

Green Party of Nova Scotia

Policy Document 2024



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## Introduction

The Green Party of Nova Scotia is unique in that it is dedicated to building thriving and sustainable communities that embody the Green Global Principles of ecological wisdom, social justice, participatory democracy, nonviolence, sustainability, and respect for diversity. The global principles underpin all policies of the Green Party of Nova Scotia and guide us to act in the interest of

1. Ecological Stewardship
2. Justice
3. Democratic Governance

These principles give rise to overarching policies of the GPNS which affect multiple areas of policy.



# Overarching Policies

## The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. acknowledges that we are operating and living on the unceded land of the Mi'kmaq and that we have a responsibility as settlers and signatories of the Peace and Friendship Treaties to actively work toward Truth and Reconciliation to create a society where we learn from their wisdom as stewards of the land and are truly living in peace and friendship with the Mi'kmaq.
2. understands that the future of Nova Scotia is dependent on there being justice brought for the climate, the economy, languages, and for the racialized, Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, 2SLGBTQQIA+, women, children and youth, children in care, those living with disabilities, and migrant communities, such that communities care for each other and every resident has the means to not only survive, but to thrive.
3. recognizes that true democracy requires evidence-informed policy development in consultation with all individuals, communities, organizations, and affected stakeholders such that all peoples feel welcome and supported in participating in social, economic, environmental, and political decision making that takes into account the knowledge and priorities of all Nova Scotians.

# Ecological Stewardship

## Protection

### Climate Change

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:


1. recognizes that we are living in a climate emergency and that the impacts of climate change are not only felt by people, but by the remainder of our biosphere.
2. supports the development of climate and sustainability criteria, including consideration of cumulative impacts, that will be applied to all future publicly funded capital projects.

### *Greenhouse Gas Reductions/Mitigation*

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that are aggressive, measurable, transparent, and consistent with the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
2. supports initiatives that promote reduced public, private and individual use of fossil fuels and increased protection of our natural sources of carbon sequestration, such as forests, healthy oceans, and salt marshes.
3. recognizes that the expansion and development of all fossil fuels, including exploratory fracking, must stop.
4. recognizes the urgent need for climate change adaptation planning that includes precautionary strategies to address climate change-related hazards, such as sea level rise, blizzards, hurricanes, and wildfires.



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5. recognizes that environmental assessment processes must consider sustainability goals and take full account of greenhouse gas emissions and cumulative impacts.
  6. recognizes the value of incorporating nature-based solutions in climate change adaptation strategies. Some examples may include incorporating more green spaces in urban areas, green roofs, etc.
  7. supports measures to raise awareness about how climate change will likely affect people in Nova Scotia.

## Wetlands and Coastal Protection

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that wetlands and coastlines perform many important functions and services to our ecosystem such as providing habitat for a variety of species, including those which are endangered, and serving as important carbon sinks.
2. recognizes that wetlands and coastlines are under increasing threat from climate change, warming waters, storm surges, and intrusive development.
3. supports measures to restore and protect wetlands and coastlines, such as by working with federal and municipal counterparts to prevent overfishing, species invasions, sand mining, pollution, and development which may interfere with such protection.
4. supports raising public awareness about the role wetlands and coastlines can play in our ecosystems and in protection against erosion and flooding.

## Waste Minimization and Circular Economy

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports stringent legislation and monitoring systems to reduce exposure to toxic pollution and eliminate instances of illegal chemical dumping.
2. supports a circular economic model of waste reduction and sustainable producer responsibility programs that promote best methods for reusing, remanufacturing, recycling of materials, and minimizing waste.
3. supports legislation for businesses and individuals transporting, storing, or producing hazardous materials to demonstrate their ongoing ability to cover the total costs of cleanup and restoration for damage arising from their operations.

## Natural Environment/Biodiversity

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes the value of maintaining intact ecosystems and expanding protected areas for their contributions to clean air, water, and land; greenhouse gas (GHG) management; natural resource industries, and the recreation and enjoyment of all Nova Scotians.
2. supports environmental legislation and procedures to prevent and address biodiversity loss and ecological collapse.

