

VOTE FOR THE FUTURE

2021 NOVA SCOTIA PROVINCIAL ELECTION **STUDENT ISSUES QUESTIONNAIRE - PARTY RESPONSES**

QUESTIONS OVERVIEW

1. ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.....	1
2. FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.....	4
3. EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING.....	6
4. CLIMATE JUSTICE.....	12
5. ANTI-RACISM & RECONCILIATION.....	16

Note: All parties were given one week to respond to the questions and all responses are unedited, except for formatting consistency.

1. ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

A. Will your party commit to increasing core funding to post-secondary education institutions?

Nova Scotia Liberal Party

Nova Scotia's post-secondary sector plays a key role in our cultural, social and economic well-being as a province, and like other sectors, it has faced unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19.

This past January the Liberal government announced \$25 million to help Nova Scotia universities manage the impact of the pandemic. We know that all 10 universities faced unexpected financial challenges for 2020-21, including a loss in revenues related to tuition and residence fees. Institutions have also incurred additional COVID-19 related costs around information technology, curriculum development and additional supports for faculty and students, as well as increased cleaning and other costs associated with public health directives.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there was a \$3.7 million increase to the operating grant for universities to train and educate our workforce of the future. On March 19, The Province of Nova Scotia announced a \$16.8 million investment that will allow four Nova Scotia universities to expand and enhance their computer science programs. To ensure we deepen our talent pool, Dalhousie University, Acadia University, Saint Mary's University and St. Francis Xavier University will each receive funding to increase or enhance their respective computer science programs.

Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative Party

A PC government will ensure that two of Nova Scotia's most urgent needs in terms of employment through education are met: trades workers, and CCAs.

Education is becoming increasingly expensive, and the debt following graduation coupled with today's economy is becoming increasingly unbearable for our youth. That is why we have put forward two comprehensive solutions to make life more affordable for our students in the key areas of skilled trades and continuing care assistants.

For those in the skilled trades in Nova Scotia, no provincial income tax will be paid by those under 30 on their first \$50,000 in earnings under the More Opportunities for Skilled Trades (the "MOST") program. The Most program will give those in the skilled trades an additional \$4,500 per year and a head start in paying off their debt, saving up for a house, or investing in their future.

In terms of our CCAs, we need 1,400 new graduates to fill our growing need. To help them get a strong financial start in life and to acknowledge the critical work that they do, we will give a 50% bursary towards a CCA's tuition upon graduation. This will allow CCAs, just as our skilled trades workers, to be acknowledged for their critical input into Nova Scotia and give them the head start in life that they deserve.

Nova Scotia New Democratic Party

Yes. As you correctly stated, Nova Scotians currently pay the highest tuition fees in the country. However, increasing core funding to post-secondary institutions is not enough; the government must also ensure that this money is spent on changes that will actually help students. To achieve this goal, the NDP would implement hard caps on university executives' compensation and impose goals to work toward the elimination of tuition fees.

Green Party of Nova Scotia

We believe that public post-secondary education institutions are key in fostering a prosperous and sustainable future for Nova Scotia. Inadequate funding is, in part, what has led to the tuition hikes in recent years and as such we are committed to working with post-secondary education institutions to increase core funding and build an economically sustainable education system.

B. Will your party commit to lowering tuition fees? Does your party have a plan for the eventual elimination of tuition fees?

Liberal

The Liberal government is committed to accessible education for Nova Scotians. We recently announced funding for individuals to train or upgrade their training as Early Childhood Educators as part of the largest ever investment in Childcare and Early Learning in Nova Scotia's history. This funding will cover the tuition and books for hundreds of students who want to upgrade.

We also recently announced a \$323,000 increase to the Technology Advantage program that brings together high schools, NSCC, and the IT sector through a partnership with NSCC and IBM. This program will help Nova Scotia students with their transition to University and College Programs.

In December 2020, Nova Scotia announced a one-time \$750 COVID-19 Response Grant to all Nova Scotia Student Assistance recipients in 2020-21. Many Nova Scotians have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including post-secondary students and, in particular, those students with disabilities. That's why we introduced the COVID-19 Accessibility Grant.

This grant will help about 3,000 Nova Scotia post-secondary students with permanent disabilities by providing them \$800 in financial assistance.

This government recognizes that students with permanent disabilities have exceptional education-related and equipment requirements. The one-time \$800 grant will help ensure equity of access to training and other educational opportunities, reflecting the government's commitment to inclusivity and opportunity.

