

Nova Scotia Provincial Election 2024

Platform Analysis



Ecology Action Centre

2024 Provincial Election Platform Analysis

The many crises facing Nova Scotia – from the high cost of living to polarization to environmental degradation – are interconnected. It is critical that our political leadership has the courage, clear plans and resolve to respond to these crises in a way that prioritizes care for all our communities and the ecosystems that sustain us.

The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) has reviewed available party platforms, election promises made on the campaign trail and responses to community organization surveys to provide a picture of where each party stands on a variety of environmental, biodiversity and climate issues. This analysis is not an endorsement of any of Nova Scotia's political parties or their candidates and is not a reflection of their previous work on the environment.

The targets and promises of each of the parties are taken from their platforms and/or websites, except where otherwise indicated. If there were no commitments found, the column has been left blank.

	Green Party	Liberal Party	New Democratic Party	Progressive Conservative Party	EAC Analysis
Coastal Protection	<p>Reinstate the Coastal Protection Act, providing for coordinated and consistent province-wide safeguarding of coastlines.</p> <p>Work closely with coastal ecologists to restore important buffering coastal habitats, such as salt marshes, across the province.</p>	<p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government would respect the will of Nova Scotians, proclaim the Coastal Protection Act, and implement the required regulations across the province. We will work with municipalities to transition any existing coastal protection action plans to one unified set of rules for coastal protection across the province.</p>	<p>We will bring back, pass and enforce the Coastal Protection Act to better protect our coastline from climate change and private development impacts.</p>		<p>EAC is calling for the proclamation of the Coastal Protection Act and its associated regulatory framework to safeguard Nova Scotians and our coastlines in the face of climate change.</p> <p>Green Party: Commitment aligns with what we are calling for, identifies the need for the consistency that a pan provincial approach offers and identifies the important role nature-based solutions play in coastal protection.</p> <p>Liberals: Commitment aligns with what we are calling for and demonstrates pathway to incorporate existing coastal protection bylaws into pan provincial legislation.</p> <p>NDP: Commitment aligns with what we are calling for, identifies climate change and private development as key drivers of coastal change.</p> <p>Progressive Conservatives: Coastal protection and adaptation are absent from the platform. No indication or commitment on what happens after the end of its current three-year Coastal Protection Action Plan.</p>

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					No party provides indication of costing related to enacting the CPA and accompanying regulation or details on what such regulations might entail.
Parks and Protected Areas goal (20 per cent by 2030)	<p>Ensure provincial legislation is in place to protect old-growth forests and to both protect and remediate coastal salt marshes, which act as natural carbon sinks.</p>	<p>Meeting the 2030 protection targets is of top priority for a Nova Scotia Liberal government. For example, if voted in, on day one, we will implement the Coastal Protection Act. Additionally, in time, we will ensure that areas of new protected land are put forward.</p> <p>We know that we have a lot of work to do to protect our ecosystems across the province, and we are committed to engaging diverse voices and perspectives to do so. We will certainly work with experts... to ensure that action is being taken to maintain Nova Scotia's forests.</p> <p>We recognize the urgency of our</p>	<p>An NDP government will be committed to strong nature and environmental protections.</p> <p>An NDP government will proceed without delay to engage widely in identifying and assessing the land and water areas that can best be protected to protect 20% of natural areas in our province by 2030. The NDP will set targets for each stage of this additional protection strategy.</p> <p>An NDP government will require a well-founded public process to remove protection from an area, equivalent to the thorough process used</p>	<p>Our government committed, in law, to protect 20 per cent of our land, water and wetlands by 2030 and are working hard to achieve this goal and maintain Nova Scotia's reputation as a national leader in conservation. A re-elected PC government will continue to work on meeting this target.</p>	<p>Although no party made specific commitments in their official election platforms in this area, commitments were made by all of the parties in a question asked of all parties by the Healthy Forest Coalition: "Will you and your party put nature protection first, not last, ending log now, save later and acting with the urgency required to protect 20% of our province by 2030?"</p> <p>Responses from the Liberal, NDP and PC parties all demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the issue and, to varying degrees, commit to specific actions to move new areas forward for protection. The NDP also commits to strengthening provincial parks legislation. The Green Party does not mention the existing Protected Areas commitments specifically but promises to legislate protection of old-growth forests and salt marsh ecosystems.</p>

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		current climate situation and look forward to... protect(ing) our province.	before an area is protected, to ensure that protection cannot be quietly removed with little or no attention.		
Mining		A Nova Scotia Liberal government will examine all resource extraction royalties to build wealth for Nova Scotians by maximizing the true value of our natural resources. We will examine the entire resource regulatory framework, with a focus on Nova Scotia's critical minerals, which will help fight climate change.			<p>Gold mining is a destructive and unnecessary industry. Given the impacts mining has on the environment and local communities, Nova Scotia should restrict metal mining to Critical Minerals necessary for a green transition, and ensure that they are strictly regulated to prevent avoidable environmental impacts. Also, the ban on uranium mining must be upheld.</p> <p>For types of mining that continue, royalty rates should be increased substantially to benefit the public purse for public benefit. This should include the costs to the Province associated with supporting and reclaiming mining projects. Most governments around the world calculate royalties based on production volume and the cost of the mineral. Nova Scotia (like other provinces in Canada) allows for a variety of deductibles from the royalty rate. We are recommending that Nova Scotia move to have no less than 10% of gross revenue for all minerals and non-mineral registered materials.</p>

