



# Budget

2018–19

*Stronger Services and Supports*

*Budget Address*



## Introduction

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

One of the first steps in preparation for budget building is to establish a set of economic assumptions. Those assumptions become the foundation upon which the budget is built. It is critical that they be solid and reflect the economic conditions, not only of the province, but also at the national and international levels.

A true test of those assumptions is when they are presented to an economic panel, consisting of representation of the major banks, academics, and private sector economists. This provides me, as Minister, with an independent assessment of the Department of Finance and Treasury Board's economic projections.

On January 9, we joined the panel in Toronto by video conference and listened intently as each economist spoke specifically about the assumptions we had submitted for them to review. It was extremely gratifying to have their unanimous support for our assumptions, which they described as “prudent” and “reasonable.”

The economic assumptions are also central to the Office of the Auditor General's review of, and opinion on, the revenue estimates. No matters came up through the course of this work that caused any concerns regarding the reasonableness of these assumptions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff at the department for their excellent work in determining those assumptions as they have formed the firm foundation on which this, the 2018–19 budget, has been built.

Our fiscal health in Nova Scotia is critical to our growth and success. When we formed government in 2013, the province was borrowing money to pay the bills. That path is not fiscally sustainable. It does not lead to good fiscal health for the province.

And that fiscal health is critical for us to attract new business and new immigrants that will drive our economy.

I thank Nova Scotians for giving our government the opportunity to table the budget for 2018–19 — our third consecutive balanced budget. This budget is projecting a surplus of \$29.4 million and we are projecting a balanced budget over each of the next four fiscal years.

This improved financial health is being recognized.

The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer has identified Nova Scotia as one of only two provinces in Canada that are on a fiscally sustainable path over the long term. Achieving that fiscal sustainability is so important, as it gives us the ability to make further investments in healthcare and education while we continue to live within our means. The investments we make today will be affordable tomorrow, and will protect our children and grandchildren from the burden of a growing debt that they must carry.

Our government embraced stronger budgetary and financial management, and I am pleased to report that three credit rating agencies have acknowledged our improved fiscal health and have recognized that in their ratings for Nova Scotia. Credit rating agencies have been downgrading some provinces, but Nova Scotia is seen as a province with a stable credit outlook.

In fact, Nova Scotia is the only province whose credit rating currently has a positive outlook. These agencies are independent, and their analysis and ratings reflect their views on the province's credit worthiness.

Dominion Bond Rating Services, Standard and Poor's, and Moody's have all cited the province's long-term commitment to fiscal prudence and strong financial management practices as positive.

With the solid financial foundation, the positive and improving credit ratings, strong financial management practices, and controlled departmental spending, we are in an excellent position to invest in programs and services that Nova Scotians need and deserve.

We can see that the investments and strategic decisions we made over the last four years are producing real results for Nova Scotians.

Our wine industry is growing and receiving international recognition.

Our fisheries exports are soaring, with exports for 2017 at an all-time high of \$2 billion.

Our start-up ecosystem is considered one of the best in the country.

Our ocean tech sector is a shining example on the international stage.

Our world-class artists, musicians, book publishers, and crafts producers are exporting their works around the world.

Our tourism industry shows the highest number of tourists in our history. Year after year, we continue to set new tourism records.

Our population is the highest ever. Since April 1, 2015, Nova Scotia's population has increased by 16,555, for a total population of 957,600. That is the result of three important facts.

First, more young people are staying in or returning to Nova Scotia than are leaving. It is the first time in three decades that we have seen this trend.

Second, more immigration, including inter-provincial migration, means more people are choosing Nova Scotia for their home.

Third, our investments in sectors where Nova Scotia has a competitive advantage have created more jobs and more opportunities for more people in Nova Scotia.

The latest job numbers show there are more full-time jobs in Nova Scotia now than at any point in our history. Since coming to office in October 2013, 16,000 new full-time jobs were added to the province's economy.