PC

Nova Scotia students graduating from Nova Scotia non-professional undergraduate programs may no longer have to repay the provincial portion of their student loans. Graduates can receive 5 years of loan forgiveness, up to \$20,400. (Nova Scotia Loans issued on or after 1 August, 2015 may be eligible for Loan Forgiveness.) The bulk of student loans are through the federal government. Details can be found here: Student Assistance - | novascotia.ca

NDP

Yes. The NDP is committed to working toward the full elimination of tuition fees in Nova Scotia. Our plan is to begin by eliminating tuition fees at Nova Scotia Community College. We will work from there to gradually lower and eventually eliminate tuition fees at all public post-secondary institutions in the province. An NDP government would also expand access to trades, with a specific focus on communities facing discrimination and underemployment.

Green

We will immediately eliminate tuition fees at all Nova Scotia community colleges, and immediately provide free tuition for all former and current youth in care. We intend to eventually eliminate tuition fees for all students in Nova Scotia, whether domestic or international.

C. Will your party commit to converting all student loans to grants?

Liberal

As of 1 August 2019, the Nova Scotia Loan Forgiveness Program can eliminate all Nova Scotia Student Loan debt for eligible borrowers who study at Nova Scotia universities. Nova Scotia students graduating from Nova Scotia non-professional undergraduate programs may no longer have to repay the provincial portion of their student loans. Graduates can receive 5 years of loan forgiveness, up to \$20,400. This is a significant step forward in reducing the burden on graduates in Nova Scotia.

PC

The balance of providing affordable student loans and grants has to be calculated. Typically, 60% of the loans provided are from the federal government, while 40% is typically from the provincial government. The Federal loan is the only one that typically accumulates interest. Upon forming a government and getting the necessary finance details, we will consider this balance in order to help attract and retain professionals here in Nova Scotia.

NDP

Yes. An NDP government would convert Nova Scotia government student loans to grants. Young people deserve a chance to succeed without being burdened by debt. Converting loans to grants will put them in a better position to build careers, homes, and families in the province.

Green

We will immediately convert all student loans to grants.

2. FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A. Will your party commit to the elimination of international student differential fees?

Liberal

International students add a great deal to Nova Scotia, bringing experience and diversity to our campuses and communities. International student fees and increases are set by individual universities and colleges.

In the past year, the Liberal Government introduced new immigration streams making it easier for international students who graduate from programs in Nova Scotia to apply for permanent residency. The International Graduates in Demand immigration stream started as a pilot program in April. Those hired must be international graduates of eligible programs offered by Nova Scotia's private career colleges and universities or Nova Scotia Community College. Changes to the Occupations in Demand immigration stream announced June 16th, allow employers to hire international newcomers to fill heavy equipment operator and construction trade helper and labourer positions.

Nova Scotia's current immigrant retention rate is 71 per cent, the highest in Atlantic Canada. This speaks to the supports in place for newcomers to our province and we want this number to grow. We know that there is still lots of work to be done to make Nova Scotia the most welcoming and Inclusive province it can be.

The number of international graduate approvals in Nova Scotia has increased from 35 in 2014 to 1,018 in 2020, and the office continues to work closely with post-secondary institutions, international students, graduates and stakeholders to keep this upward trend going. We value our international students for all they bring to our schools and communities.

PC

The costs of our world-renowned post-secondary institutions need to be competitive and attractive for students and people setting up to work and live in Nova Scotia. Upon forming the government, a review of how these fees are balanced and the impact they have will be conducted.

NDP

International students provide immense benefits to our province by bringing new ideas and expertise from around the world while enriching life on campus and beyond. It is not fair that they have been excluded from previous memorandums of understanding on tuition fees, allowing differential fees to rise as high as post-secondary institutions believe they can get away with. An NDP government would address international student differential fees as part of its eventual goal to eliminate tuition fees.

Green

We will commit to immediately eliminating international student differential fees and working towards eventually eliminating international student tuition. We commit to providing immediate MSI for all upon immediate arrival in Nova Scotia and removing any bureaucratic barriers preventing international students and migrant workers from accessing appropriate and adequate healthcare.

B. Will your party commit to providing immediate Medical Services Insurance (MSI) upon arrival for international students as well as migrant workers?

Liberal

All international students receive testing and vaccination without barriers and free of charge, this information has been widely available. Public health officials have produced specifically targeted educational campaigns to ensure this information was accessible to international students and those working in Canada without Permanent Residency.

We are open to continued dialogue regarding updates to the MSI model.

PC

Many universities provide medical coverage at a very competitive rate on an opt-out basis for all students.