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Affordable Energy & Energy Efficiency	<p>Support legislation and incentives to increase energy efficiency in all buildings in the province and to develop and implement green tech.</p> <p>Support the public sector and training programs to help anyone who loses their job, or may lose their job, due to the transition to a green economy.</p> <p>Increase funding to the Clean Economy Grant Program, create both Masters and Doctoral awards with four grants at both levels, and increase funding to living wage levels; also make the grants renewable for one year for Masters students and two years for PhD students.</p>	<p>We will expand the <i>Heating Assistance Rebate Program</i> to help low-income Nova Scotians with their energy bills, saving them \$1,000 a year. Cost estimate: \$52.5M</p> <p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will expand energy efficiency programs, including heat pump and weatherization programs, to help middle class Nova Scotians save money on power and help our environment. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate the fee for the Home Energy Assessment for all Nova Scotians, • Increase rebates for heat efficiency programs such as 	<p>The Nova Scotia Energy Poverty Task Force suggested that a bill assistance discount to income-qualified households of 50% for both electricity and fuel oil. We'll implement the recommendation, providing a 50% discount on your power bill, for electricity and oil, saving the average household \$1,000 annually.</p> <p>By removing the HST off of the purchase and installation of heat pumps, providing upfront savings so that people can make the switch to more efficient power sources.</p>	<p>Will cap power rate increases to the Canadian average increase</p>	<p>In May of this year, a task force consisting of Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia Power, the Nova Scotia Oil Heat Association, Efficiency Nova Scotia, anti-poverty and housing organizations, the Municipality of Bridgewater and representatives from three different provincial government departments, recommended a comprehensive program to alleviate and prevent energy poverty (as recommended by the Clean Energy Task Force). The next government should implement in full the Made-in-Nova Scotia Home Energy Affordability program to lift 27,500+ households out of energy poverty.</p> <p>Green: Focus on efficiency is positive. But no mention is given to the other aspects of the Energy Poverty Task Force's recommendation (on-bill relief, arrearage management, emergency support), or how to reach renters.</p> <p>Good to see some emphasis on education and training programs which are necessary for a just transition. Need acknowledgement of the job opportunities in the green transition, and how to ensure they are equitably distributed.</p> <p>Need greater details on what kinds of incentives and legislation they plan to implement – specifically to support low-income and equity-deserving households and renters.</p> <p>Prioritize getting Nova Scotia's grid off coal and work to create a regional grid within Atlantic Canada to create new markets for Nova Scotia's world-class wind resources.</p> <p>Liberal: --Expanding HARP at \$52.5M is about \$20M more expensive than the cost of fully implementing the recommendation of the Energy Poverty Task Force (which is not mentioned), -Valuable that they included renters as a specific group in need of support but platform lacks detail in how they will ensure renters can access these benefits.</p>

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	<p>Support retraining incentives, programmes and courses in postsecondary institutions to provide a just transition to climate change employment.</p>	<p>the heat system rebates, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that renters and small landlords can benefit from energy efficiency upgrades and savings. <p>Cost estimate: No additional spending required, to be paid for from cap and trade revenues.</p> <p>To reduce power rates, we need more competition for power generation. We will do this by expanding the ability of renewable energy companies to provide power directly to Nova Scotians and aggressively holding Nova Scotia Power responsible for meeting legislated performance targets.</p>			<p>--The idea of "expanding the ability of renewable energy companies to provide power directly to Nova Scotians" is worth exploring. The door seems open from the Energy Reform Act. But it is difficult to judge without the details.</p> <p>-The free home energy assessment (current cost \$200) is an interesting idea. A small but significant barrier to people getting going on home energy retrofits.</p> <p>PC: Does not mention the Energy Poverty Task Force report, nor energy poverty more broadly. The proposal to cap rate increases based on national averages has these problems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeps focus on rates rather than bills. Rates will increase as long as we depend on home heating oil and coal. The long-term solution is home efficiency. The short-term solution is on-bill relief for low-income households. 2. It makes no sense to base NS's energy rates on national averages, when most provinces do not rely on home heating oil to the extent NS does. We have a unique energy mix. 3. As we've seen previously, our utility uses rate caps as an excuse to neglect legislated greenhouse gas reductions (partially because it opens NSPI to further credit downgrades). <p>NDP: If by "saving the average household \$1,000 annually," they mean the average qualifying (low-income) household, this would align with what we would like to see. However, they don't mention the other three components of the recommendation: arrears management, a crisis intervention fund, and enhanced efficiency support (other than broadly dropping HST on heat pumps). All four components are necessary for a fully effective program. These other key components were, however,</p>

