



Business Plan

2023-24

**Natural Resources
and Renewables**

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Budget 2023-24: Business Plan
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Department of Natural Resources and Renewables

2023-24 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 per cent 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. 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 Renewable Energy

In 2023-24, the Department will work towards the 80 per cent by 2030 renewable electricity target, and net zero by 2050, by:

- working with the successful proponents of the *Rate Based Procurement* process (a fair and transparent process to procure new renewable energy projects for Nova Scotia's electricity system; [Nova Scotia Rate Base Procurement \(novascotiarp.com\)](https://novascotiarp.com)) to develop projects, address supply chain issues and maximize benefits to local communities.
- launching the *Green Choice Program* for large electricity users to help achieve 100% renewable energy and launching the *Community Solar Program*.
- developing programs and supports to transition off coal electricity generation, including support for workers and communities, in part by continuing to support scholarships and training programs.
- expanding energy efficiency and 'off-oil' programming for homes and businesses, with a focus on energy poverty and equity.
- working across government departments to create a path for offshore wind projects and hydrogen projects, with a goal of minimizing environmental and economic impacts.
- implementing a critical minerals strategy that encompasses a full value chain approach to advance clean, mineral-based energy.
- investing in low carbon community-based projects <https://novascotia.ca/low-carbon-communities/>
- implementing provincial green infrastructure projects through the Investing in *Canada Infrastructure Program GHG Mitigation Stream*.
- developing a plan to grow the electric vehicle (EV) charging network, offering rebates to install charging infrastructure, and working with partners to increase EV adoption, including transit agencies to electrify public transportation.
- working with partners to develop Active Transportation (AT) networks, and promoting AT as a safe, accessible option to move within communities; through two main approaches: supporting AT design (example: supporting Bicycle NS to design core AT networks in 2023/24 with Wagmatcook, Baddeck, and Windsor), and supporting AT implementation.
- creating an action plan to support the development of the green hydrogen sector and establishing a clean fuels fund to support industries and businesses in adopting low-carbon and renewable fuels such as green hydrogen, renewable natural gas, and biofuels.
- supporting the growth of our offshore renewable energy sector and optimizing existing infrastructure at the Fundy Ocean Research Center for Energy (FORCE) to accelerate technology innovation, research, testing and validation, and supply chain growth.

- enabling and attracting investment in energy projects such as emerging opportunities like Offshore Wind, Hydrogen, Geothermal and Carbon Capture Storage)

Implementing the Independent Review of Forest Practices and Conserving Wildlife

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

- continuing to implement ecological forestry practices through the Silviculture Guide for the Ecological Matrix (SGEM) and High Production Forestry (HPF) and move forward other recommendations from the *Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia*.
<https://novascotia.ca/ecological-forestry/>
- prioritizing forestry related goals under the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*. This work will support implementing conservation, high production and mixed forestry zones on Crown land, including identifying the percentage allocation of Crown land for each zone.
- regularly communicating progress to stakeholders and the public by various methods, including the ecological forestry website <https://novascotia.ca/ecological-forestry/> delivering a collaborative approach to update the management system for species recovery.
<https://novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/species-at-risk/>
- leveraging diverse resources and using risk management to enhance the implementation of the provincial *Endangered Species Act*.
- reviewing regulations to identify options to address current wildlife challenges and gaps.
- developing options for rehabilitating orphaned bear cubs.

Maintaining the Provincial Parks System and Achieving Land Protection Commitments

The Department will continue its collaboration with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change, to deliver on Government's commitment to protect at least 20% of the total land and water mass of Nova Scotia for nature conservation by 2030. To achieve this goal, the Department will be:

- working towards designating the remaining sites in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan and to deliver on Government's protected land commitment.
- collaborating with the Mi'kmaq on Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas to clarify and update management planning objectives and priorities through provincial park management plans and statements
- continuing to invest in, promote and build awareness of our network of provincial day-use and camping parks to deliver sustainable, inclusive reliable and accessible services to all park visitors. <https://parks.novascotia.ca/>
- advancing the Provincial 2022-25 Accessibility Plan in our network of 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 for Public Benefit

The Department will deliver on its mandate to sustainably administer Crown lands by:

- Continuing to conduct ongoing regulatory, business process improvement and planning processes for managing and administering Crown lands.
- Continuing to work with Build Nova Scotia and Environment and Climate Change to address historic contamination on Crown lands.

Financial Summary 2023-24

Departmental Expenses Summary Natural Resources & Renewables (\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2022-2023 Estimate</u>	<u>2022-2023 Forecast</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>
Senior Management	759	780	769
Clean Energy	34,372	20,270	33,349
Business Development & Strategic Opportunities	11,234	11,495	13,713
Subsurface Energy Development	2,088	1,924	2,148
Forestry & Wildlife	22,439	33,896	26,423
Geoscience and Mines	5,565	5,218	6,903
Regional Services	47,664	107,149	48,136
Policy and Corporate Services	7,146	7,162	7,441
Land Services	3,619	3,344	3,697
Total – Departmental Expenses	134,886	191,238	142,579
Ordinary Recoveries	16,795	9,822	25,755
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	741.7	698.3	741.7