We saw growth in both Nova Scotia's employment and its labour force for the first time since 2012. That strength is reflected in retail spending, which is up 6.2 per cent in 2017, over the previous year.

Working with our post-secondary institutions, businesses, and social enterprise communities has reversed the trend of youth outmigration. That is something we can all celebrate.

One measurement of how a province is performing is the ratio of net debt to GDP. When we formed government, the net debt-to-GDP ratio was 38.2 per cent. The One Nova Scotia Commission challenged the province to reduce that ratio to 30 per cent by 2024.

I am proud to say that each year since 2014 that ratio has decreased, from 38.2 per cent in 2014 to 35.8 per cent in 2017, and we are on track to achieve the 30 per cent target by 2024. We are trending in the right direction.

These successes take time, they take a plan, and they take determination. And they make our province stronger.

Continued strategic investment by our government will move our province forward.

We are a stronger province and we are in a positive financial position.

## Healthier People and Communities

Since coming to office we acted to strengthen our healthcare system. Through our investments, we were able to hire more doctors, reduce the wait list for home care, and perform more orthopedic surgeries. There has been progress, but I want to clearly acknowledge on behalf of government that we know there is more work to be done.

The health minister spent time meeting with doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals. We listened to Nova Scotians. And, this budget reflects what we heard.

Our top healthcare priority is improving access to primary healthcare, including access to family doctors. In the last year, more than 100 new doctors were hired to help the people of this province. However, we continue to look for new ways to bring more doctors here to practice.

We are making investments to advance several initiatives to help train, retain, and recruit more doctors.

We recently announced \$39.6 million as part of a multi-year plan to recognize the dedication of family doctors to their profession and to their patients. Our doctors are essential to the healthcare system, and we value their commitment.

We want to thank Doctors Nova Scotia for working with us to develop a suite of incentives to support our family doctors, to attract new ones, and to address the 811 Need a Family Practice list.

This year, we are providing \$19.6 million toward our plan.

We will be offering doctors with an established family practice, or who are establishing a family practice, an increase in their compensation. Let me be clear — family doctors are getting a raise.

We know there are Nova Scotians waiting for a family doctor, and it is a priority for this government to help increase access to primary care. We want to reduce the wait list, and we cannot do it without help from family doctors.

As part of our plan, funding is available for incentives that are specifically structured to encourage doctors to take on more patients.

Our Patient Attachment Incentive will pay doctors who accept new patients from the 811 list, patients referred from an emergency department, and patients from a practice where a doctor is retiring or relocating.

Our Technology Incentive is a pilot project that pays doctors to communicate with their patients through telephone and e-health services. This will improve a patient's access to care and help doctors work more efficiently, which we hope will allow them to take on more patients.

Our Enrolment Incentive encourages doctors to develop an up-to-date patient list. This will help us work with doctors to establish a new primary care payment model that supports collaborative practice and helps them take on more patients.

We will also compensate doctors who use electronic medical records. This will help improve overall quality of care in their practice.

Our healthcare system needs to reflect how new doctors want to practice.

When health professionals work together, they can take on more patients, and people get healthier, and see their quality of life improve.

We are investing an additional \$8 million to increase the number of collaborative care teams across the province and enhance existing teams. This brings our total annual investment to \$17.6 million.

In addition, we are funding more residency spaces at Dalhousie medical school. We know if people train here, they are more likely to stay here.

This budget contains funding for up to 10 new doctors to come here through the practice ready assessment program.

In addition to this, our government recently announced a new immigration stream that will make it easier for internationally trained doctors to move and work here. We are only the second province in the country to offer a dedicated immigration stream for doctors – and it already has three recruits.

If doctors want to access our tuition support program, it will forgive up to \$120,000 of a doctor's tuition if they are willing to practice in an underserved community for five years. This will bring more doctors to rural and urban communities that are in need.

We have also provided more flexibility for doctors to determine where they want to practice in Nova Scotia.

The way we look at delivering primary healthcare is changing, so too are expectations and social awareness of mental health issues.

