



Business Plan

2020–21

Department of Environment



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Budget 2020–21: Business Plan
Finance and Treasury Board
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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2020-21 Business Plan for Nova Scotia Environment. This plan highlights key actions over the coming year to protect our environment, the health and safety of Nova Scotians, and the welfare of farm animals.

We have some exciting changes coming in Nova Scotia this fall. We recently passed new legislation to ban single-use plastic shopping bags. These changes will come into effect Oct. 30, 2020. This year, we'll be communicating with businesses and all Nova Scotians to ensure they are ready to phase out plastic bags. Businesses will have the information they need to consider alternatives. Nova Scotians have always been strong stewards of our environment, and we believe they will choose to bring their own bags as much as possible.

Last fall, we passed the Sustainable Development Goals Act, which committed my department to produce a Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth in 2020 and establish goals through regulations. We'll soon be consulting with Nova Scotians about the regulations and the climate change plan, and we're looking forward to hearing their views. We're continuing to speak with stakeholder groups as well about our Coastal Protection Act, one of the first pieces of legislation in the country to protect our coastlines.

We are also a regulator, and we take that responsibility very seriously. We're continuing to look at how we can improve our compliance and enforcement processes. This includes assigning our staff to the highest-risk activities; updating the software that tracks our inspection work; and better tracking trends in enforcement and compliance.

Finally, we will continue to work diligently on environmental assessments to ensure companies do the work required to identify risks to the environment, and come up with plans to mitigate them.

I look forward to working with department staff, colleagues across government, and stakeholders across the province to advance these priorities for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
The Honourable Gordon Wilson
Minister of Nova Scotia Environment

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Vision of Nova Scotia Environment

A leader in regulatory excellence, conservation, partnership and promotion, we protect the environment, human health, and the welfare of farm animals.

Mandate

The September 2017 mandate letter gives direction for the following priorities:

- Continue to support a business environment that is conducive to innovation and economic development, striking the right balance to ensure that effective regulation protects the interests of Nova Scotians while enhancing our provincial prosperity.
- Continue consultation and work with Nova Scotians to develop coastal protection legislation to provide legal protection for our coasts.
- Collaborate with the Department of Lands and Forestry on the Biodiversity Act and the creation of a Biodiversity Council.
- Continue implementing Nova Scotia's Cap-and-Trade Program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Work with the Department of Lands and Forestry to move toward 13 per cent protected land in the province without negative recreational or economic effects.

Core functions

The following core functions of Nova Scotia Environment support the mandate:

- Develop programs and deliver services to enhance the protection of the environment, human health, and the welfare of farm animals.
- Develop legislation, regulations and policies based on sound scientific knowledge and expertise.
- Educate, inspect and enforce to ensure compliance with legislation and regulations.
- Proactively respond to environmental, animal, and human health risks.
- Process notifications, applications, and approvals for regulated activities.

Goals to achieve mandate and core functions

Goal 1: Education, inspection, compliance, and enforcement

Continue working towards a best-in-class inspectorate that is defined by:

- An informed, professional and competent workforce that is able to recognize and apply the right level of response to an action.
- Consistent and effective compliance with legislation and regulations.
- An integrated and responsive structure that creates flexibility needed to ensure resources are deployed based upon risk.

Priorities/Activities for 2020-21

- Enhance our inspector orientation and training program.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

- Develop new training components to support the role of compliance, inspection and enforcement in the Department.
- Enhance existing training for our inspectors.

Goal 2: Program and risk management

Programs that manage risks to an acceptable level and deliver desired benefits through:

- Resources and efforts that are continuously aligned with program needs on a risk basis.
- Ensuring programs are well-structured and meet intended outcomes, while focusing on continuous improvement.

Priorities/Activities for 2020-21

- Identify potential program improvements.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

- Review some programs to determine if there are potential improvements that could be made.

Goal 3: Client-focused service delivery

Improve the quality of service delivery to department clients through:

- Regulations that are clear and easy to understand.
- Supporting and empowering staff with information and training to best position them for success in their roles and interactions with Nova Scotians.

Priorities/Activities for 2020-21

- Continue to build and enhance NSE's use of the System Notification and Approval Processing (SNAP), the department's system for processing notifications, approvals, licenses and registrations. The system also tracks the operational work of environment inspectors. When an inspector completes an inspection, site visit or audit, the system tracks it for accuracy and continuity.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

- Continue work to move regulatory programs into SNAP. By incorporating more programs into SNAP, this will ensure appropriate resources are deployed for the level of risk and allow more accurate reporting

Goal 4: Regulatory excellence

Ensure necessary regulations are predictable, transparent, and protect our health, safety and environment by:

- Modernizing regulations and reducing regulatory burden where appropriate to eliminate barriers to private sector growth and productivity.
- Modernizing legislation, creating the foundation to support innovation, sustainable prosperity and regulatory excellence.
- Measuring results to ensure outcomes are met.

Priorities/Activities for 2020-21

- Develop regulations for the Coastal Protection Act
- Continue implementation of the made-in-Nova Scotia Cap and Trade system to require the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions.
- Develop regulations for the Sustainable Development Goals Act

- Develop a Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth
- Advance land protection in Nova Scotia in partnership with Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq, private land trusts, and others while working with the Department of Lands and Forestry to move towards the protection of additional Crown lands associated with the 13 percent mandate while ensuring a balance so there are no negative recreational or economic effects.
- Work with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness to support reduction of unnecessary regulatory burden to Nova Scotia business.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success

- Legal framework for protection for our coasts is implemented
- Continued implementation of Cap and Trade Program
- Government's approach and framework to support sustainable prosperity is renewed
- Percentage of province legally protected in a manner consistent with Pathway to Canada Target 1 reporting standards.
- A reduction of unnecessary NSE regulatory burden to Nova Scotian businesses is achieved.

Financial Summary

Environment Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2019-2020 Estimate</u>	<u>2019-2020 Forecast</u>	<u>2020-2021 Estimate</u>
Administration	795	776	806
Policy	5,891	5,952	5,978
Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement	21,190	21,519	21,770
Sustainability and Applied Science	8,369	10,054	11,789
Climate Change	2,279	2,298	2,149
Total - Departmental Expenses	38,524	40,599	42,492
Ordinary Recoveries	354	2,463	3,846
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	355.3	331.8	356.3

Note:

For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2

For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1