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					<p>referenced by the NDP during the provincial candidates' debate on CBC.</p> <p>It is also good to see renoviction protection via a Residential Tenancy Enforcement Unit. This is important for renters whose landlords participate in efficiency retrofits.</p>
Aquaculture & Fisheries	<p>Ensure proper and cost-effective surveys of fish populations are consistently performed to monitor stock health and prevent overfishing.</p> <p>Ban open-pen fish farms in favour of contained operations which do not endanger local fish populations.</p> <p>Work with academics, fishers, and anglers to mitigate the introduction and spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, which may harm inland fishing operations.</p>	<p>Hold an inquiry into illegal fishing in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>Introduce a no-tolerance policy for illegal fishing.</p> <p>Introduce mandatory fines, and revoke buying licenses for repeat offenders.</p> <p>Modernize the provincial department of Fisheries and Aquaculture by creating an office responsible for working with the other levels of government to protect our fisheries, and create a dedicated fisheries enforcement unit to</p>	<p>Via Healthy Bays Network survey:</p> <p>"We oppose expansion of the [open-net pen] industry... An NDP government will adopt transparency requirements and engage stakeholders in preparing a transition plan that can be implemented in Nova Scotia without unnecessary delay to ensure sustainable aquaculture."</p>	<p>Via Healthy Bays Network survey:</p> <p>"... it's important to acknowledge the value that open-pen fish farming brings to Nova Scotia's economy. Last year, the industry produced over \$100 million in farmed fish, providing stable income for hundreds of families and supporting coastal communities... we believe that decisions regarding its future should be based on thorough, independent evaluations. An independent board has been established to assess all relevant information and make informed decisions... We remain committed to engaging in environmental</p>	<p>On fisheries, the Green Party plan to establish a council for fisheries disputes is a good start to dealing with conflict and illegal fishing in the province, although limited detail is available on how they would address the issue in collaboration with the federal government. Similarly, the Liberal Party offers the creation of an office responsible for working with other levels of government on illegal fishing. They call for a "no tolerance" policy, stricter punishments and more resources for enforcement. There is no mention of the importance of Indigenous governance and sovereignty within the actions proposed. The NDP and PC parties do not explicitly address fisheries issues. Not mentioned in the platforms, we would like to see the parties commit to robust boat-to-plate traceability regulations in collaboration with the federal government.</p> <p>On aquaculture, we are looking for party platforms that commit to a transition away from ecologically damaging open-net pen fish farms, as is now taking place in BC. We are also looking for parties that support small-scale regenerative aquaculture projects (e.g., shellfish and seaplants) through responsible development planning. In some cases, shellfish and seaplant aquaculture can improve local environmental outcomes while offering storm surge protection, local food sources and sustainable livelihood opportunities for coastal communities.</p> <p>The Greens and NDP express clear opposition to seacage finfish farming. Both commit to a plan that would prevent industry expansion and lead to transition away from open-net pens in the long-term. The Liberals have adopted a middle path, offering a</p>

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	<p>Support the development and sustainable implementation of local aquaculture operations for various species.</p> <p>Establish a council of licenced commercial fishers, Indigenous fishers, and government representatives to handle fisheries disputes equitably and prevent escalations.</p>	<p>ensure enforcement officers have the resources and focus necessary to protect this essential industry.</p> <p><i>Via Healthy Bays Network survey:</i></p> <p>“It’s clear that the aquaculture review process needs to be improved in Nova Scotia. We believe that all voices, especially those of our coastal communities, should be considered when making decisions about the future of our marine ecosystems. A Nova Scotia Liberal government will engage in conversations with all stakeholders to ensure that we are moving forward with a method that benefits our province... We are not looking to</p>		<p>concerns, while protecting our critical aquaculture industry...”</p>	<p>consultation on the best aquaculture methods for Nova Scotia moving forward and claiming that they are “not looking to expand” open-net pens. The PCs are clear that they will support seacage fish farming, along with the broader aquaculture industry, if elected. The PC platform demonstrates an intention to protect the status quo and seems most likely to lead to open-net pen expansion in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>When it comes to other forms of aquaculture, like shellfish and seaplants, the Greens, NDP and Liberals each promise to help the industry grow “responsibly”, “sustainably” or in alignment with local community support. All are broadly aligned with EAC positions in this regard. The PC material does not distinguish between various aquaculture types.</p>

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		<p>expand finfish aquaculture.</p> <p>We strongly support expanding shellfish aquaculture and sea plant harvesting, and want to work to ensure these applications can be expedited in areas where coastal communities are supportive. This is a major economic opportunity for our province, and can contribute to a clean, healthy ocean."</p>			
Renewable Energy & the grid	Form a committee composed of members of academia, industry, and municipal representatives to develop a plan for modernizing Nova Scotia's electrical infrastructure for efficiency and resilience to extreme weather event.	A Nova Scotia Liberal government will take a strong stance to ensure that Nova Scotian wind energy benefits Nova Scotians. We'll strongly regulate land leasing, water access, and generation capacity to ensure that all Nova Scotians are	By transitioning Nova Scotia to renewable energy like wind and solar. We'll speed up the transition to net-zero buildings, and make it easier for people to become part of the solution by offering rebates for moving off coal and fossil fuels for their home heating.	Focus on the smart development of our energy and natural resources sectors through Nova Scotia's Clean Energy Plan, which will in turn provide more opportunities for families and result in fewer of our children going "out west" for work. It will make Nova Scotia a world class energy producer in	<p>EAC believes in greening Nova Scotia first and that a regional grid can increase resilience and energy bill affordability. We want to ensure that government is committed to the phase out of coal by 2030 and the development of an 80% renewable energy grid by 2030.</p> <p>Green: The Green Party's plan would include transforming Nova Scotia Power by taking away the utility's ability to own power plants, creating a "wires only" utility – which will exclusively be responsible for transmitting and/or deliver electricity purchased from other sources. The idea broadly aligns with the goal of eliminating the utility's historic monopoly on generation and creating competition for electricity generators. Innovative solutions to this problem are welcome in our political discourse.</p>