With this budget, we are taking steps to provide better access to mental health services, provide more mental health supports in our schools, and combat the problem of opioid addiction in Nova Scotia.

This budget contains \$2.9 million more for mental health services.

Those Nova Scotians facing a mental health crisis need more support. Our investments are providing more funds to reduce wait lists that continue to be too long.

Providing better access to these crucial services is necessary in communities throughout the province. This budget funds an expansion of community-based mental health supports to help those areas without quick access to outpatient clinics.

We recognize the importance of combating opioid addiction. Over the last year, we reduced wait lists for treatment and provided more specialist support. To keep building on this success, the budget provides \$3 million for the second year of the Opioid Action Plan, bringing the two-year total to \$5.7 million.

We will focus on further reducing wait lists, providing better access to naloxone kits, funding more education for the public and training for healthcare providers, helping those seeking treatment, and supporting important harm reduction work in our communities.

This work was led by Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health, and Roger Merrick, Director of the Public Safety Division at the Department of Justice. Because of their efforts, even more families will get the help they so desperately need.

Many of our young people are struggling with mental health problems, and post-secondary students may be at particular risk due to the changes and pressures in their lives. This year, government will provide funding to pilot new technology-based interventions designed to provide essential support for their mental health.

Student groups have asked for this support, and the Mental Health Commission of Canada has endorsed the use of online therapy tools as a way to address wait times, create additional access to care, and promote a higher quality of care.

We also want to continue providing support to students in our schools. The SchoolsPlus program puts mental health resources into our schools. To date, it has been available to support 87,000 students – or 74 per cent of the student population. We will continue to expand this program each year until it is available to every student in the province.

Youth health centres are school-based initiatives that support student health. They offer our young people a range of services, including health education, health information and referrals, follow up and support, and some clinical services. There are youth health centres in 70 schools, staffed by part-time or full-time youth health coordinators. Government will provide an additional \$1 million to support these centres.

This budget will increase the Take Home Therapies program by \$1.2 million, for a total of \$2 million. This will help Nova Scotians, who are facing exceptionally high costs for take home cancer drugs, focus on their health instead of their medical expenses.

Nova Scotians want to live at home for as long as possible. That is why, since coming to office, we have continued to increase funding for home care services each year.



Our efforts to fund and improve home care have produced results for Nova Scotians — the home support services wait list has been reduced by 72 per cent. This budget provides even more funding — \$5.5 million to address the ongoing demand. This brings the total budget for home care services to \$266 million.

We want to support families whose loved ones can no longer care for themselves at home. The Caregiver Benefit program is there for them.

Four-hundred dollars a month is available to those who provide unpaid care for 20 or more hours per week to an adult with high to very high care needs. This year's expansion will support 600 more caregivers, bringing the total who can benefit from this program to more than 2,500 Nova Scotians.

Successfully receiving a hip or knee replacement dramatically changes a person's quality of life.

In this year's budget, there is an additional \$8.8 million to strengthen the province's orthopedic surgical services that will allow the orthopedic teams to better respond to more of their patients' needs and reduce wait times.

Since 2013, government has added \$24.3 million to the budget for hip and knee surgeries, bringing the total number of surgeries performed in the last four years to 14,000.

Our multi-year plan for orthopedic surgery means we can dramatically reduce wait times for many patients.

With this year's additional funding, we will increase the number of surgeries performed by 350, for a total of 4,200 surgeries this year. As well, this funding supports creating a central booking process, making better use of operating rooms across the province, hiring more surgeons, and offering pre-habilitation services that help patients prepare for a successful surgery.

Dr. Marcy Saxe-Braithwaite and Dr. Eric Howatt are the co-chairs of the provincial orthopedic working group. Their work, and our continued investment, will bring us closer to the six-month national standard for wait times.

The working group and Nova Scotian surgeons developed this multi-year plan. Their opinions and expertise were a critical part of that process.

Our budget reflects our focus on reducing wait times — for family doctors, for mental health supports, for home care, and for surgeries. That is how we build a healthier, stronger Nova Scotia.