People coming to Nova Scotia from outside the country who hold a study permit that is valid for a minimum of 12 months can apply for coverage the first day of the thirteenth month following the date of arrival in Nova Scotia as a student (providing they have not been outside the province for more than 31 consecutive days except in the course of their studies); a student arriving in Nova Scotia in July cannot apply until August of the following year. For continuous coverage, a copy of each Study Permit must be submitted to MSI and a declaration must be signed each year. Persons on a Study Permit are eligible for insured services in Nova Scotia only. Services rendered while outside the province would be the responsibility of the individual.

NDP

Yes. The NDP believes health care is a human right. An NDP government would expand MSI coverage to all people living in Nova Scotia regardless of citizenship status. This includes international students, migrant workers, and their families.

Green

We will commit to immediately eliminating international student differential fees and working towards eventually eliminating international student tuition. We commit to providing immediate MSI for all upon immediate arrival in Nova Scotia and removing any bureaucratic barriers preventing international students and migrant workers from accessing appropriate and adequate healthcare.

3. EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING

A. Will your party commit to raising the minimum wage to a living wage?

Liberal

The current model of determining annual minimum wage adjustments is mandated, under the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code, and overseen by the Nova Scotia Minimum Wage Review Committee based on the formula set out in the minimum wage regulations.

On January 4, 2021, the Minimum Wage Review Committee submitted its annual report to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. The report included two recommendations. The second of the two recommendations was to increase the minimum wage rate to \$12.95 an hour and to conduct a review of the current approach to setting the minimum wage rate.

The new rate increase came into effect on April 1. The Committee will provide recommendations to the government. The Committee has representatives from both employees and employers. The recommendations are expected by the end of the year.

We listen to representative groups of employers and employees and strive for a balanced approach to decision-making while adapting to economic realities. We value the recommendations of the Minimum Wage Review Committee including suggestions that a diversity and inclusion lens be applied when setting government policy in relation to the minimum wage and setting a minimum wage that attracts workers to Nova Scotia and makes life easier for all Nova Scotians.

PC

The PC Party is fully committed to making life more affordable for Nova Scotian workers. While the cost of living has skyrocketed across Nova Scotia, there is an even more profound impact on those in HRM. That is why our party has put forward solutions to address the growing financial stress facing our workers, such as the Better Paycheque Guarantee, and the More Opportunities for Skilled Trades (the "MOST") program.

The Better Paycheque Guarantee will return 50% of the corporate tax a corporation pays on the condition that 100% of those funds are returned to employees through better paychecks, or used to hire more employees. This will ensure that those with existing employment have a higher pay cheque, while helping those without a well-paying job to secure one.

For our skilled tradespeople, the MOST program provides that those under 30 years of age will pay no provincial income tax on their first \$50,000 in earnings under a PC government. This will allow those fresh out of college to get a head start in life; to save for a home, purchase a new vehicle, or to pay off their debts as early as possible while also filling a growing void of skilled workers in our society.

NDP

Yes. An NDP government would introduce legislation to raise the provincial minimum wage to \$15 per hour. From that important starting point, we are committed to continuing to work toward achieving a living wage.

Green

We propose the creation of a Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) program which will provide a livable income for all living in Nova Scotia regardless of employment status. The GLI will start at \$18,329 per person annually and increase to \$20,000 over four years. We believe that everyone deserves access to a livable income because of existing, and not because of their contributions to the economy. However, we recognize that it is unlikely that we will be

able to implement a GLI immediately and as such, we will increase access to existing programs and increase their amounts including: raising minimum wage to a livable wage, Income Assistance, and disability supports to ensure that everyone has an income of at least the amount of the proposed GLI.

B. Does your party have a plan to increase access and affordability for high quality internet across the province?

Liberal

We understand that access to reliable, high-speed internet across the province gives Nova Scotians options in choosing where to live and work and helps attract those who can work remotely to our province. Develop Nova Scotia continues to advance projects that extend internet networks and service through the government's investment in the Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust.

Earlier this year, Develop Nova Scotia announced more expansions to existing contracts for internet for Nova Scotia Initiative projects. These expansions provide access to high-speed internet connections to an additional 5,600 homes and businesses, extending coverage to 99 per cent of Nova Scotia.

We know how important high-speed internet is, especially to those living in rural and remote communities. It is critical to businesses and families, and our government is committed to bringing access to as many Nova Scotians as possible. Develop Nova Scotia continues to accelerate timelines for rural homes and businesses to be connected. The trust is investing \$29 million in these contract extension projects, with leveraged funds of \$8 million from other levels of government and the private sector.

