



BUSINESS PLAN

2024-25

**Natural Resources
and Renewables**

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Budget 2024-25: Business Plan
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Department of Natural Resources and Renewables 2024-25 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

The Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (NRR) is responsible for the development, management, conservation and protection of energy, forests, geoscience, mines, minerals, parks and wildlife resources, and the administration of the province's Crown lands. With this mandate, the Department will play a lead role in helping achieve Government's goal of 80 percent renewable electricity by 2030, and net-zero by 2050. NRR also continues to focus on the protection of biodiversity, wildlife, and species at risk as the province transitions to ecological forestry and renewable energy. It promotes the sustainable development of our natural resources to grow the economy while working with businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Department is making progress on each Government commitment identified in the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables' [Mandate Letter](#).

Advancing the Development and Sustainable Use of Clean and Renewable Energy

The Department will continue to work towards the 80 percent by 2030 renewable electricity target, and net-zero by 2050. NRR will aim to achieve renewable electricity targets by:

- Implementing the Community Solar Program and continue to offer the *Green Choice Program* for large electricity users, to help achieve 100% renewable energy.
- Advancing core Active Transportation networks in more communities across the province.
- Implementing the province's Clean Power Plan, creating flexibility in moving off coal by 2030. This will provide an opportunity for future investment in growth sectors (e.g., offshore wind, geothermal, hydrogen, batteries). ([Clean Power Plan](#))
- Exploring energy storage, specifically for hydrogen and wind programs. This includes evaluating and determining subsurface energy resources and the regulatory pathway forward.
- Implementing programs to improve energy efficiency and cut energy bills, with an initial focus on low- and moderate-income households and reducing the use of heating oil.
- Working collaboratively with the Federal Government and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to establish a regulatory framework for offshore wind energy.
- Implementing the Green Hydrogen Action Plan to support continued development of the green hydrogen sector. ([Green Hydrogen Action Plan](#))
- Engaging Nova Scotians on the clean energy transition, ensuring awareness of opportunities for individual communities.
- Continuing to support of Nova Scotia's Climate Plan implementation, including assessment of geological hazards, e.g., coastal erosion, in our changing climate.

Ecological Forestry Transition and Conserving Wildlife

The Department will continue work to support the historic shift in forest management through the:

- Implementation of ecological forestry practices through the Silviculture Guide for the Ecological Matrix (SGEM) and High Production Forestry (HPF).
- A Forest Stewardship Guide will be released for consultation.
- Communicating progress in ecological forestry implementation to stakeholders and the public using various methods, (<https://novascotia/ecological-forestry/>).
- Efforts to expand/promote clean wood energy through use of Liquid Biofuel (offtake agreements and development of sustainable aviation fuel) and solid wood (woodchip and pellets) heat for district energy systems and public sector buildings (long-term care and education facilities).

- Delivering a collaborative approach to update the management system for species recovery (<https://novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/species-at-risk/>).
- Undertaking policy projects concerning species at risk and orphaned bear rehabilitation.
- The Department will release a report on the State of Biodiversity as outlined under the *Biodiversity Act*.
- Implementation of the Department specific elements of the Nature Agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada. The goals of the agreement are to develop policies, guidelines, and special management practices for implementing the *Endangered Species Act*; collating data and development of landscape planning tools for management of Nova Scotia's Biodiversity.
- Development of a co-management agreement for the harvesting of Moose in Cape Breton with the Mi'kmaw of Nova Scotia.

Maintaining the Provincial Parks System and Achieving Land Protection Commitments

The Department will continue to invest in the sustainability and accessibility of the Provincial Park System and maintain its collaboration with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change to implement the 20 percent Collaborative Protected Areas Strategy (CPAS) (released December 20, 2023). The CPAS focuses on identifying, protecting, and managing provincially administered lands and inland waters; supporting education on expanded conservation of private lands and Mi'kmaw leadership in conservation; and fostering partnerships for community and economic benefits derived from protected and conserved areas. To meet these goals the Department will:

- Continue to work to designate remaining sites in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan.
- Protect additional Crown lands by implementing the CPAS and addressing forest pests.
- Undertake capital investment in our provincial parks, ensuring a focus on accessible infrastructure and amenities (<https://parks.novascotia.ca/>).
- Collaborate with the Mi'kmaw on Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas to clarify and update management planning objectives and priorities through provincial park management plans and statements.
- Strengthen wildfire and hazard response by investing, in partnership with NRCan, in new equipment (water bomber helicopters, communication technology and personal protective equipment, etc.) and training (internal staff and multiagency cross training).
- Advance the provincial 2022-25 Accessibility Plan in provincial parks by continuing to partner with municipalities, and sport and recreation associations to promote and invest in infrastructure improvements and adaptive equipment (<https://parks.novascotia.ca/>).

Managing Crown Lands and Natural Resources for Public Benefit

The Department will deliver on its mandate to develop and manage Crown lands and other natural resources through the following approaches:

- Continue regulatory, business process improvement and planning processes for managing and administering Crown lands.
- Continue to deliver a Radon Awareness and Mitigation program for low-income households.

Financial Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary Natural Resources & Renewables (\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>	<u>2023-2024 Forecast</u>	<u>2024-2025 Estimate</u>
Senior Management	1,378	1,221	1,411
Clean Energy	33,349	21,592	30,044
Subsurface and Offshore Energy	5,410	6,084	4,609
Forestry & Wildlife	33,166	42,744	32,344
Geoscience and Mines	6,903	6,457	6,142
Regional Services	48,136	63,623	50,887
Policy and Corporate Services	10,540	12,352	12,289
Land Services	3,697	3,591	3,862
Total – Departmental Expenses	<u>142,579</u>	<u>157,664</u>	<u>141,588</u>
Ordinary Recoveries	25,755	22,233	28,455
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	741.7	701.0	741.7