## Investing in Early Years and Education

Beginning with our first budget, we invested in supports for our students and to improve their classrooms.

With the support of our federal partners, this budget includes \$15.5 million to support early childhood education programs that are accessible, affordable, and inclusive. In February, we changed the Nova Scotia Child Care Subsidy program so that more families across the province could receive more funding toward the cost of regulated child care.

We will ensure the long-term sustainability of a professional team of early childhood educators through the implementation of workforce development initiatives, in cooperation with our post-secondary institutions.

Last year marked a historic moment in our province's history as we launched a free, all-day pre-primary program. This play-based program provides children with learning experiences, helps develop their social and emotional skills, and supports a successful transition to public school.

The pre-primary program is about helping the province's four-year-olds be the best four-year-olds they can be. The research is clear — giving children access to a high quality early learning program in the year before they start school, puts them in a better state of readiness when they arrive. It is a game changer for children, families and the education system in this province.

The 2018–19 budget includes a further \$17.6 million investment. That will add about 130 more classes, for a total of about 184 classes in communities from Glace Bay to Yarmouth. The pre-primary program will continue to expand until every four-year-old in the province has access.

Investments like these help families access a free program for four-year-olds. They help many women get back into the workforce, and, of greatest importance, they give our children, regardless of their socio-economic status, the best possible start along their learning path. This provides an affordable option for parents.

This year's Education and Early Childhood Development budget remains focused on improving classroom conditions by working with teachers. We continue to fund the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions. The council, which mainly consists of classroom teachers, provides direction on how to spend new funding earmarked for improving classrooms and helping students.

Last year, with a budget of \$10 million, the council recommended hiring 139 new teachers to cap class sizes from grades 7 to 12, and to address junior high math and literacy supports. It brought in the first provincial attendance policy and invested in projects designed to help students who are frequently absent from class. These improvements will continue to be funded in the 2018–19 budget.

Our government looks forward to the council's recommendations on how best to invest the additional \$10 million, which is also included in this budget.

We have been clear — improving the model of inclusion in our province is a priority. We launched the Commission on Inclusive Education to help us develop a plan that will support those children in our system who need it most. This budget has \$15 million to begin implementing recommendations from the commission.

Improving this system will help students and will ensure that teachers can focus on teaching. This means active involvement from other departments — like Health and Wellness and Community Services — to provide a variety of supports based on student need.

We know there are communities in need of new schools. As recommended by Dr. Avis Glaze in her report and by the auditor general, we are developing a plan for new school construction. By June 1, 2018, we will release our plan that will outline our roadmap for new school projects. This plan will reflect priorities that were identified by school boards.

## Inclusive Economic Growth

Our population is growing, young people are starting to see Nova Scotia as a place of opportunity, and our key economic sectors are prospering. Momentum is with us, but we need to keep moving, keep growing, and keep finding new opportunities for growth.

We want to build on our tremendous immigration success by providing more funds to help market our province abroad and by providing more support to immigrants who choose to call Nova Scotia home.

Immigration strengthens our economy, grows our population, revitalizes our communities, and adds to our province's diversity.

Inter-provincial migration is also helping to realize that increase in youth population.

Lauren Hodgins works as an Aquaculture research technician at Nova Eel, a company owned by Nova Scotia glass eel fishermen who are investing in eel farming technology. Lauren came to study at Dalhousie University from her home province of Ontario, but says she fell in love with it here and wants to make this her home.

Lauren MacEachern is a staff scientist with Solid State Pharma here in Halifax. She hails from Coldbrook, Nova Scotia and studied at Memorial University in St. John's for her bachelor's degree and then at Dalhousie University for her master's. Lauren knew she wanted to stay here after graduation to lay down her own roots, and she says she is pleased to have found a career path that is aligned with her skills and education.

It is great to see our Nova Scotian youth choosing to stay home and building a life here, because they have fulfilling work and a connection to this province.