# Green Infrastructure

## Transition to a Green Economy

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that the survival of the planet requires urgent transition to a green economy that is not dependent on the development of the fossil fuel industry.
2. supports legislation and incentives for a transition to energy efficient public and private buildings, homes, and for the development and production of green technologies.
3. supports public job and re-training programs to help workers who may be affected by the economic transition.

## Transportation

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports an expansion of affordable public transit within and between communities.
2. supports investment in livable neighbourhoods that promote walkability, cyclability, and other diverse forms of mobility, to facilitate safe travel and the reduced need for private vehicles for health, environmental, economic, and social benefits.
3. supports reducing emissions from privately and publicly owned vehicles through measures to facilitate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles, including comprehensive and equitable access to charging infrastructure.



# Natural Resource Industries

## Agriculture

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that less than 10% of the food in Nova Scotia is grown on local provincial farms, farmland is under threat by developers, and some 'conventional' and 'industrial' agricultural practices deplete soil health, pollute the environment, and are cruel to animals.
2. supports legislative and financial measures for:
  - a. regenerative land management and agriculture,
  - b. protection of farmland to secure the local food supply,
  - c. investment and research into climate-friendly agricultural techniques, practices, and food production systems that make our food supply more resilient,
  - d. investment to assist farmers in moving from conventional to regenerative production systems that do not require the use of artificial agents,
  - e. enhancement of small-scale farming and community gardening initiatives that support local and sustainable food security systems in urban and rural settings and
  - f. the development of local markets and distribution systems to support small scale, local producers.

## Food Security

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

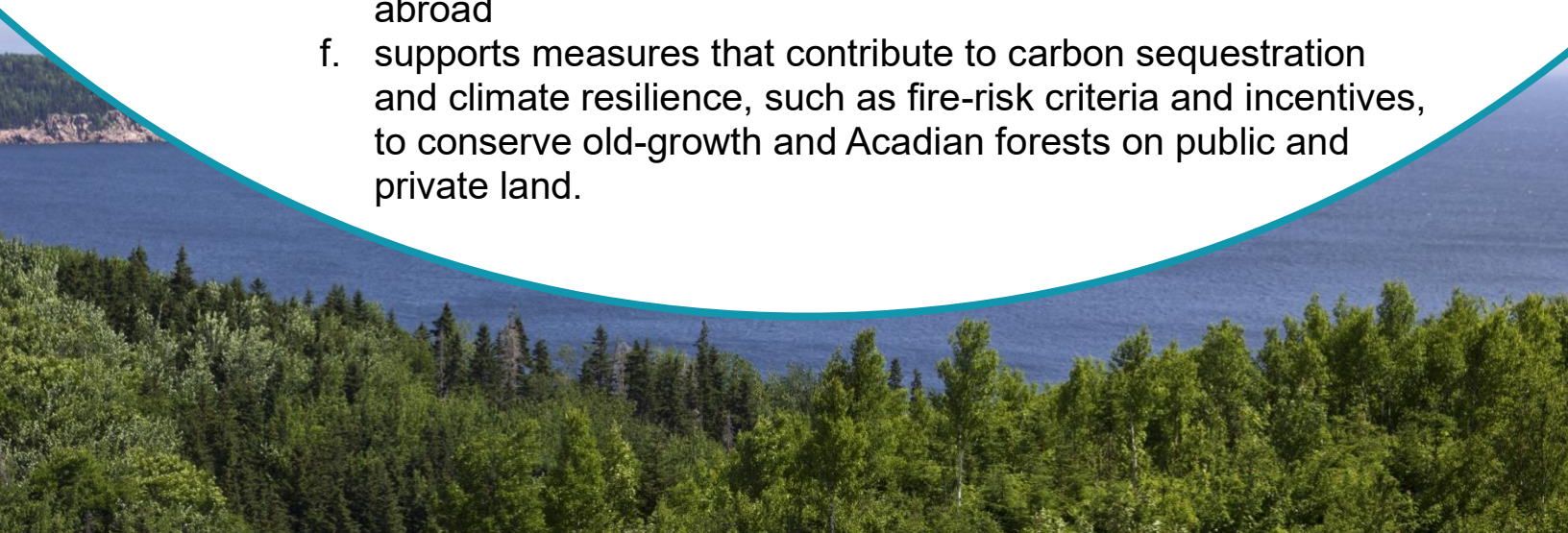
1. acknowledges that adequate food is a fundamental human right, is a main determinant of people's health and well-being, and that access to affordable, healthy, local food is very limited in Nova Scotia.