Preparatory and engineering work has begun on the contract extensions, and it is expected all homes and businesses covered by these extensions will have access to improved network by the end of or before 2023. Timelines for access to connections will vary by community and will be further refined by providers within the next several months. This work will continue with internet providers to reach as close to 100 per cent of homes and businesses as possible.

PC

Ensuring that every Nova Scotian has access to proper, modern high speed internet represents the biggest economic development opportunity since the railway. There is no greater investment in our economy than in ensuring the Internet is available to everyone.

A PC government will invest in getting the Internet to every household, not just most, for the simple reason that we see every single household as an economic development opportunity.

Satellite Internet aims to provide service to Canadian regions that lack high-speed internet. To receive the service, the user must purchase the satellite hardware package at a cost of \$649, which includes a satellite dish. Bell presently charges \$59.95 for their installation fee. The satellite Internet service itself is \$129 per month thereafter. The monthly costs are competitive with Bell Aliant, which offers their fastest internet, Bell Fibe, for the same \$129/month.

For any household Develop Nova Scotia leaves behind, a PC government will subsidize the installation costs of satellite (less what a household would pay to a provider like Bell, if they had access).

This investment will provide every household in the province with access to the Internet should they want it. It will also modernize Nova Scotia and increase productivity and is absolutely necessary to seizing the potential of our province.

NDP

Yes. In our modern world, access to reliable high-speed Internet must be recognized as an essential service. Previous governments have tried to address this problem by giving handouts to big telecoms in the hope that service will improve, but this strategy has clearly failed. An NDP government would support the creation of municipally-owned, non-profit, and cooperatively-owned Internet services to ensure that all communities in Nova Scotia can invest in sustainable, affordable, community-led solutions.

Green

Ensuring universal access to affordable and high quality internet across the province is one of our top priorities to ensure that no one in this province is left behind.

C. What is your party's plan to address the housing crisis?

Liberal

The Liberal Party of Nova Scotia understands how necessary it is to protect renters against rising prices and address affordable housing in Nova Scotia.

In the last year, we've committed \$25 million to address immediate investments recommended by the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission. This money will directly support new affordable housing units, repairs to public housing and building upgrades that

will reduce emissions. It will create an independent housing entity and look at modernizing laws and regulations around housing. An additional \$2.5 million will support a fund, to be co-created with community housing organizations, to help grow the community housing sector and to add more affordable units.

The other parties are running on platforms that address only pieces of the problem we face as a province. We are striving for a balanced approach that lessens the impact on those looking for a place to call home now while expediting the creation of new housing stock for the future to help bring down rising housing costs. We're providing more than 2,500 rent supplements and repairing and adapting almost 1,000 homes for low-income Nova Scotians.

Access to affordable housing is essential to quality of life. Creating affordable housing is a group effort and we remain committed to finding innovative solutions with our partners that help Nova Scotians find an affordable place to call home.

PC

The PC Party fully acknowledges that we are in the midst of a housing crisis. Demand across the province has risen to heights that Nova Scotia has never witnessed before, and this crisis is quickly reaching a breaking point.

When there is low supply and high demand, prices will rise, as we have witnessed. The answer to this problem is simple: we need more supply to create a more competitive marketplace. If there is competition to fill vacancies, prices will stabilize and become more manageable.

As of right now, our development process is too slow. It can take years for a building to be planned and constructed. Development is simply not keeping pace with the growth of our population.

A PC government will cut the red tape holding developers back and incentivize them to build right here in Nova Scotia as quickly as possible. It's imperative that developers know that they are welcome here, and can operate a successful housing business while providing high quality, affordable units to our growing population.

To discourage non Nova Scotian taxpayers from purchasing our properties, taking home ownership for Nova Scotians further out of reach, we are also introducing a special deed transfer tax and a property tax levy.

A deed transfer tax is a one-time payment due at the time of closing a property transaction. Standard deed transfer tax rates are set by each municipality, but range from .5% of the purchase price to 1.5% of the purchase price. For purchasers who do not pay Nova Scotia income tax, our PC government will implement an additional, provincial deed transfer tax of

5%. This tax is in addition to the deed transfer tax set and collected by the respective municipalities. This will help to cool our housing market, and allow greater access to home ownership for our population.

NDP

The NDP has an extensive plan to address the housing crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it very clear that having access to safe, affordable housing is essential. Massive rent increases, “renovictions,” and skyrocketing house prices have made it more difficult to rent or own a home in many communities.