It is also great to hear stories about young people who grew up in other places, yet they see opportunity here.

I would thank both Lauren Hodgins and Lauren MacEachern for sharing their stories with me, and for joining us in the House today.

We need to keep building on this success by continuing to invest in programs that help young Nova Scotians get their first job and build a career here. We are investing more than \$18 million in a suite of programs to achieve that goal.

Our government will continue to place a high priority on co-op placements, on mentorship programs, and on other opportunities to connect more young people to their career path and to employers.

The Graduate to Opportunity program helps businesses hire recent graduates so they can get their first job after university. This budget contains \$1.7 million more for this program, bringing it to a total of \$6.5 million this year.

The program was launched in 2015 and provides salary contributions to eligible businesses that hire recent graduates. The offset is 25 per cent in the first year and 12.5 per cent in the second. Employers will now receive an additional 10 per cent subsidy in the first year for diverse and international hires.

Since launching this program, we have helped more than 500 graduates get their first job.

This year, we are continuing to fund the Innovate to Opportunity program. With a \$1.7 million investment, this program helps businesses hire those with master's degrees and PhDs.

If a business is willing to hire a young person with these qualifications and pay them at least \$60,000 per year, government will subsidize a portion of the wages — between 35 and 50 per cent in the first year, 20 and 25 per cent in the second year, and 12 and a half per cent in their third year.

These graduates enter businesses and companies to help them conduct research and find new ideas to grow the business.

This program is a win-win. A young person gets a job and valuable experience. And a business gets help with research and development. The government shows support for both through these investments.

One of the first companies on board with the Innovate to Opportunity program was Rimot, a local information technology and communications company. Its Chief Technology Officer, James Craig, says he has enjoyed working with university researchers in the past, and through this new program, he has hired Walter Adbe who has the skills that align well with the company's work and will help them compete globally.

I would like to thank James and Walter for coming to the House today, along with their CEO, Andrew Boswell, to share their experience with us. I wish them the best of luck, and I expect Rimot's example will be followed by many others because of the Innovate to Opportunity program.

This year, we also continue funding the Apprenticeship START program, which supports small and medium-sized businesses in hiring apprentices from under-represented groups or in rural areas. This program currently supports 700 positions across the province.

These are the kinds of programs that will provide employment opportunities for young Nova Scotians entering our workforce.

Our fisheries exports are soaring. The sector's exports have grown for seven consecutive years and are now valued at \$2 billion annually.

This year's budget adds \$5.8 million to the Atlantic Fisheries Fund for a total provincial contribution of \$8.3 million this year. This program, delivered in partnership with the federal government and other Atlantic provinces, will be used to help Nova Scotian companies create new products to sustain their export growth.

The need to find long-term growth opportunities is why we will also continue investing in the Aquaculture Development program. This program funds important research to help the industry increase productivity, support the independent review board and engage the public.

This work will be complemented by the Building Tomorrow Fund. The concept for this fund is based on the very successful Honeycrisp Orchard Renewal program. This \$3 million fund will help fisheries, aquaculture, and agriculture companies innovate, develop, and sell new products, explore new markets, and become more efficient in their operations. We will work with industry as we develop this program.

The Building Tomorrow Fund will also help to sustain sector growth, as will our Wine Development program. Last year, sales of Nova Scotia wines topped \$17 million. It is a growth category for sales at the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation. This program has already helped to increase the number of acres of grapes planted in Nova Scotia by 40 per cent, supporting the goal of the Grape Growers Association to double acreage by 2020.

Some of our agri-food businesses already see the value in exporting and are being recognized for their efforts.

From Lunenburg County, Terra Beata Farms grows cranberries, but is more significantly a processor, making products destined for local and international markets. Owner David Ernst says exporting is essential to his company, with 90 per cent of his sales outside the region and outside the country.

Terra Beata Farms employs 25 people directly and injects an even greater amount into the Nova Scotia economy indirectly via purchases of fruit, packaging, trucking, and other services necessary for a world-class operation. The company continues to win awards, including a Nova Scotia Export Achievement Award last year for their export success.

