centre (Chester) by working with municipalities and healthcare providers to improve local services.
- **Care for the healthcare workers who care for us:** Improve workplace safety, enable healthcare professionals to work to their full scope of practice, and develop payment models and working conditions that help recruit and retain healthcare workers.
- **Coordinated mental health and addictions care:** Expand community-based early intervention and coordinated mental health and addictions response teams, connecting people with treatment, recovery services and ongoing support.
- **Measure what matters and make every healthcare dollar count:** Set measurable targets for primary care, emergency services and surgeries, direct funding toward better access and patient outcomes, and publicly report progress.

Communities that connect

A good life is about more than what we can afford. It's also about belonging, having people we can count on, opportunities to participate and places to gather. Volunteers, community organizations, libraries, arts and cultural groups, faith communities and local businesses help bring people together, strengthen communities and provide practical support. Government should help ensure everyone can participate and contribute.

Actions we can develop together

- **Support the places and organizations that bring people together:** Support accessible community spaces, organizations, local gathering places and facilities that foster belonging, reduce isolation and provide practical support.
- **Make it easier to volunteer and contribute:** Explore meaningful tax recognition for substantial volunteer service and opportunities for high school students to earn credits for community involvement.
- **Keep our main streets and cultural life vibrant:** Support local arts, culture, festivals and creative industries alongside local businesses and community-led efforts to revitalize downtowns, main streets and public gathering spaces.
- **Measure what makes communities thrive:** Consider measures of belonging, social connection, access to services and quality of life when evaluating government decisions.

A life you can afford

A good life should not be pushed out of reach by the cost of necessities. Nova Scotians need affordable homes, groceries, power and transportation, and more money left in their pockets. Government

cannot control every cost, but it can protect consumers and reduce barriers that keep people in poverty.

Actions we can develop together

- **Build more affordable housing:** Increase affordable, co-operative, public and supportive and transitional housing, including rentals, and work with municipalities to provide the infrastructure needed for new homes.
- **Make renting more affordable and secure:** Improve rent protections to address high rents, prevent unreasonable increases and preserve existing affordable rental homes.
- **Improve food security and access to affordable groceries:** Support grocery co-ops, community food initiatives and local food networks, and address barriers to affordable, nutritious food in communities with limited grocery options.
- **Make home and vehicle energy costs more affordable and fair:** Explore an Essential Use Electricity Rate, support energy-efficiency upgrades and introduce a Ratepayers' Bill of Rights covering fair billing, payment arrangements, disconnections, outages and independent complaint resolution. Review regulated gasoline pricing to identify potential savings and repeal the electric and plug-in hybrid vehicle levy.
- **Improve access to financial assistance and supports:** Review income assistance, disability supports and other support programs to reduce barriers, improve access and better help Nova Scotians meet their basic needs.
- **Strengthen consumer protections:** Improve protections against unfair business practices, misleading charges and inadequate dispute resolution, while keeping rules practical for small and local businesses.

Infrastructure that works — today and tomorrow

Good infrastructure makes life easier, safer and more affordable. Roads, bridges, public transit, cellphone service, water and wastewater systems all need to meet today's needs and keep pace with growth. Working with municipalities and communities, we need to plan for growth, improve accessibility and prepare for extreme weather and a changing climate.

Actions we can develop together

- **Improve road maintenance:** Establish clearer standards to make roads and bridges safer and reduce vehicle damage and costly repairs.
- **Expand public and community transportation:** Work with municipalities and local transportation providers to expand affordable transit and community transportation services, particularly in rural areas.
- **Close cellphone coverage gaps:** Address persistent gaps in cellphone service so Nova Scotians can stay connected, access services, do business and reach help in emergencies.

Government that listens and earns your trust

Nova Scotians should have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect them and confidence that government acts in the public interest. That means listening before decisions are made, working in partnership with municipalities, Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, Acadian and Francophone communities, persons with disabilities, newcomers, local organizations and others directly affected by decisions. Government services should be accessible, secure and easy to use, with help from a real person available when people need it. And public officials should follow clear rules, with strong independent oversight.