2. recognizes that insufficient government supports and the dominance of a few large food chains, which are often inconveniently located, have contributed to:
  - a. difficulty for local producers to compete and
  - b. the need for charity-based food provision.
3. supports legislative and financial measures to ensure that people can access affordable, healthy, culturally relevant, and local (where possible) food.

## Forestry

### The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that the types of forestry practices used can either harm or aid our biodiverse ecosystems.
2. supports stronger legislation in favor of sustainable practices to facilitate systemic change in the forestry industry and towards an ecological forestry approach noting reports on best practices such as the 2018 Lahey report.
3. Supports measures to ensure forest and ecosystem protection including, for example:
  - a. the legislated elimination of clearcutting forestry practices,
  - b. the facilitation of best practices silviculture on public and private land forestry and for old-forest restoration,
  - c. full implementation of the Endangered Species Act on public and private land,
  - d. legislation preventing toxic agents, such as glyphosate, from being applied to fields and forests and
  - e. legislation preventing the use of forest biomass for the purpose of electricity generation both domestically and abroad
  - f. supports 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.



## Fisheries

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that inappropriate fisheries' practices can severely harm aquatic ecosystems as well as the biodiversity of our waters, and can also affect the safety of the products for consumers.
2. supports legislation to facilitate sustainable fisheries, such as ensuring areas of no-take zones and continued legislation for periods of no-fishing.
3. supports funding for research into fishing methods which minimize negative ecological impacts and develop uses for bycatch and waste products.
4. supports close coordination with Federal counterparts and measures to ensure that fishery operations and disputes are handled equitably.
5. supports the diversification of fisheries' species in Nova Scotian waters to avoid overfishing and potential extirpation of fish populations while providing livelihoods for local fishers.



## *Aquaculture*

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that inappropriate aquaculture practices pose risks to native aquatic populations, the health of exploited species, and to consumers.
2. supports ecologically safe aquaculture practices, such as land-based operations, to support the economy of Nova Scotia with minimal ecological harm.
3. supports monitoring of identified commercial species for potential threats such as disease, illegal harvesting, and invasive species.
4. Supports research efforts in the identification of species which are good candidates for sustainable aquaculture.



## Other Natural Resource 'extractives'

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that extractive industries, such as mining, while currently necessary, can interfere with the rights of Nova Scotians and the ecosystems upon which we all depend.
2. supports legislation and monitoring to ensure that industries operate without their wastes interfering with:
  - a. ecosystems or
  - b. people's health, employment prospects, or recreational enjoyment of the natural environment

And that industries are:

- a. held responsible for all cleanup and restoration and
  - b. subject to steep and prohibitive penalties for noncompliance or for environmental accidents that should have been prevented.
3. supports measures to assist in just transitions for former employees leaving harmful extractive industries or when industries close or relocate.





# Energy

## The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports efforts to modernize and improve provincial energy infrastructure as the province faces more frequent bouts of extreme weather such as blizzards and hurricanes.
2. recognizes the economic and social impacts of power outages and supports ways to prevent them.
3. recognizes that access to energy is vital to our way of life and, thus, should be efficient, local, and have as little negative impact on the environment as possible.
4. supports the development, implementation, and constant improvement of green technologies as we move away from fossil fuels.
5. supports moving toward a diversified energy sector that relies on a variety of sources supplied in many locations throughout the province.
6. recognizes the challenges posed by the ownership structure of Nova Scotia's electrical utility when meeting evolving energy needs and goals during a climate crisis.
7. supports regulatory modernization to allow, and measures to incentivize, widespread adoption of demand response and distributed energy resources, prioritizing decentralized implementations that use open standards and technologies.

