



Business Plan

2023-24

**Environment and
Climate Change**

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Budget 2023-24: Business Plan
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Department of Environment and Climate Change

2023-24 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

Through legislation, regulation and enforcement, the Department of Environment and Climate Change has a mandate to support a clean and healthy environment, protect land, advance a clean economy, address the climate crisis, and guide the province towards a sustainable and clean future where all Nova Scotians can thrive.

In 2023 - 24, the Department of Environment and Climate Change will fulfill its mandate and support the Government's business plan by continuing work in the areas of sustainable prosperity, climate action, land protection, circular economy, sustainable development, and protecting human and environmental health.

Sustainable Prosperity

The Department of Environment and Climate Change is responsible for the [Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act \(EGCCRA\)](#). It sets the course so Nova Scotia can seize opportunities to drive prosperity, create jobs, preserve our environment, and build the clean economy of tomorrow.

In 23-24, the Department will collaborate with the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives to set up a panel tasked with making recommendations to address environmental racism. This supports EGCCRA's legislated principle of equity, which is essential for sustainable prosperity.

Also, as part of EGCCRA, in 2023-24, the Department will:

- Collaborate with all departments to report on Government's annual progress
- Support departments who are responsible for legislated goals

Finally, the Department will:

- Support sustainable prosperity by removing regulatory burden, and helping companies navigate regulatory processes
- Continue to make progress on its own legislated commitments, including the commitments highlighted below

Climate Action

Nova Scotia is facing a climate emergency and there is an urgent need for action. By responding to climate change, we can help protect the health of Nova Scotians. In 2023-24, the Department of Environment and Climate Change will collaborate with other departments to:

- Begin implementation and reporting on the climate change plan [Our Climate, Our Future: Nova Scotia's Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth](#)
- Implement the output-based pricing system which will reduce industrial carbon pollution
- Build climate change adaptive capacity and resilience through adaptation planning
- Ensure clarity for companies on the regulatory requirements for green hydrogen projects, which are one of many renewable energy projects that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Support and fund solutions that address systemic inequities and discrimination related to climate change

Land Protection

Protecting land in Nova Scotia is important for supporting a sustainable and prosperous future. It supports biodiversity and mental well-being and helps with carbon capture. In collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, in 2023-24 the Department will:

- Continue working to conserve at least 20% of the total land and water mass of the Province of Nova Scotia by 2030
- Develop and release a collaborative protected areas strategy to support the target above.

Circular Economy

A circular economy minimizes waste by keeping resources in the economy and out of the landfill. This is a major component of climate change mitigation. In 2023-24, the Department will support Nova Scotia's circular economy by:

- Developing a plan, complete with public engagement, specific actions and interim targets, that will outline how Nova Scotia will meet its solid waste reduction goal of no more than 300 kilograms per person per year by the year 2030

Sustainable Development

As a regulatory department, the Department plays a critical role in enabling sustainable development in Nova Scotia. Through the *Environment Act*, the Department regulates over 150 activities that require approvals. Regulatory processes managed by the department impact activities such as road building, renewable energy projects, mining, and other large industrial projects.

The Department is working to evaluate its processes and update them to increase efficiency and effectiveness, to support sustainable development.

As part of the Department's work to modernize environmental assessment, in 2023-24 the Department will:

- Continue work to modernize the environmental assessment process by 2024, including consideration of: cumulative impacts, diversity, equity and inclusion, independent review, Netukulimk, and climate change.

A modernized process will support a client-friendly environment that is conducive to development and solutions that are sustainable, all while protecting the environment.

Protecting Human and Environmental Health

Protecting the land and water is good for the environment and good for our health. In 2023-24, the Department will continue its work to:

- Modernize its ambient air quality standards
- Develop provincial water quality objectives to guide activities that affect water quality

The Department of Environment and Climate Change is committed to delivering a healthier, cleaner, more sustainable Nova Scotia. The work planned for this coming year will contribute to this commitment.

Financial Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2022 -2023 Estimate</u>	<u>2022-2023 Forecast</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>
Administration	984	997	1,075
Policy	6,215	5,797	5,925
Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement	16,398	16,510	15,743
Sustainability and Applied Science	12,446	32,038	8,844
Climate Change	1,858	141,822	8,858
Total - Departmental Expenses	37,901	197,164	40,445
Ordinary Recoveries	3,870	3,870	185
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	318.8	297.5	305.5

Note:

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

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