Actions we can develop together

- **Listen before decisions are made:** Strengthen advisory councils and public consultation through more accessible and inclusive practices, so Nova Scotians can contribute their perspectives and see how their input influences decisions.
- **Strengthen integrity and independent oversight:** Modernize conflict-of-interest laws with stronger disclosure requirements, clear rules for public officials, protections for people who raise concerns and more independent oversight.
- **Protect the independence of MLAs:** End appointments by the Premier that provide government backbenchers with extra pay, reinforcing their responsibility to represent constituents and hold government to account.

An economy that works for you

A strong economy should create good jobs, support successful businesses and give Nova Scotians opportunities to build their futures in the communities they call home. That means strengthening established industries like fisheries, forestry, agriculture and tourism, while pursuing opportunities in defence, shipbuilding, clean energy and other emerging technologies. We need to work with municipalities, businesses and communities to build on regional strengths, remove barriers to growth and support rural economies. We also need to work more closely with our Atlantic neighbours, improve productivity and help businesses grow and compete. That includes helping businesses and workers adapt to technological change, including the opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence. Efficient, science-based regulations must protect our health and environment while supporting responsible development. Economic growth must deliver lasting benefits for Nova Scotians, including future generations.

Actions we can develop together

- **Make it easier to start and grow a business:** Simplify permits and access to business supports and financing, reduce unnecessary red tape, and help local businesses plan for succession.
- **Strengthen Atlantic cooperation:** Work with neighbouring Atlantic provinces to reduce barriers to trade, improve transportation connections, align regulations where practical, and pursue shared opportunities for business growth, investment and economic development.
- **Prepare Nova Scotians for good jobs:** Develop long-term workforce forecasts to better align education, apprenticeships, skills training and credential recognition with future job opportunities.
- **Create pathways into our traditional industries:** Work with the fishing, farming

and forestry sectors to expand hands-on mentorship, help new entrants build careers and businesses, and support succession so the next generation can carry these industries forward in communities across Nova Scotia.

- **Strengthen our local food system:** Support Nova Scotia farmers, food producers and processors, strengthen local supply chains and expand opportunities for Nova Scotia products in local markets and public institutions.
- **Ensure Nova Scotians share in the benefits:** Ensure resource development delivers good jobs, local investment and a fair financial return to Nova Scotians. Explore a provincial wealth fund to turn resource revenues into lasting public benefits for future generations.

A healthy environment for generations to come

Nova Scotia's land, water, coastlines and natural ecosystems are central to our quality of life, communities and economy. We need to protect what makes our province special, reduce emissions, pursue clean and affordable energy and prepare our communities and industries for a changing climate. New development must protect our environment, serve the public interest and avoid passing risks and costs to Nova Scotians.

Actions we can develop together

- **Make protected areas truly protected:** Identify and protect important natural areas, meet Nova Scotia's conservation targets and ensure protected status provides meaningful, lasting protection.
- **Prepare for a changing climate:** Work with communities and industries, including



fisheries, agriculture and forestry, to develop practical plans for adapting to flooding, coastal erosion, wildfires and other climate-related risks.

- **Advance clean, affordable energy:** Support renewable energy and energy efficiency while protecting affordability, grid reliability and Nova Scotia's long-term interests. Ensure new projects, including offshore wind, are developed through competitive processes that deliver lasting benefits for Nova Scotians.
- **Protect our coastlines:** Establish clear provincial rules for coastal development that protect people, property and natural areas from flooding, erosion and rising sea levels.
- **Set clear rules before emerging technologies move forward:** Establish a public framework for major projects such as data centres that protects electricity and water supplies, ensures proponents pay their fair share of infrastructure costs, and prevents financial and environmental risks from being shifted to Nova Scotians.