# Justice

## Decolonization and Reconciliation

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. support and recognizes the rights of Mi'kmaq people to the use, protection, and stewardship of land vital to their cultures, health, and well-being.
2. acknowledges the historic and current imbalances in the relationship between Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia and the need to secure the basis for an improved quality of Mi'kmaw life.
3. supports healthcare services incorporating traditional practices.
4. recognizes the importance and role of extended families and elders, and ancestors.
5. supports investment in public education to build awareness about the history, culture, and wisdom of indigenous peoples in Mi'kma'ki.
6. supports government investment in preservation and revitalization of the Mi'kmaw language.
7. supports collaboration with the federal government to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Missing and Murdered Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Peoples report, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
8. supports and acknowledges the right of Mi'kmaq people to have decision-making authority over the use of land and resources covered by the Peace and Friendship treaties. The treaties were reinforced in Nova Scotia by the Supreme Court Marshall decisions recognizing their rights to resource extraction.
9. supports and acknowledges the co-management of all Crown and other publicly managed land, where no decision on the use or disposition of said land is made, without prior informed consent of Mi'kmaq people.
10. supports collaborating with Mi'kmaq leaders to create a Land Back program to return the management and stewardship of all Crown lands to Mi'kmaq communities.

# Health

## The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. joins the people in Nova Scotia in valuing our universal public health care and supports their desire for an expansion of services to include prevention, universal pharmacare, and sexual reproductive, palliative, dental, and eye care.
2. supports action that proactively addresses root causes of health problems, including addressing inequalities associated with social determinants of health, such as income, race, age, and gender thereby reducing the need for emergency services, and chronic and acute care.
3. recognizes that the health impacts of climate change will not be distributed equitably and will often disproportionately affect marginalized groups.
4. recognizes that the health impacts from pollution and toxic waste are not distributed equitably due to environmental racism and the associated targeting of Black and other racialized communities for the locations of toxic sites.
5. supports working with local health authorities to conduct climate change and health vulnerability and adaptation assessments to identify and address vulnerabilities to climate change in our health systems (e.g., assessing if patients are vulnerable to extreme heat in rooms without air conditioning, determining how much back-up power generation is required in a power outage, etc.).
6. supports action to eliminate barriers to accessing quality healthcare.
7. recognizes that health care has eroded from inadequate planning for health professionals' training, insufficient funding to maintain services and increasing reliance on private sector provided services which cost more and risk profit-motivated losses in the safe delivery of quality services many of which require users to pay leading to greater inequalities.
8. supports renegotiation of equalization payments to ensure adequate funding to eliminate privatization, increase training, better prepare for health crises, and expand programs.
9. supports measures for the prevention of and treatment for mental health and addiction-related health needs with adequate services and