Some highlights of the NDP plan include:

- Making rent control permanent so that annual rent increases are capped.
- Strengthening tenants’ rights, including allowing tenants to file group complaints, requiring landlords to post rental rates in a building, and creating a registry of health and safety violations in rental properties.
- Building 1,000 new units of housing in the next four years by reinvesting in publicly-owned, cooperative, and non-profit housing.
- Expanding affordable housing by redirecting provincial, municipal, and private resources to non-profit housing providers and empowering municipalities to require affordable housing through inclusionary zoning.
- Funding housing for marginalized communities, including African Nova Scotians, Mi’kmaq, people experiencing criminalization, lone-parent households, and people with disabilities.
- Addressing the financialization of housing and strengthening regulation of short-term rentals.

Green

Access to proper housing is a human right, one that is not being upheld in this province. We are in a housing crisis, and we must improve access to quality affordable housing for everyone living on this land. Many are faced with unsafe living conditions and sky-rocketing rental rates which they cannot afford and this is only made worse when people face discrimination as a result of their identities. We will immediately limit the amount that rent can be increased as an emergency measure to prevent people from losing their homes. We need to build communities with many different types of housing units to increase availability and encourage the strengthening of ties between people of all kinds living in this province like co-op housing, apartments with units of different sizes, not-for-profit housing, secondary suites, among others. Safe housing is also environmentally friendly and sustainable housing. We will ensure that the amount of energy used in housing is reduced, and support the development of housing that follows LEED standards.

More specifically we will:

- Increase the supply of shelter beds and transitional housing for the homeless including shelter spaces and supported housing for intact families.

- Immediately implement rent control as an emergency measure to prevent people from losing their housing.
- Consider the pertinence of rent control on a long term basis.
- Implement a Housing First strategy in Sydney, Halifax and Truro.
- Increase the supply of safe, affordable and quality housing across the Province as the affordable housing stock needs to address the needs of all age groups, family sizes and people with disabilities.
- Increase the mix of affordable housing to include public housing, co-ops, not for profits, small houses, and secondary suites, the mix will also include new builds, retrofitting existing buildings and repurposing empty buildings.
- Guarantee that in no case will any disability benefits be reduced by any change in living situation.
- Ensure that a provincial housing program is coordinated with other key policy areas such as a guaranteed livable income, employment, recreation and leisure, transportation, health care and the environment.
- Work with CMHC, municipalities, housing organizations, Mi'kmaq communities, and the private sector to ensure that the full range of strategies can be utilized to address the issue.
- As recommended by the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission, establish an arm's length independent provincial housing entity.
- Have a long term affordable housing strategy that will ensure that future housing developments are done with a climate change lens that includes low GHG emissions and principles of accessibility and equity.
- Make 100% of social housing Net Zero Energy Ready (NZER) by 2030.

4. CLIMATE JUSTICE

A. Does your party have a plan to transition Nova Scotia to a renewable energy grid? What are the details of that plan and does it include a just transition for students and workers in high-carbon industries?

Liberal

The Rankin Government focused on bringing green jobs to rural Nova Scotia with the largest electricity procurement of renewable energy projects to date. The province announced a Request for Proposals (RFP) to attract low-cost and innovative solutions to supply 10 % of the province's electricity from renewables, such as wind and solar.

This will create 4,000 jobs, mostly in rural Nova Scotia, and generate more than \$550 million in construction activity in wind-rich areas, such as Guysborough, Pictou, Antigonish, Hants, Cumberland, and Colchester counties.

Once these projects are operational, they will also reduce Nova Scotia's greenhouse gas emissions by more than 1 million tonnes each year. This call for proposals will help the province get closer to the new Renewable Energy Standard of 80 per cent target and support the province's goal of achieving a 53 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero by 2050.

PC

The province will commit to 80% of its electricity needs being supplied by renewable energy by 2030. The effect of this target will mean eliminating Nova Scotia's reliance on coal nearly ten years earlier than our current target of 2040. As a result, the goal for our energy production breakdown is estimated to be as follows.

Energy Source	GWh	%
Coal	-	0%
Natural Gas	1,100	10%
Domestic Hydro	1,300	11%
Biomass	500	4%
Wind	4,600	40%
Maritime Link	1,000	9%
Maritime Link non firm market	1,800	16%
Hydro Import	1,200	10%
Total	11,500	100%

NDP

Yes. Climate change is a defining crisis of our time that will impact every aspect of life in Nova Scotia. Through our Green Jobs Plan, an NDP government would take immediate action to heavily reduce emissions while also making Nova Scotia a leader in climate innovation. Specifically, we would set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 50 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, as well as transitioning our grid to 90 percent renewable energy and phasing out coal by the same year. We will also write climate change directly into the mandates of Nova Scotia Power and Efficiency Nova Scotia.