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	<p>Support the development of offshore wind resources.</p> <p>Continue to support initiatives to install solar panels on commercial and residential buildings, including in Mi'kmaq communities.</p> <p>Overhaul electricity regulations and regulatory processes to facilitate quicker adoption of innovative demand response programs and other smart grid technologies that are customer optional ("opt-in"). This modernization will keep electricity prices lower for customers while accelerating efforts to green the grid.</p> <p>Provide increased incentives and financing options</p>	<p>benefitting from our natural resources. Further, all renewable energy projects would be required to either put electricity into our grid or pay into a fund that will be used to lower power rates for consumers.</p> <p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will work with the federal government to advance interregional electricity transmission planning and coordination to stabilize energy costs. This will increase access to affordable clean energy while both bolstering grid reliability at times of high energy demand and improving resilience against extreme weather.</p>		<p>hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuel.</p>	<p>Liberal: Platform aligns with EAC's calls for an interconnected grid in Atlantic Canada by building high-capacity transmission lines between provinces, as well as prioritizing the phase out of coal in NS.</p> <p>An interconnected grid will be a key component of lowering electricity costs across Atlantic Canada and increasing reliability. An interconnected grid could also spur investment in offshore wind and allow NS to export power post-2030.</p> <p>NDP: While quicker deployment of renewables is needed for Nova Scotia to get off coal by 2030, a more detailed policy proposal would be welcomed by the EAC.</p> <p>PC: EAC agrees that the renewable energy transition will present our province with an unprecedented opportunity to create jobs in the renewable energy sector.</p> <p>After phasing out coal by 2030, Nova Scotia will have an opportunity to export clean electricity across the region – an exciting possibility for Nova Scotians. However, the best way to ensure affordability and reliability for Nova Scotians, as well as long-term investment in renewable energy, is to build an interconnected, regional grid in Atlantic Canada. The platform makes no mention of this reality, and the EAC would welcome more details about how job creation and an export economy will be facilitated through government policy.</p> <p>All: Some party platforms have put forward interesting ideas that broadly align with the EAC's vision for an affordable, reliable, and clean electricity grid. For example, the Liberal Party platform mentions the ideas of enabling Nova Scotia to export and import renewable energy, which will be essential to achieving our goals.</p>

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	<p>for purchasers of residential battery energy storage systems who participate in demand response programs. This measure will both increase the resiliency of the grid and encourage household-level climate adaptation against outages due to extreme weather events.</p> <p>Explore steps to separate Nova Scotia Power's generating assets into a subsidiary or other distinct entity from its transmission and distribution assets, while making provisions for grid balancing, to reduce the potential for conflicts of interest in negotiating Power Purchase Agreements and managing Generation Interconnection</p>	<p>Cost estimate: to be paid for from cap and trade revenues.</p> <p>We will redouble our efforts to get Nova Scotia off coal without simply substituting fuel oil in power plants.</p> <p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will expand renewable power generation in Nova Scotia to keep costs down, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing substantially in renewable generation with in-province wind, solar, and battery farms, and Ensure that the sites in Nova Scotia with the best wind power generating potential are being used for projects to get 			<p>The Green Party platform mentions the idea of a 'wires-only,' utility which could create welcome competition in the electricity sector.</p> <p>Other platforms, such as those of the PCs and the NDP, articulate laudable goals such as job creation, increased economic activity, and a faster transition to renewable energy. However, more details about how we get there would be welcomed by the EAC. When it comes to energy, the devil is in the details.</p>

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	<p>Procedures. This would open up the power generation market to greater competition.</p> <p>Work toward achieving provincial carbon neutrality by 2050.</p>	<p>our province off coal power and lower power bills. Cost estimate: to be paid for from cap and trade revenues.</p>			
Carbon Tax	<p>Implement a made-in-Nova Scotia carbon pricing system to replace the federal backstop system, removing loopholes for large emitters to ensure fairness and provide larger rebates for individuals.</p>	<p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will get rid of the carbon tax. To ensure we are still doing our part to lower pollution, we will work with other Atlantic Provinces to establish a Cap and Trade program that will reduce large industrial pollution without punishing consumers at the gas pumps.</p>	<p>No mention of the carbon tax in their platform; however, the platform does promise to remove the gas tax.</p>	<p>No mention in their platform; however they have stated in the media and on some of their election signs that they are against the carbon tax.</p>	<p>Carbon pricing is just one of many potential tools to decrease and regulate carbon emissions. Nothing requires provincial leaders to implement the federal carbon pricing program. All provincial governments have the ability to create their own emissions regulations, subject to federal approval, which can be tailored to increase payments to low income Canadians (as has occurred in BC).</p> <p>Cap and trade – the system of emissions control proposed by the Liberals - is one example of an alternative provincial plan to carbon pricing. The success of this proposal would depend on the ability of NS to trade with other jurisdictions, including others in the Atlantic regional as well as other states and provinces with carbon pricing regimes, such as Quebec and California Other proposals, such as the Green Party's suggestion of implementing of a “made in Nova Scotia system” to target big emitters, are lacking in specifics. NDP and PC platforms do not mention carbon pricing.</p> <p>Regardless of the proposal, it is important to remember that the elimination of carbon pricing is not a solution to Nova Scotia's affordability crisis. Getting rid of a price on pollution would limit the province's ability to fund targeted energy poverty reduction programs, as well as other investment in a net-zero economy. Carbon pricing is one policy tool among many which can provide</p>