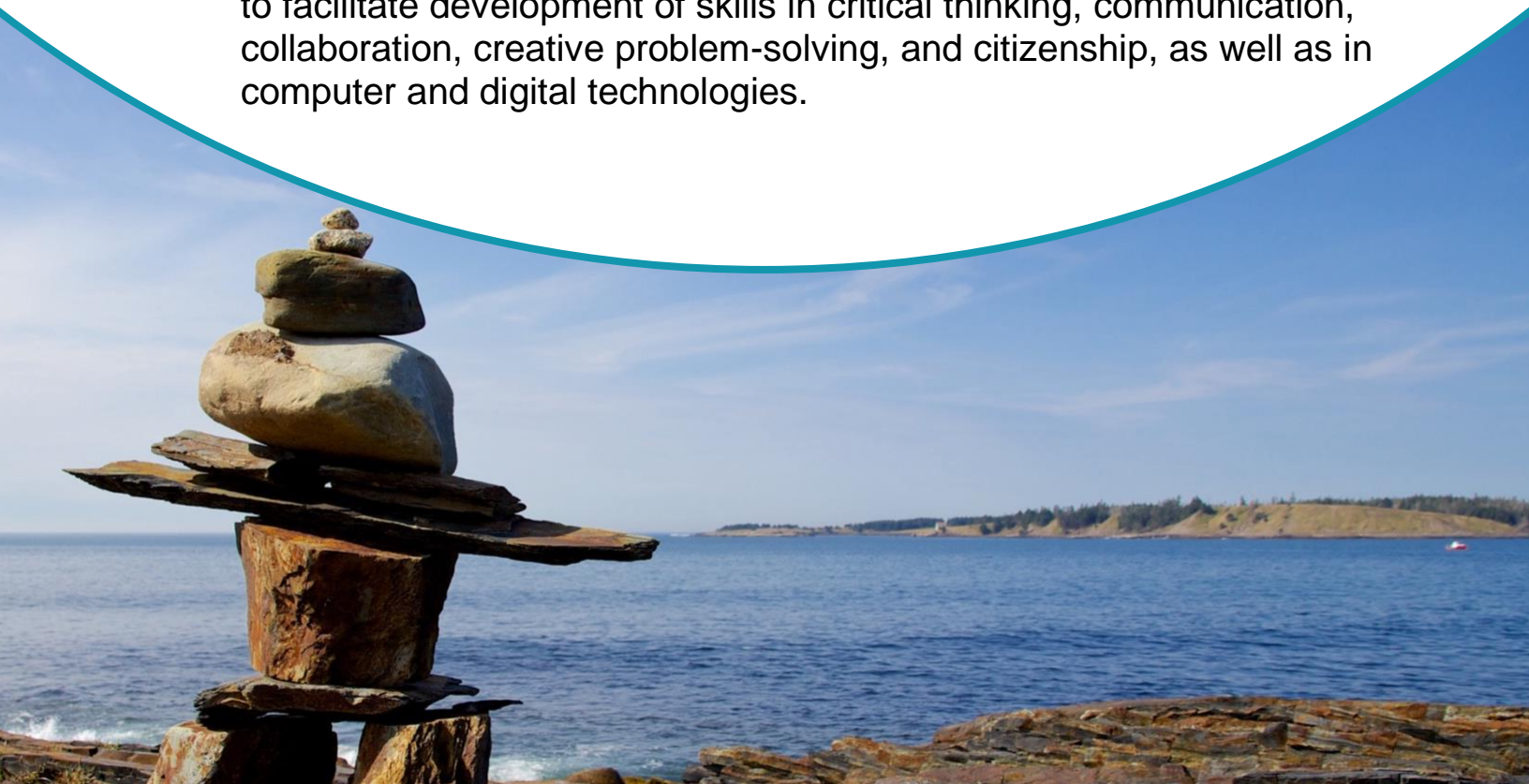
support to all areas of the province with respect, compassion, and without stigma.

10. supports a community-based, public healthcare system which ensures training of health care staff and provision of infrastructure to provide and maintain sufficient quality services to all areas of the province.

## Education

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. joins the people of Nova Scotia in valuing our universal public education system and supports their desire for an expansion to universal access to post-secondary education and beyond.
2. acknowledges that Education has been severely underfunded such that there is a desperate need for improvement of classroom and school conditions to increase the well-being of learners, teachers, and all school-based personnel.
3. acknowledges that education is not just training for future jobs but an opportunity for all students to realize their unique learning drives, goals, strengths, and needs to develop into citizens who participate fully in society.
4. recognizes that the education system requires diverse programming to facilitate development of skills in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and citizenship, as well as in computer and digital technologies.



# Poverty Elimination

## The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that poverty is a complex systemic problem that arises from poor policy decisions which then reverberate through society leaving large segments of the population in a cycle of impoverishment.
2. recognizes that impoverished communities have long been targeted for development projects that pollute the land, water, and air.
3. recognizes that provincial and federal governments have often offloaded their responsibilities related to poverty alleviation to non-profit organizations without providing appropriate or consistent funding, thereby resulting in an inequitable distribution of available services across the province.
4. supports legislation and funding which facilitate equitable access to poverty reducing factors such as healthy homes, free or affordable education, and jobs that pay a living wage.
5. supports renegotiation of Federal equalization payments to ensure adequate funding for the prevention and elimination of poverty.
6. advocates for universal needs supports, such as a Guaranteed Liveable Income, to help people not only survive, but thrive, in their vocation of choice within their home communities as much as possible while being fairly remunerated with the opportunity for a healthy work-life balance.



