

# Program and Service Review and Structural Change

*Government is examining how programs meet their objectives and provide real return on investment of tax dollars for the benefit of Nova Scotians. Over the decades, government has introduced a complex web of often overlapping programs that need rigorous examination and review.*

## Respecting and maximizing taxpayer dollars

A thoughtful and methodical examination of government programs to ensure they are working and returning value to taxpayers.

- Since change is difficult, many programs and services that were created over decades were never reviewed and rarely modified or eliminated if not meeting their objectives
- Government established Program Review “to determine if government should be delivering certain programs and services, and if the way we deliver them makes sense”
- Program Review acknowledges that relying on across-the-board cuts hasn’t worked and could do more harm than good
- Program Review is directed by a panel of Cabinet Ministers and MLAs, chaired by the Premier, in a collaborative environment with departments
- While Program Review in 2014–2015 was often a learning process about government programs, it is now a permanent part of government that will deliver more savings and efficiencies as government moves to sustainable finances
- More than 150 programs were identified for initial Year 1 review

Programs were reviewed using a number of criteria including:

- purpose (e.g. What is the public need being addressed? Is it a critical need? Is it government’s role to address it?)
- effectiveness (e.g. How effective is the program? Can we respond to this public need more effectively?)
- cost (e.g. How much does this program cost? Is that an appropriate cost? Could the province adopt more cost-efficient or effective approaches?)

## Acting on the results

Making the tough choices that will return government to sustainable finances.

- Program Review to date will save taxpayers \$119 million
- The savings identified come primarily from:
  - program changes (\$10.2 million) that include:
    - converting seven underutilized camping parks to self-registration
    - closing two underutilized visitor information centres in Digby and Pictou
    - ending the Environmental Home Assessment Program and a duplicated flood-mitigation program
  - grant and tax changes (\$56.8 million) that include:
    - rebalancing support to the creative sector by revising the Film Industry Tax Credit and phasing out equity investments in film projects with savings reinvested in a \$6-million Creative Economy Fund to support film, animation, music/sound recording and publishing industries, beginning in 2016
    - refreshing the Sustainable Transportation Strategy with new vision and goals
    - eliminating the out-of-province university student bursary

- structural changes (\$42.7 million) that include:
  - eliminating the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism
  - phasing out the Nova Scotia Gateway Office as it was originally established to take advantage of a federal program that has been cancelled
  - merging Nova Scotia Lands and Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd. to eliminate duplication of function
  - eliminating Film and Creative Industries Nova Scotia
  - consolidating Land Registry Offices to five locations to reflect increased online use
- other changes (\$9.4 million) that include:
  - various revenue adjustments and administrative efficiencies