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					opportunities to hold industrial polluters to account and provide funding for climate action and energy poverty reduction.
Active Transportation	Further the implementation of non-emitting modes of transportation within urban centres such as bike lanes, bike sharing systems, and multi-use pathways.	Invest to improve 100 local trails and community recreation infrastructure projects across the province			<p>None of the parties addressed the main causes of road fatalities - distracted driving, speeding, failure to wear a seat belt and impairment. Not only do these cause avoidable deaths but also contribute to making roads feel unsafe for walking and cycling and reducing traffic congestion caused by accidents. Enacting photo radar to enforce speeding and running red lights would greatly reduce road fatalities for all road users.</p> <p>The EAC is calling for the province to proclaim the 2018 Traffic Safety Act – which would enable photo radar. We are also calling for an amendment to the Act that would allow municipal Traffic Authorities the ability to set speed limits to 30km/h on residential roads. Lowering speed limits and enforcing them will drastically make our roads safer and therefore also enable cycling and walking.</p> <p>The EAC is also calling for the Provincial Active Transportation Strategy to be released and adequately funded. Under this strategy, we would like to see safe cycling and scooting added to the school curriculum, and substantial funding for AT infrastructure and programming.</p> <p>All parties need stronger commitments to active transportation for urban and rural communities.</p>

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Transit	<p>Initiate a long-term project for a comprehensive, multimodal transit system designed for inter-municipal travel in Nova Scotia, including buses, light rail, and ferries, and integrate this system with existing municipal transit and active transportation infrastructure.</p> <p>Collaborate with municipalities to implement or enhance mass transit systems and ensure they are integrated as much as possible with other transit options.</p> <p>Drastically increase the allocation of provincial funds for transit infrastructure, matching each dollar spent on new highway</p>	<p>We'll make the largest investment in rural community transport in Nova Scotia's history, ensuring that community transportation organizations can lower costs and increase services.</p> <p>Cost estimate: Cost estimate: \$12M</p> <p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will invest to improve and expand the Joint Regional Transportation Agency to continue planning a long-term vision for regional transportation in Nova Scotia, including determining where LRT would be most effective.</p> <p>Cost estimate: Total cost: \$2M/year</p>	<p>By making the Halifax Harbour ferries free. We'll expand transit options in the HRM by fast-tracking the recommendations included in the HRM Rapid Transit Strategy, including more rapid bus lines, more ferry routes, and more options to get you home to your family faster.</p>	<p>A feasibility study to build light rail for commuters that will give Nova Scotians more of the most precious asset: time. Less time in traffic, less time commuting means more time for what matters most: family and community. Rail routes to be explored will begin with Windsor to Mill Cove, Bedford and in CBRM.</p>	<p>Transportation is the second largest source of GHG emissions in NS, and personal vehicle use accounts for roughly half of NS transportation emissions. Personal vehicles are also very expensive. The average vehicle ownership cost in Canada is \$1,387/month. Having viable alternatives to personal vehicles means reducing GHG, decreasing household expenses and improving public health.</p> <p>We need substantial investments in transit, active transportation, and car share to make getting around the province possible without a personal vehicle. To do this we need attractive alternatives – meaning fast, reliable and pleasant.</p> <p>Greens: Positive overall commitments, would be nice to see more detail. Better integration between existing transit services could improve regional trips, but little detail is provided.</p> <p>Electric school buses, and tax incentives aligns with EACs goals of promoting electric school buses for NS, and encouraging further adoption of charging infrastructure for EV owners.</p> <p>Liberals: Transit services in NS only recover up to 30% of their operating costs through fare collection. Making public transit free across the province would eliminate admin costs associated with fare collection, and provide more predictable funding to transit agencies. Making transit free will greatly benefit rural communities where door-to-door dial-a-ride fares start at \$7-15, and often exceed \$60 per ride.</p> <p>Strong commitments to investing substantial funding for transit in both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>NDP: Free Ferry events have demonstrated ridership on Halifax Ferries would significantly increase if fares were removed. The increase in ferry ridership would bring the operating costs per passenger from \$6-7 to \$2-4, which could reasonably be recouped through the provincial sales tax on purchases resulting from ferry crossings. Would like to see a financial commitment to</p>