# Homelessness and Housing

## The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. believes that housing is a human right, as acknowledged in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and supports changes to provincial legislation to protect this right and prevent discrimination based on housing status.
2. acknowledges the requirement for urgent measures that address poverty, financial insecurity, health and wellness, and systemic barriers.
3. recognizes that 20% of Nova Scotia's housing stock is currently owned by the corporate sector.
4. acknowledges that the continued appropriation of residential housing for investment purposes can be detrimental to improving availability and access to affordable housing, especially when there is a lack of strong legislation protecting tenants' rights.
5. supports access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing options that benefit everyone including people who are students, refugees, newcomers, migrants, immigrants, and temporary workers.
6. supports a housing first model that provides people who are homeless or vulnerably housed with access to housing and necessary social supports.
7. supports measures to increase the availability of and access to affordable, environmentally friendly and energy efficient housing, including public housing.
8. supports federal, municipal, and provincial partnerships for investment in upgrading and renovating existing private, non-corporate owned, housing stock to meet 21st century energy efficiency standards.
9. recognizes municipal jurisdiction over zoning and supports incentives to modernize zoning to address sustainability and equitability.
10. supports strong legislation protecting tenants, including against unhealthy accommodations and unfair evictions for renovations.
11. supports increased investment in construction and maintenance of new and existing public housing to meet current and future demands across the province, conveniently located near public transportation, schools, employment opportunities, etc.

# Policing and Criminal Justice

## The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports a commitment to nonviolence, and believes that peace, and security for our communities should not rest mainly on threats of force, violence, or punishment, but on cooperation, sound economic and social development, environmental safety, and respect for human rights.
2. recognizes many people in Nova Scotia face unsafe living conditions, police brutality, increasing amounts of gun violence, domestic violence, and the highest human trafficking rates in Canada.
3. recognizes that police services can disproportionately negatively impact those who are Black, Indigenous, or other people of colour, 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples, and those living in poverty.
4. recognizes Nova Scotia's colonial history involving the settler-colonial relationships.
5. recognizes that the use of police services to deal with issues of mental health, poverty, and civil engagement are detrimental to the healthy development of Nova Scotian society.
6. recognizes that the prison/jail system is currently not serving its intended purpose of rehabilitation, and supports developing evidence-informed alternatives to reduce rates of recidivism/support individual rehabilitation.
7. supports measures to improve police and justice services, such as through:
  - a. reallocation of police service resources to ensure the use of appropriate responders,
  - b. use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that are culturally appropriate and
  - c. public education to strengthen understanding around consent to reduce instances of sexual abuse and to end prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