We also have plans for a just, community-led transition for carbon-intensive workforces, including free NSCC tuition and dedicated training streams for energy efficiency and renewable workforces. This work will be guided by a Green Jobs Task Force that includes representatives from labour, business, advocacy groups, universities and community colleges, and marginalized communities.

Green

Yes, we will:

- Immediately declare a climate emergency focusing all government departments on climate change as a priority. This will include educating the public and our children about climate change, its impacts, and strategies to address.
- Reduce our GHG emissions by 70% below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve a net-zero-carbon economy by 2045.
- Require that all of Nova Scotia's electricity would come from carbon-neutral sources by 2030.
- End all provincial subsidies to fossil fuel sectors.
- End exploration, drilling, and extraction of fossil fuels (including exploratory fracking) in Nova Scotia.
- Provide funding for Mi'kmaq communities to bring all of their existing housing to net zero energy ready (NZER) standards within five years.
- Provide \$50 million per year in funding to Housing Nova Scotia, to enable energy efficiency retrofits to all social housing units (using local contractors) to bring them to NZER standards.
- Provide funding for the SolarHomes program to allow it to increase the rebate to \$1 watt and to continue after 2022.
- Direct resources in all provincial government departments towards adapting to climate change and provide adequate financial and resource support to municipalities for mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- Introduce a Just Transition Act that will provide opportunities for workers in fossil fuel industries to have access to retraining and financial support to transition into the green energy sector.

B. Will your party commit to building no new fossil fuel infrastructure?

Liberal

Nova Scotia has set the most ambitious goals in the country to tackle climate change. Everything we do to address climate change today will help protect our ecosystems and bring down our GHG emissions in the future. We have committed to moving off coal by 2030. We're investing to make homes and vehicles more energy efficient and developing detailed regulations to protect our coastlines.

We are transforming how we manage our public lands, creating a made-in-Nova Scotia approach to a more sustainable, diverse forestry sector.

Among the actions the government has taken to protect the environment:

- Developing detailed regulations for the Coastal Protection Act, which will determine what can and can't be built on the province's coastlines.

- Updating the provincial climate risk assessment, with a focus on the climate change risks that will most impact Nova Scotians' wellness. The final report will be ready in 2022.
- Starting a rebate program for e-bikes, electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids, to encourage Nova Scotians to move away from gasoline-powered vehicles.
- Investing more than half of the Green Fund in energy-efficiency programming for low-income Nova Scotians.
- Announcing the intention to designate 62 new wilderness areas, nature reserves and parks, moving toward the current goal of 14 %.
- Working with departments and sectors to identify and address the risks and opportunities presented by climate change under our Climate Adaptation Leadership Program.
- Passing the Plastic Bag Reduction Act to ban single-use plastic shopping bags.

PC

Establishing a plan now with the above-noted sources of energy, will allow the time for the industry to adjust and prepare. It is also worth noting that the December 2020 carbon price announced by the Federal government (\$170/tonne by 2030) will have the result of a phasing out of coal by the early 2030s, as opposed to the previous target of 2040.

NDP

The NDP is committed to investing in renewable solutions to the climate crisis, not new fossil fuel infrastructure. An NDP government would also transition our grid to 90 percent renewable energy and phase out the use of coal by 2030.

Green

Yes, we will end subsidies to fossil fuels and end current fossil fuel extraction. This includes building no new fossil fuel infrastructure.

C. Will your party commit to establishing a provincial Environmental Equity Working Group and include a race-equity lens to environmental decision-making?

Liberal

Consultations are ongoing for our Sustainable Development Goals Act and our Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth. We are also consulting on our Coastal Protection Act Regulations.

We understand that systemic racism in our province has resulted in environmental impact for Black and African Nova Scotian communities and Mi'kmaq communities. There are numerous examples of how environmental racism in Nova Scotia has negatively impacted

people's health and harmed environments that contribute to livelihoods and cultural and spiritual practices.

The Liberal government is committed to find better ways to be more inclusive and to have more diverse voices around decision making tables.

PC

Upon forming the government, we will update the province's existing environmental decision-making process to include diversity, inclusion and equity. Working with racial and community groups we can help guide projects forward. Our environmental assessment legislation should be amended to give voice to under-represented communities. There are examples across the province of less desirable projects being placed in under-represented communities. Our PC government will include a mind and eye to ensure fairness for those communities in decision-making.