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	<p>construction with a dollar spent on building transit capacity.</p> <p>Create tax incentives to build and operate public electric vehicle charging infrastructure, especially in rural areas.</p> <p>Electrify school bus fleets to reduce exposure of school-age children to automobile emissions, following similar Green-led efforts in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.</p>	<p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will make public transit free across Nova Scotia, eliminating barriers to transportation and providing up to \$5,000 per year in savings for those who switch from driving to commuting by public transit. We will also invest to increase public transit capacity to account for the expected growth in ridership, ensure system efficiency, and support more accessible transit options.</p> <p>Cost estimate: Cost estimate: \$53.6M</p> <p>Traffic in Halifax is at an all-time high and we need solutions now, including better access to public</p>			<p>supporting/increasing other transit options in HRM including their support of the Bus Rapid Transit Plan. Need commitments for transit outside of HRM including CBRM.</p> <p>PC: A feasibility study for light rail in CBRM was funded to begin in April 2024, but there is little evidence of any work on this study over the past 6 months. Expanded transit between HRM and the Annapolis Valley would better connect many communities, but a feasibility study would likely find ridership is too low for light rail. Increasing bus service (from 1 daily trip) would meet transit needs sooner, while building ridership demand for future rail.</p> <p>Overall: It is positive to see transit included in multiple platforms.</p> <p>Light rail is a great long-term solution, but we also need more immediate improvements to transit in the short-term. The promise of feasibility studies is encouraging, but how “feasibility” is defined can cancel projects.</p> <p>Investing in more buses and drivers is the cheap, fast and easy way to drastically increase transit options and reliability. The current major barrier for transit both in municipalities and rural services is staffing and funding for operations.</p>

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		<p>transit, investments in rapid transit, more efficient roads, and more work from home options. A Nova Scotia Liberal government will immediately create a joint task-force with the HRM to identify opportunities to reduce congestion and fund immediate solutions, like Halifax's plan for bus rapid transit.</p> <p>Cost estimate: Total cost: \$6.25M/year</p>			
Roads		<p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will invest in critical highway infrastructure to increase safety on our highways, complete the 100-series highways, and improve the flow of goods and people around our province. Specifically, our</p>		<p>Eliminating tolls on Macdonald and MacKay bridges to improve the flow of traffic in the HRM.</p> <p>The largest ever investment in HRM roads to ease traffic congestion</p>	<p>Liberal: Would like to see a feasibility study comparing this proposal to other safety approaches to make our roads safer (like lowering & enforcing speed limits).</p> <p>PC: Studies show that building more and bigger roads doesn't ease traffic congestion. Need evidence-based solutions to address congestion. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856423001465</p> <p>Would like to see a study or evidence to support the idea that removing tolls would improve the flow of traffic. Most traffic delays on the bridges result from accidents. Would like to see a</p>

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		<p>priorities include making improvements to safety infrastructure across the province, completing controlled access highways on the 101 and 103, and ensuring proper exits on the 104. Cost estimate: Total cost: \$40M/year</p> <p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will invest in maintaining rural road infrastructure by enhancing maintenance efforts for ditches and culverts to keep our roads safe and protect private property.</p> <p>Cost estimate: Total cost: \$5M/year</p>			<p>commitment to identifying the primary factors causing accidents and solutions to reduce them.</p>

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Agriculture and Food Security	<p>Increase investment and research into climate-friendly and regenerative agricultural practices and biopesticides.</p> <p>Fund initiatives, such as community gardens, to foster agriculture in urban areas to produce more local food.</p> <p>Create incentives for farmers to implement regenerative agricultural practices, recognizing benefits of agriculture in the carbon economy.</p> <p>Empower farmers by collaborating with them to improve their capacity to sell their products in local retail markets.</p>	<p>A Nova Scotia Liberal government will immediately halt all payments to Sobeys for the Nova Scotia Loyal program, and instead invest that money in developing a comprehensive marketing and growth plan for local products. Cost estimate: No additional spending required.</p> <p>To improve competition in the grocery market, a Nova Scotia Liberal government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ban restrictive covenants that determine where grocery stores can be built. This will increase competition and improve availability of grocery stores across the province, 	<p>Removing the provincial portion of the HST on phone bills, internet and groceries to reduce monthly costs for all Nova Scotians, particularly seniors on fixed incomes and young and single-parent families struggling to get by.</p> <p>The Affordable Homes Rebate will help hundreds of thousands of renters and homeowners by providing an average annual rebate of \$900 when their household incomes are under \$70,000 a year</p>	<p>The PC Party plans to cut HST in NS for the first time ever, making some items cheaper to purchase.</p>	<p>The EAC is calling for policy solutions to the food insecurity crisis, including a provincial food strategy and stronger income supports. A strong food platform would also include significant investments in local and regional infrastructure focused on systems-level advocacy and building community capacity for change. The EAC would like to see improvements to the NS Loyal Program to provide more substantial incentives and benefits for local producers and businesses, redirecting funds that are intended to benefit large grocery corporations toward independent retailers and producers.</p> <p>The NS School Lunch Program launched in October 2024. The EAC calls for a robust universal, cost-shared lunch program that (1) supports regional economies through targeted procurement plans, (2) works collaboratively with the federal government and local stakeholders, and (3) builds strong relationships with local suppliers to enable schools to develop seasonal menus that meet dietary and cultural needs of students while supporting the local economy.</p> <p>Greens: Platform has a strong focus on agriculture and climate-friendly agriculture practices. This is the only platform that includes actions on school food. However, the party does not state that they will provide increased support to expand the School Lunch Program. The commitment to increasing farmers' capacity to sell products in local retail markets is promising but lacks specificity. Actions around affordability and income supports would strengthen the platform.</p> <p>Liberals: Platform demonstrates a broader understanding of the issues facing our regional food system than other platforms. Their commitment to banning restrictive covenants and investing in independent grocery retailers and food hubs aligns with what we are asking for. The Liberals will stop payments to Sobeys as part of the NS Loyal Program, instead directing funds towards marketing and growth plans for local products.</p> <p>NDP: Overall, the platform makes very little direct mention of food security or agricultural support. Focus appears to be more on</p>