## Job Security

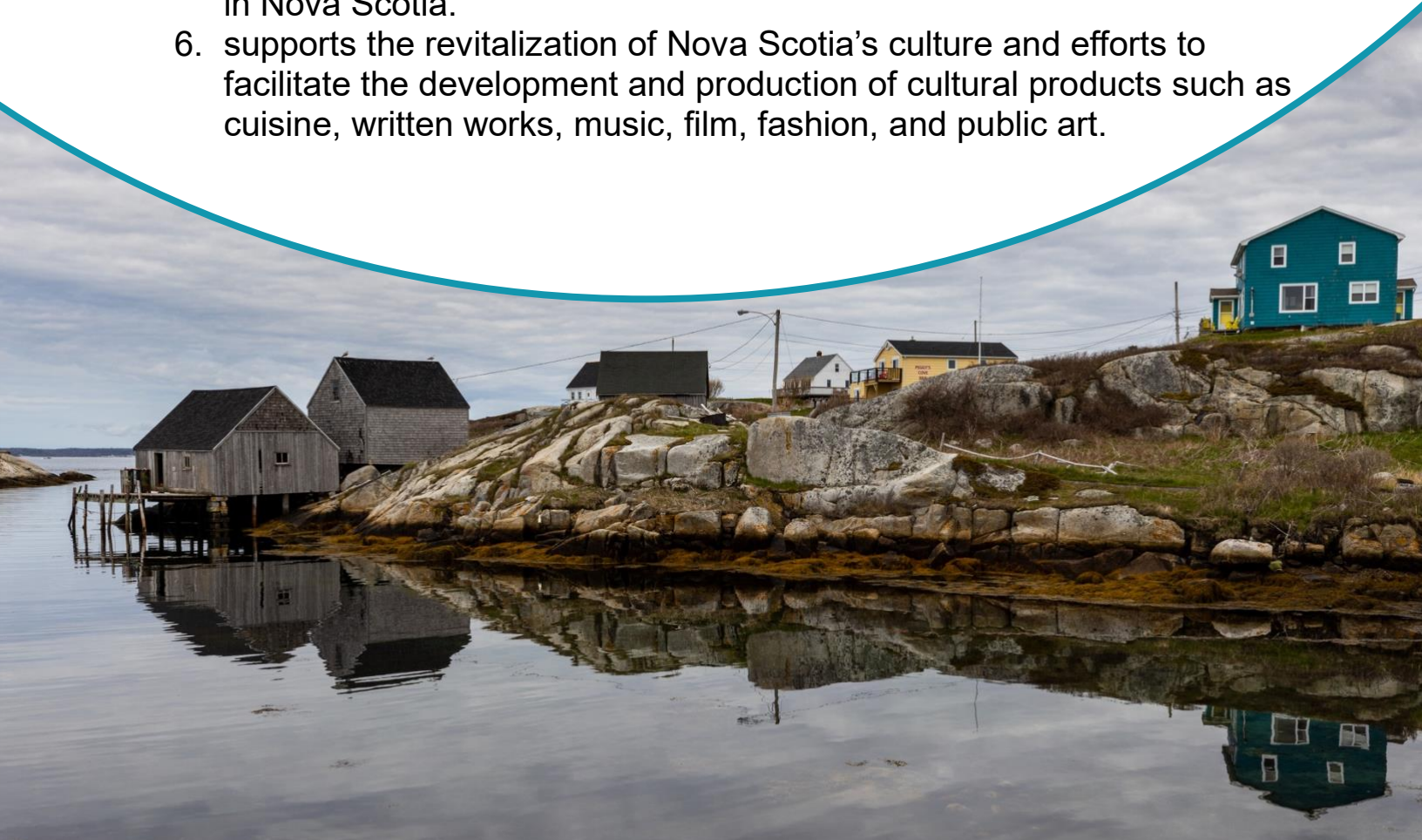
The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that employment must provide sufficient income to survive but should also allow people to enjoy a satisfying life.
2. recognizes that many workplaces limit participation through inequitable practices, such as systemic prejudices, inadequate accessibility, and unsafe conditions.
3. supports legislation of minimum-wage levels above the poverty line, labour standards which enhance equitable hiring, promotion and compensation practices, safety on the job, accessibility and reasonable accommodations, union rights, whistle-blower protection, and work-life balance.

# Arts, Culture and Heritage

## The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. understands 'cultural heritage' to include buildings, architecture, monuments, historical communities, books, works of art, as well as folklore, traditions, language, and local knowledge, and natural features such as parks.
2. recognizes that Nova Scotia is richer for the art and cultural heritage of all its people including First Nations, Acadian settlers, those brought by displacement and force, immigrants past and present, and supports measures that strengthen and enrich Nova Scotia's cultural development.
3. recognizes that Nova Scotian communities and individuals benefit immensely from the presence, preservation, and promotion of arts, crafts, cultures, and heritage.
4. supports measures that enable creative individuals and industries to establish and thrive in Nova Scotia as well as policies which facilitate public engagement with the Arts.
5. recognizes the limitations and inequity of having one official language and supports a review of provincial status for non-English languages in Nova Scotia.
6. supports the revitalization of Nova Scotia's culture and efforts to facilitate the development and production of cultural products such as cuisine, written works, music, film, fashion, and public art.