I am pleased to welcome David and Evelyn Ernst to the House today and wish them continued success bringing Nova Scotia cranberry products to the world.

We continue to work to develop our natural resources, improving regulations to make them more responsive, while keeping our environment and our communities safe.

The Offshore Growth Strategy will be extended for an additional four years. We are pioneering new geoscience research techniques for offshore exploration. This will advance our understanding of our geology and our resources. This strategy will ensure Nova Scotia is positioned to take advantage of this economic opportunity, modernize our regulations, and market investment opportunities in Nova Scotia to global investors.

Over the coming year, we will also transfer the geoscience and mining division within the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Energy. This will allow the merger of two teams with expertise in subsurface development and will enhance development opportunities in our province. Additionally, this move will also ensure the forestry industry continues to have a dedicated departmental focus. It will be structured to ensure government best achieves the necessary balance between protection and preservation, and sustainable development. Professor Bill Lahey is expected to conclude his review of forestry practices in Nova Scotia by the end of April. That review will provide recommendations to government on ways to help achieve that delicate balance.

The Atlantic Gold Mine, near Middle Musquodoboit, was the only new gold mine to open in Canada in 2017. To build on this success, the government will launch the Mineral Resources Development Fund to support private-sector led mineral exploration, the development of new mines, university research, and training. The new fund will help spur investment and development. It will also help create jobs and innovation in this primarily rural-based industry.

As much as our economic success depends on sending more of our products and services to other countries, we remain focused on helping to bring more tourists to our province. Many of our small businesses – restaurants, bed and breakfasts, tour operators, shops, and cafés – rely on tourists for their success.

Our tourism sector already has had back-to-back record setting years. We are making investments in our tourism sites and providing support to help keep the sector growing.

As part of our tourism strategy, we need to make it easier for people to get to our province. That includes more direct flights coming to Nova Scotia from key markets in Asia, Europe, and the United States.

Improving tourists' experiences once they arrive is also critical. We will continue to work with other levels of government and the private sector to grow this industry.

We are improving the business climate in the province by reducing the tax burden on small business and cutting \$25 million in red tape.

Our work in this area is getting national recognition. In January, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business granted Nova Scotia an A-minus grade on reducing red tape. Our grade has steadily increased from a D-minus grade in 2015. CFIB also praised our Business Navigator service as part of its national award program. We launched the navigator service as a pilot in 2017 to guide business owners through rules and regulations, and allow them to focus on opening, operating, and growing their businesses. The positive response from the small business community is why government will continue to fund the service on an ongoing basis.

To further improve the business climate in the province, we will introduce a new Innovation Equity Tax Credit. Beginning in 2019, it will be more narrowly focused and have a threshold similar to our neighbours. The existing Equity Tax Credit will be phased out over time. This change will create more investment in high growth Nova Scotian businesses that are well positioned for rapid scaling-up, for more employment, and for export growth.

Sustainable development of high-potential land and infrastructure to attract people and investment to Nova Scotia are important. Waterfront Development has the experience and expertise in this area. This year, its mandate will expand to become the province's strategic property development corporation. Its mandate will focus on creating opportunities for entrepreneurs in both rural and urban communities.

Recently government announced the creation of a new rural internet trust with an initial investment of an estimated \$120 million. Starting this year, funds from the trust will be used to support projects that will help bring better internet services to under-serviced communities and businesses. This trust is intended to leverage funding from the private sector, and both municipal and federal governments.

The benefit of economic growth also lies in the other investments made possible by it. With a growing economy, we are able to provide more help to those who need it most by making our province more accessible and inclusive, by helping women who are at risk, and by making investments that will help people move out of the cycle of poverty.

This budget includes \$18.3 million more to help people with disabilities. This funding will help more people transition from larger residential facilities into smaller community-based options. This, in turn, will enable those with disabilities to lead more independent lives.