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	<p>Provide guidance and supports for current and future school/ community gardens in all schools, or alternatively communities, in the province to promote food security, environmental sustainability, lifelong healthy food choices, social inclusion, life skills, the arts, and all subject areas, through integrated curricular action plans and inquiry and project-based learning on a classroom as well as a school-wide basis.</p>	<p>especially in rural areas, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in independent grocery stores by providing grants and loans so they can expand to better serve their communities and compete against large grocery stores. <p>Cost estimate: Cost estimate: \$10M</p> <p>We will invest \$10M to expand affordable food programs across the province by building new food hubs, expanding programs that buy excess food from farmers to sell directly to Nova Scotians, and investing in mobile food markets.</p> <p>Cost estimate: Cost estimate: \$10M</p> <p>Currently, consumers do not pay HST on basic</p>			<p>income support, through HST reductions and rebates. Income and affordability interventions are important, however more specific food system priorities in their platform would help ensure this remains a policy priority. There is also a noticeable lack of support mentioned for agriculture and farmers.</p> <p>PC: Overall, the platform makes very little direct mention of food security or agricultural support. Platform focuses on income intervention and affordability through their cutting of HST, indexing tax brackets, and raising the basic personal amount, along with raising minimum wage (no amount specified). They mention their launching of the School Lunch Program in October with “free lunch for every student,” however, the current model is pay-what-you-can. Overall, the platform makes very little direct mention of food security, no mention of agricultural support, and no commitment to expand and improve the School Lunch Program or advance a provincial food strategy.</p>

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		<p>groceries like fruit, flour, and milk. However, many foods that families rely on are still subject to a 15% HST. These include foods like granola bars, pre-made salads, and sandwiches at the grocery store. A Nova Scotia Liberal government would remove the provincial sales tax from all food in grocery stores.</p> <p>Cost estimate: Cost estimate: \$11M</p> <p>We will develop a Centre for Agriculture Ventures and Enterprises that will bring together different levels of government, post-secondary institutions, and farmers to find innovative ways to support our farms. One of the first priorities will be to</p>			

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		help our farms adapt to climate change. We'll also develop a mental health plan for farmers, who we know are twice as likely to experience suicidal ideation. Cost estimate: Total cost: \$13M			
Zoning and Housing	<p>Ensure Nova Scotians have the right to housing that meets their basic needs.</p> <p>Increase investment in public housing and other forms of non-market housing.</p> <p>Support non-market housing for low-income Nova Scotians and those at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Support price competition from the private sector, restoring a robust and competitive housing market like the one that existed</p>	<p>Set a goal of building 80,000 new homes by 2032 to eliminate the housing shortfall, aiming for a rate of 11,000 new homes per year—enough to accommodate Nova Scotia's growth.</p> <p>Establish increased minimum density standards across our province that take into account proximity to transportation and services.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate zoning to encourage density near our province's universities so</p>	<p>Put an End to Spiraling Rent Increases with Rent Control: That cuts in half the allowable Tim Houston rate increase (2.5% from 5%). We'll also close the Houston fixed-term lease loophole that has allowed landlords to exploit Nova Scotia's tight rental market and charge double-digit rent increases.</p> <p>Protect Renters From Unfair Evictions and Renovictions: By reversing the Conservatives' loosening of eviction rules, establishing</p>	<p>Help you buy your first home by creating a First Time Home Owners Program.</p> <p>Make vacant land parcels available to communities for \$1 on the condition that they be developed into affordable housing options.</p>	<p>Green: The platform focuses on addressing affordability and social issues as a whole -- including housing, homelessness, poverty, and food insecurity, while transitioning to a sustainable, green economy. Key commitments include prioritizing non-market housing, ensuring a basic standard of living for all Nova Scotians, and fostering cross-party cooperation to solve these challenges.</p> <p>Liberal: The platform demonstrates a broad, inclusive approach to housing with specific goals for affordable housing, seniors, students, and marginalized groups. This approach shows an understanding of the diverse needs within the housing market. It includes innovative solutions like investment in modern building practices and tax reforms that could stimulate housing development and improve climate resilience. There is a clear emphasis on reducing red tape, improving municipal support, and incentivizing non-profit sector participation and non-market housing solutions. This platform has the most housing-focused goals.</p> <p>NDP: The platform focuses on addressing the housing crisis in Nova Scotia through a mix of initiatives aimed at both renters and first-time homebuyers. Key proposals include a Rent-to-Own Starter Home Program for lower-income buyers, building 30,000 new affordable rental homes, stronger protections for renters from unfair evictions</p>