# Responsible Government

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that governance is the process of making and enforcing decisions for a society and that in a democracy it must operate with the public good as the goal.
2. supports governance where:
  - equitable citizen participation is paramount,
  - decisions made serve all of society and the ecological processes on which society depends and
  - government is held accountable to the citizens it serves

## Participation

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports Participatory Democracy in which everyone in Nova Scotia has the right to express their views and can directly participate in the decisions which affect their lives.
2. supports education and greater public awareness around electoral and legislative processes.
3. supports public access to information, which is Open By Default according to the International Open Data Charter of the Open Government Partnership, unless there are legitimate reasons why some data cannot be released, to promote transparency, accountability and ethical conduct.
4. supports fair hiring of public servants and fair and transparent processes for making appointments to provincial agencies, boards, and commissions as well as the empowerment of all to serve as non-partisan professionals.
5. supports measures to increase the engagement of all demographics in the political process such as lowering the voting age.



# Decision Making

## Measurement

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. recognizes that decisions need to be based on measurement of multi-factors that serve all of society and the ecological processes on which society depends instead of based on singular measurements of economic factors such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
2. supports measuring what we value - natural, human, and social capital (along with built and financial capital) as well as the costs borne by the society as a whole to repair or control pollution, the climate crisis and poverty, ensuring equitable distribution of the burden of that cost.
3. supports full accounting of the well-being of Nova Scotia by such measures as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) for all public and private operations.

## Fiscal Management

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports fiscal management that respects Nova Scotian values, and addresses the needs of all people of Nova Scotia when making decisions regarding income, investments, incentives, and service provision.
2. supports government investment in measures to improve equity and enhance ecological capability such as increasing training of health professionals, converting to green buildings and vehicles, and purchasing land for ecological protection including parks, and recreation.
3. supports fair, progressive taxation.
4. supports the use of fiscal measures, such as carbon incentives to facilitate rapid transition to a green economy free of fossil fuels.

# Elections

## *Electoral Financing*

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. acknowledges that there are financial barriers to standing as a candidate for political office.
2. supports political financing that helps level the financial playing field for all parties and for those standing as independent candidates. Fairness and more inclusive participation would be enhanced through measures to reduce the influence of money in politics, such as:
  - a. public funding through financial assistance such as: per-vote subsidies to parties and child care payments,
  - b. caps on donations, rebates for donations and on overall campaign spending and
  - c. transparency of campaign reporting.
3. supports political finance benefits, access, and inclusion for independent candidates comparable to candidates of political parties.

## *Electoral Reform*

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. acknowledges that the selection of representatives through democratic elections is a critically important process in establishing and maintaining the legitimacy of governments.
2. supports electoral reform in Nova Scotia toward a system of voting that is proportional, fair, and democratic, acknowledging the experiences of the many democracies around the world where systems of Proportional Representation are already in use.
3. supports a non-partisan, democratic, and consultative process, such as a Citizen's Assembly, to design an electoral system of Proportional Representation that is suitable for Nova Scotia's particular needs.

4. supports fair election rules that provide the same opportunities to independent candidates as for those of political parties, such as access to voters' lists.

### *Municipal Elections*

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports empowering Nova Scotia's many municipalities to engage in their own democratic reforms, adapting election processes to suit the needs of local democracies.
2. supports options for municipalities to extend municipal voting rights to permanent residents, with provincial support for the implementation of any such decision.
3. supports provincial political finance reforms extending to municipal elections.

## Accountability

The Green Party of Nova Scotia:

1. supports government reporting of targets, expectations, and progress toward those ends.
2. supports full transparency of all MLA compensation and benefits.
3. supports accountable governance, free from preferential lobby influence and partisan hiring and contract awarding with oversight and enforcement for conflict of interest.
4. supports comprehensive investigative powers for the Auditor General with a scope of work that expands as required.