We will also provide \$2 million to businesses and community groups to make their facilities more accessible to people with disabilities — both their employees and their customers.

At-risk women will see more support in this budget as we continue to dedicate annual funding across government departments to support survivors of sexual assault. Work with stakeholders to develop a provincial action plan to combat domestic violence is also an important part of this commitment. This year, \$2 million will fund grants for community projects, research, and other initiatives focused on preventing domestic violence and supporting victims.

To help parents who receive both income assistance and child support payments, this budget provides \$3.4 million. It will fully exempt child support payments from income assistance calculations. This will help about 1,500 families who will no longer have their child support payments deducted from their income.

Our budget includes investments that will help break the cycle of poverty that is holding too many of our families back.

We are making changes to Income Assistance. Our budget provides \$1.5 million to fund a program that will help income assistance clients earn more money without seeing a reduction in their payments.

This year, we are investing \$4 million for initiatives under the Blueprint to End Poverty, as part of a four-year, \$20 million commitment. This will bring the two-year total to \$6 million. These funds provide grants to community organizations to test innovative ways to help address poverty.

When we first took office in 2013, we clearly stated that cutting the wait list for affordable housing was a top priority. Over our first term, we reduced that wait list by 20 per cent. Over the next three years, we want to reduce it by a further 30 per cent.

We are also investing in the current stock of public housing — \$12.4 million is dedicated to improving our buildings.

Finally, we are spending \$3 million to double the tax-free poverty reduction credit, from \$250 to \$500 per year. The credit is provided quarterly to Income Assistance clients without children, who have an annual income of \$12,000 or less. Increasing the credit will provide added assistance to some of the most financially vulnerable people in Nova Scotia.



These commitments will move us closer to our goal of an inclusive Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia is a national leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and we will continue to address climate change. The province is investing \$3 million a year for four years to support the federal government's new Low Carbon Economy Fund. Our investment will leverage \$56 million in federal funding to create new programs and expand existing programs that help Nova Scotia homeowners and businesses become more energy efficient. This results in lower energy costs for the consumer and reduced emissions for the province.

## A New Confidence

Whether we look at the growing technology sector in Cape Breton or the flourishing tourism sector on the South Shore, we are seeing people prospering in a stronger Nova Scotia. We are witnessing numerous success stories across our province, because Nova Scotians stepped up and worked shoulder to shoulder with one another and with us.

Our success is not just limited to within our borders.

Recently, a collection of organizations from Atlantic Canada promoting an Ocean Supercluster was awarded its share of federal innovation funding. Fifty applicants competed for the funding and this Atlantic Canadian project was selected as one of the winners. The federal funding of more than \$150 million will be matched dollar for dollar by the private sector.

Also, a team from the Sobey School of Business had an exciting weekend at the Venture Capital Investment Competition in the United States. They took home a silver medal. This team of Nova Scotian students defeated teams from prestigious schools like Yale, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dartmouth College. Congratulations to all team members and their coaches.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Nova Scotia wine is gracing the menu of one of the top restaurants in Europe. Benjamin Bridge's Brut Reserve 2008 was placed on the menu of Gordon Ramsay's three-star Michelin restaurant in London.

In New York, "Old Stock: A refugee love story" by Halifax-based 2B Theatre, is now playing Off Broadway. This is a true example of how we can create art here, and export it around the world.

We are competing and winning on the international stage. We are showing what a small province filled with passionate, creative, and innovative people can do.

We are able to achieve this while holding onto the traditional warmth and hospitality for which we are known. In this moment, we are showing what a new Nova Scotian confidence looks like.

This new confidence gives your government pride as we sell our province to the world. This new confidence is why we, as a people and a province, will be able to capitalize on the opportunities that lie ahead. It is why we will succeed when we work together.

On behalf of our government and in the best interest of Nova Scotians, I present, with both pride and optimism, the 2018–19 budget.

© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, 2018

Budget 2018–19: Budget Address  
Finance and Treasury Board  
March 2018

SBN 978-1-55457-822-1