NDP

Yes. An NDP government would immediately establish a Green Jobs Task Force to guide the transformation of Nova Scotia's economy into a sustainable one while creating thousands of green jobs. This task force will include representatives of African Nova Scotian organizations, Mi'kmaw organizations, women's advocacy organizations, anti-poverty organizations, and the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, among others. This will ensure that historically marginalized communities have a place at the head table in all discussions about the future of Nova Scotia's green economy. An NDP government will also systematically address instances of environmental racism, and report regularly on its progress in doing so.

Green

Yes, we will:

- Immediately establish an Environmental Equity working group to address inequities (including racial) in environmental stewardship and climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Enact an environmental bill of rights enshrining the principle of a basic human right to a healthy environment.

5. ANTI-RACISM & RECONCILIATION

A. Will your party commit to redirecting Nova Scotia's provincial policing budget toward community-led initiatives identified by Black and African Nova Scotian communities, Mi'kmaq and Indigenous communities, and the 2SLGBTQ+ community?

Liberal

Premier Rankin announced the creation of the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives on Feb. 23. to help lead the work of equity across government. The Office works closely with community partners and other departments to address racism and inequity to ensure that Nova Scotia is a place where everyone can thrive.

We introduced legislation this spring to recognize August 1 as Emancipation Day in Nova Scotia. This is an opportunity for all Nova Scotians to educate themselves on the legacy and impacts of slavery and anti-Black racism in this province and around the world, and to honour our historic African Nova Scotian communities and the many contributions they've made to Nova Scotia's culture and heritage.

The MacNeil government banned the police use of street checks in 2019. This step alone does not fix the discrimination faced by Black and African Nova Scotian communities and Mi'kmaq and Indigenous communities in Nova Scotia. We need to do more. We announced an investment of \$4.8 million for a new community-led justice institute that will support African Nova Scotians in contact with the law and help address overrepresentation and anti-Black racism in the justice system.

PC

A PC government is already committed to creating a new department of Mental Health and Addiction, and drastically increasing funding to provide Universal Mental Health Care in order to reduce interactions with the justice system. For example, persons with mental health concerns are twice as likely to have involvement in the criminal justice system. With regards to community-led initiatives, we know how important these are, and have committed to having local decision making lead physician recruitment initiatives. We support community-led initiatives, but need the details before we commit to anymore. Upon forming a government, we are willing to meet and learn more about what the community-led initiatives are.

NDP

The NDP is committed to using our voice to advance an anti-racist agenda. An NDP government would implement all recommendations made in the Street Checks Report by Dr. Scot Wortley to ensure that African Nova Scotians, indigenous people, and other marginalized communities receive fair treatment in communities across Nova Scotia. We are also committed to conducting a complete and transparent review of our policing system at the provincial level to determine what further changes are necessary. This review will be conducted with special consideration given to the African Nova Scotian, indigenous, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

Additionally, the NDP would establish emergency mental health crisis teams across the province, based on successful models from other jurisdictions. These teams will include social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses, ensuring that people experiencing mental health crises are treated with compassion and care and would reduce interactions with police.

The NDP is committed to increasing dedicated funding for front line resources — mental health resources, childcare, access to health care and housing — that reduce reliance on police to provide front line services that they are not trained or equipped to provide.

Green

Yes, we will:

- Work with municipal and federal governments to redirect police funds towards community services including poverty reduction, recreational services, educational services, mental health services, and career transition services with the aim of redefining public safety and the role of the police as an agency of social control.
- Establish a Nova Scotia Provincial Safety Force to replace the employment of the costly RCMP with standards that include specialized training for working with residents who are disabled, 2SLGBTQQIA+, women, transgender, newcomers, racialized, Indigenous, Black, or of various religions.
- Support and learn from legal activists and groups representing communities underrepresented within the staff of the justice system, such as women, Black Nova Scotians, 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and newcomers and other persons of colour.
- Engage with self-determination efforts of Mi'kmaq people to establish independent legal courts and promote restorative justice practices over further criminalization practices.

B. Will your party commit to fulfilling all TRC Calls to Action under provincial jurisdiction? What is your party's plan to implement these calls to action?

Liberal

Since 2015, we have worked in partnership with the Mi'kmaq and Canada towards addressing the TRC Calls to Action. This work continues in areas related to justice, socio-economic opportunities, social issues, education and training, culture and heritage, language, and health and wellness.

The work has been done collaboratively with the Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous organizations to ensure meaningful participation in programs, services, and policies and to ensure that these will have positive outcomes for communities, families, and individuals.