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	<p>before governments abandoned investment in public housing.</p> <p>Implement a Housing First program with additional services for mental health, addictions, and employment assistance to address homelessness.</p> <p>Lower the rent cap to 3%, reflecting the Bank of Canada target range for inflation, and apply it universally, including to new leases for the same unit.</p> <p>Implement a truly actionable ban on rental discrimination against families with children.</p> <p>Push for the establishment of a provincial Residential</p>	<p>students have a place to live.</p> <p>Eliminate any cases of restrictive covenants or exclusionary zoning that prevent housing from being built.</p> <p>Build More Non-Profit Housing: building 4,000 additional units by 2032, being sure to include wraparound supports for residents (Cost estimate: Total cost: \$37.5M/year)</p> <p>Fix the Broken Property Tax System: Lower property taxes, especially in highly-taxed areas like the CBRM, Ensure our property tax system incentivizes housing being built, and Increase taxes on large vacant lots in our urban areas.</p>	<p>eviction and renoviction protection that works for both tenants and landlords, and creating a new Residential Tenancy Enforcement Unit.</p> <p>Create a Path to Home Ownership through a Rent-to-Own Starter Home Program: That combines more home construction with lower up-front costs for first-time buyers. We'll work with the growing factory-built home construction industry to deliver high quality, energy efficient, affordable homes to first-time home buyers with a household income of less than \$100,000 per year.</p> <p>Build more Non-Market and Co-op Homes: Have set an ambitious initial goal of 30,000 new</p>		<p>and renovictions, and rent control to curb excessive rent hikes. This platform is the most critical of the business-as-usual approach to housing.</p> <p>PC: The platform focuses on making housing more accessible through down payment assistance programs and expediting housing approvals. It highlights past efforts to support renters, invest in public housing, and develop vacant land. Additionally, the platform acknowledges that housing growth requires enhanced transportation infrastructure, with a focus on commuter options. This platform has the fewest housing-focused commitments.</p>

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	Tenancies Compliance Unit.	<p>Re-Think Municipal Zoning Standards: The municipal funding formula will be reviewed to incentivize housing starts and red tape reduction (Cost estimate: \$20M).</p> <p>Modernize Housing Legislation: We need a rules-based system across the province that will encourage new housing.</p>	affordable rental homes.		
Environmental Bill of Rights	The Green Party of Nova Scotia supports an environmental bill of rights "that enshrines the principle of a basic human right to a healthy environment." ⁱ	The Liberal Party of Nova Scotia issued a statement saying they support an environmental bill of rights.	The NDP "would continue to advocate for the bill of rights if they were to form a government".	A statement from the Progressive Conservative Party on Monday did not say if they support the call for a right to a healthy environment. Spokesperson Catherine Klimek said working toward emissions reduction and land protection goals, as well as providing funding for energy upgrades and climate change mitigation, "go at the nature of the legislation."	<p>East Coast Environmental Law is calling for a commitment to enact a Bill of Environmental Rights and Responsibilities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • says all Nova Scotians have a right to a healthy environment in which biodiversity is preserved, • says the Government of Nova Scotia has a legal responsibility to protect the environment for present and future generations, • gives Nova Scotians new and enhanced legal tools to support this work, and • supports the implementation of the <i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>. <p>While no party addressed this issue in their platform, a CBC news story reports that the Green, Liberal, and NDP parties would commit to an Environmental Bill of Rights. The PC Party did not say if they</p>

	Green Party	Liberal Party	New Democratic Party	Progressive Conservative Party	EAC Analysis
					would support such a bill. All quotes in columns to the left are from this news story.
Forestry Practices	<p>Fully implement the recommendations of the 2018 Lahey forestry report.</p> <p>Collaborate with researchers and the forestry industry to develop more sustainable forestry practices.</p> <p>Support measures to ensure the legislated elimination of clearcutting forestry practices.</p> <p>Support facilitation of best practices silviculture on public and private land forestry and for old-forest restoration.</p> <p>Call for full implementation of the Endangered Species Act on</p>	<p>Will work with experts to ensure that action is being taken to maintain Nova Scotia's forests.</p>	<p>From Healthy Forests Coalition questionnaire:</p> <p>An NDP government will provide the resources and leadership needed for on-going timely implementation of the ecological forestry policies and processes arising from the Lahey Report, including better definition and protection of old growth forest.</p>		<p>Forestry practices were a big issue in the last election, with all parties committing to implementing the recommendations of the Independent Review of Forestry Practices (the Lahey Report), which is now being implemented by government, although there is still a lot left to do.</p> <p>This election the Green, Liberal and NDP have reiterated that promise. The Green Party also made several related commitments including to ban glyphosate spraying and forest biomass burning for electricity. The PC party made no specific commitments regarding Forestry Practices.</p>

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	<p>public and private land.</p> <p>Urge legislation preventing toxic agents, such as glyphosate, from being applied to fields and forests.</p> <p>Urge legislation preventing the use of forest biomass for the purpose of electricity generation both domestically and abroad.</p> <p>Support measures that contribute to carbon sequestration and climate resilience, such as fire-risk criteria and incentives, to conserve old-growth and Acadian forests on public and private land.</p>				

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	Require both survey-based and molecular-based assessments of forest health and monitoring of invasive or destructive species.				

Find each party's platforms here:

[Green Party](#)

[Liberal Party](#)

[NDP](#)

[Progressive Conservative Party](#)

ⁱ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/law-firm-right-to-healthy-environment-1.7372996>