Your money, well spent

Public money should be spent responsibly and make a real difference in Nova Scotians' lives. Every dollar spent on debt interest is a dollar unavailable for healthcare, education, roads and other priorities. We need a credible path back to balanced budgets, stronger oversight of spending and responsible management of provincial finances that protects the interests of future generations.

Actions we can develop together

- **Strengthen spending oversight:** Follow procurement rules, use open competition,

give local businesses fair opportunities to compete, require value-for-money assessments for major investments and strengthen legislative scrutiny of spending.

- **Make government services more efficient:** Review programs and services to reduce duplication, simplify processes and lower costs without compromising results.
- **Establish a path to a balanced budget:** Develop a realistic, costed plan with clear targets and timelines for balancing the budget and managing provincial debt, and publicly report on progress.

Strong families, bright futures

Every child deserves a safe, healthy start and the opportunity to reach their potential. Families need access to affordable child care and support as children grow. When families face difficulties, early intervention and appropriate services should help keep children safe and families together wherever possible. Our schools should provide a strong education to support diverse learning needs, protect students' wellbeing, including from online harms, and be closely connected to the families and communities they serve. Beyond high school, young Nova Scotians should have accessible, affordable pathways to further education and careers through universities, NSCC, apprenticeships and skilled trades training, with opportunities to build their futures here at home.

Actions we can develop together

- **Give families and communities a stronger voice in schools:** Reinvigorate School Advisory Councils, strengthening their role in school decisions and connections among schools, families and local communities.



- **Make schools phone-free:** Extend cellphone restrictions throughout the school day, including breaks and lunch, to improve learning, attention and social connection.
- **Better support for diverse learning needs:** Improve access to learning supports, classroom resources and timely assessments so students with different abilities and learning needs can succeed.
- **Make university applications simpler and more affordable:** Work with Nova Scotia universities to establish a single application process for universities across the province.

Living well as you age

Nova Scotians should be able to age with dignity, independence and security, with choices about where and how they live. We need more affordable, accessible housing and living options that support independence, connection and community life, along with care and services that adapt as needs change.

Actions we can develop together

- **Create more housing choices for seniors:** Support accessible, affordable housing options, including smaller homes, co-operative housing and community living arrangements that offer independence alongside connection and support.
- **Make care and support easier to access:** Improve coordination of home care, community services and long-term care so seniors can access the right level of support as their needs change.
- **Better support family and unpaid caregivers:** Explore expanded respite services and practical assistance for people caring for aging family members.

Safe communities and access to justice

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their homes and communities, and to have access to a fair, timely justice system. Crime and violence cause lasting harm, and victims deserve protection, support and justice. Community safety depends on effective prevention and policing, but also on housing, healthcare, mental health, addictions and social supports. These systems must work together to understand the causes of crime, prevent harm and respond more effectively to people in need. Communities also need effective emergency preparedness, reliable communications and coordinated response and recovery, with proper support for volunteer firefighters and other emergency responders. Municipalities and the federal government are essential partners in these efforts.

Actions we can develop together

- **Make it easier for victims to get help:** Establish a single point of contact to help victims navigate the justice system and access counselling, assistance and other supports.
- **Strengthen the response to gender-based violence:** Improve prevention, expand access to emergency shelters and specialized supports for survivors, and improve coordination of services for people at risk.
- **Support safer communities:** Work with municipalities to address local policing needs and costs, including expanding the use of safety officers and other approaches to neighbourhood and downtown safety.
- **Improve responses to mental health and addictions crises:** Expand coordinated response teams that bring police, mental health professionals and outreach workers together, so people in crisis receive appropriate care and support.

My commitment is to lead by listening, bring people together and make responsible choices that turn our province's potential into a better everyday life. With Liberal members and Nova Scotians shaping the path forward, we can build a future where a good life is within reach for everyone.

BECKY DRUHAN

together **WITHBECKY**

Authorized by the Official Agent for Becky Druhan

www.togetherwithbecky.ca

leadership@togetherwithbecky.ca

  @BeckyDruhanNS