This work is complex and requires a long-term commitment from the government, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Notable work and projects include:

- A major revision to the Child and Family Services Act was undertaken, and continues, with direct engagement with Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs.
- Opening of the Wagmatcook Court representing a historic step forward in supporting Indigenous justice in Nova Scotia.
- Waiving of all administrative fees for Residential School survivors and their families to reclaim their Indigenous names.
- Ongoing collaborative work and support with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre to support their over 90 programs and services that address urban issues relating to housing and homelessness, mental health and addictions, education and training support, childcare, and economic development.
- Planning and participation in the development of a new Mi'kmaw Health and Wellness Authority.
- Supporting the establishment of a new long-term care facility in Eskasoni, a first in Nova Scotia.
- Collaborative development of appropriate Shubenacadie Residential School commemoration.
- Supporting the development of a Mi'kmaw Language Strategy. Currently, Mi'kmaw Language can be taken by students in place of Core French at any grade to fulfill their second language requirement. This curriculum is not organized by grade but by stages of language development in an offer to meet the needs of all learners based on their level of language development.
- Inclusion and focus on Mi'kmaq culture in the Nova Scotia Culture Action Plan.
- Continued support for various sport and recreation activities including the Mi'kmaw Summer Games, North American Indigenous Games, Mi'kmaw Hall of Fame, and sport programming for Mi'kmaw youth.
- Dedicated cultural training across government departments, educational institutions and partners, and other business organizations.
- Treaty Education Nova Scotia, a partnership between the Province and Mi'kmaq, is developing programs and services for the education system, provincial civil service, and all Nova Scotians to highlight the contributions of the Mi'kmaq. These resources will help explain the importance of Treaties and how they are significant building blocks for Nova Scotia and Canada and how we have all benefited from them.
- Collaborative partnership with the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association to shape the approach and focus for addressing the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice in Nova Scotia.
- \$723,000 increase for Unama'ki Pathways in Technology, Early College High School, an integrated partnership program for Mi'kmaq students with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and developing workplace skills.

- The Rankin government is provided \$150,000 in annual funding for five years for a new Mi'kmaw Chair in Healthy L'nu Communities at Cape Breton University. This new position was created to incorporate and gather L'nu knowledge to improve health outcomes of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw. It will be a community-based model for health research and practice and is a collaboration among Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaw communities, Tajikeimik (Mi'kmaw Health & Wellness), the Department of Health and Wellness, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, IWK Health Centre and other partners. We will continue to work to raise awareness about the TRC Calls to Action and implement and coordinate provincial initiatives that respond to these Calls.

Reconciliation is a long-term journey that will take generations to complete.

PC

Under the federal government providing credible solutions to the TRC calls to action, we commit to not being a roadblock on the path to reconciliation. Our plan is to partner with a federal government, no matter the political party, to move these actions forward. We will actively pursue provincial initiatives.

NDP

Yes. The NDP is committed to implementing all provincial Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and reporting annually on our progress. Some of our specific plans include:

- Eliminating the over-representation of indigenous adults and youth in custody in jails and report on progress toward doing so.
- Adopting and supporting community sanctions that would provide alternatives to imprisonment for indigenous people.
- Fully implementing Jordan's Principle, which ensures that First Nations children have equitable access to all government-funded public services, regardless of whether they live on or off-reserve.
- Increasing the number of indigenous professionals working in the health care field. The NDP has introduced legislation to this effect, but it has not been supported by the Liberals.

Green

Yes, this is one of our top priorities and is a key component of our campaign pillars focused on ecological stewardship, justice, and empowering democratic collaboration.

Specifically, we will:

- Recognize and support the ability of Mi'kmaq people to maintain ways of living on the land that are vital to their cultures, health and well-being.

- Support health-care services that incorporate traditional practices and recognise the role of extended families and elders.
- Launch a public education program to build awareness about the rich history, culture, and wisdom of indigenous peoples in at least this part of Mi'kma'ki.
- Advocate that the federal government finance native language immersion education for First Nations children, and support immersion teacher training to build capacity to strengthen the Mi'kmaq language.
- Work with the federal government to fully implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Missing and Murdered Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Peoples report, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Immediately acknowledge the right of Mi'kmaq people to have decision-making authority over the use of land and resources covered by the Peace & Friendship treaties, including Nova Scotia, thereby setting up a system of co-management of all Crown and other public lands where no decision on the use or disposition of public land is made without the prior informed consent of Mi'kmaq people.
- Work with Mi'kmaq leaders to create a Land Back program that will return the management and stewardship of all crown lands to Mi'kmaq communities and create a process for residents of the province to return the stewardship of their land back to Mi'kmaq communities.
- By 2023, ensure that the laws of Nova Scotia are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and implemented accordingly.