

August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Kathleen Yurchesyn  
Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce  
275 Charlotte Street  
Sydney, NS B1P 1C6  
By email: [kathleen@cbregionalchamber.ca](mailto:kathleen@cbregionalchamber.ca)  
Dear Ms. Yurchesyn:

**Re: 2021 Nova Scotia Provincial Election Questionnaire**

Thank you for your correspondence in the above noted matter. The Liberal Party's responses are below.

**How do you specifically plan to address population decline and unemployment in Cape Breton Island and help positively change our economic future?**

Nova Scotia's population is at an all-time high and continues to grow and I am pleased to say that Cape Breton is not being left out of this increase in population. We are seeing many encouraging trends in Cape Breton's population that has reversed decades of decline: less of our young people leaving for jobs in other provinces, record international student growth at Cape Breton University, and positive interprovincial in-migration as people from around the country move here to work from home.

The relocation of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Marconi Campus to a new, contemporary home, will revitalize Sydney's waterfront. The Marconi Campus will be a beacon on the Sydney Harbour. This \$18 million transformational project will become a magnet for innovation, entrepreneurship, culture and business for all of Cape Breton.

Our government also has an ambitious plan to accelerate renewable energy growth so that 80% of Nova Scotia's energy comes from renewable sources by 2030. Constructing renewable energy projects will create thousands of jobs and contribute hundreds of millions to Nova Scotia's GDP, growing prosperity for all. Our government's recent investment into the development of 350 megawatts of renewable energy projects such as wind and solar, will stimulate over \$550 million in construction activity while creating over 4000 new jobs.

A re-elected Rankin government would continue to have consultations with organizations around the province on how to continue building on Nova Scotia's recent success as the pandemic comes to an end. We believe that the Liberal Party's plan for economic recovery in a post-pandemic Nova Scotia is the strongest of any party contesting this election.

**How would you work directly with CBRM Mayor and Council to address Commercial and Residential taxes and develop a strategy to lower our tax rate to be more attractive for investment and affordable for our commercial taxpayers?**

The responsibility for setting residential and local commercial taxes in CBRM is the responsibility of CBRM Mayor and Council.

The provincial corporate tax rate of 14% applies uniformly to all businesses in Nova Scotia as is the Small Business Tax Rate. In the budget prior to the pandemic our government lowered the corporate tax rate by 2% and the Small Business rate by .5% to 2.5%, making them among the most competitive in the Atlantic Canada region.

**Will your government publicly support the initiative to develop Sydney Harbour as an international transportation, logistics and green energy hub and commit to a cost-sharing agreement for the planned \$103 million rehabilitation of the Sydney to Port Hawkesbury section of the Cape Breton and Central Nova Railway?**

Our government has been paying monthly subsidies, currently \$30,000 a month since the railway ceased operations in 2015. This monthly payment is to keep the railway from being abandoned by the operator and to preserve the line for a potential future Sydney container pier or other commercial use cases if they should materialize. Should Sydney secure a container operator then a conversation about any necessary infrastructure would occur. Prior to being able to commit to a rehabilitation project a feasible business case and willing railway operator would need to be in place.

**As Premier, how do you plan to support continued future investment on Cape Breton Island, and how do you plan to prioritize many of the other infrastructure investments before the government for our region?**

The Liberal government has made many investments in Cape Breton Island over the past 8 years and a re-elected Rankin government is committed to future economic development initiatives throughout Nova Scotia. MLA Derek Mombourquette was a strong advocate within our government for the relocation of the NSCC Marconi campus to downtown Sydney to support economic development in the downtown core. We have also invested in Cape Breton University, including recently adding 62 new seats each year for the RN Nursing program there. Cape Breton's educational institutions will play an important role in training a strong workforce for the Island and in drawing in international students. The economic spinoffs from our educational institutions and their ability to draw people to the Island will be crucial in the years to come.

Our government created the Gravel Road Program and a re-elected Rankin government will double the investment in this popular program to \$30 million a year. We will also double our investment in the Rural Mitigation Fund that invests additional money into paved rural roads that need resurfacing and rehabilitation.

Our government is also investing in the CBRM Healthcare Redevelopment project. This project is the largest healthcare infrastructure investment in Cape Breton's history: hundreds of millions of dollars are being invested and it will create thousands of jobs while bringing brand new, world-class healthcare services to CBRM that will last the next 50 years.

**How will your government support the post-pandemic recovery of our economy, and what specific investments do you plan to make?**

A re-elected Rankin government's number one priority is post-pandemic economic recovery, and we believe that Nova Scotia is ideally situated for strong economic growth and recovery.

Prior to Covid-19 we were in a strong fiscal position and it has allowed us to support businesses and our people over the course of the pandemic.

A re-elected Rankin government will:

- Help our tourism businesses with an \$18.2 million Tourism Restart Program that includes grants and forgivable loan programs for our tourism businesses, including a \$3 million boost to tourism marketing programs;
- Invest \$5 million in an expanded Digital Tourism program that will provide grants to tourism operators to digitize their business, funding websites, e-commerce solutions and things like online booking programs for campgrounds;
- Continue to invest in high-speed internet service for rural communities with the goal of having full high-speed internet for 99% of Nova Scotians by the end of 2023. These internet investments are more critical than ever with people looking to work from home now and in the future;
- Invest in the Sustainable Innovation Rebate Program, which incentivizes capital investment by Agri-food and Manufacturing businesses in Nova Scotia; and,
- Investing in the Oceans technology to help power the Blue economy in Nova Scotia through investments in offshore wind development and expanding COVE with at least four regional outposts around the province, allowing more businesses and communities take advantage of our Oceans Technology incubator.

Our government is filled with optimism for Nova Scotia. Our province was on the move before the pandemic and we believe that we will be back better than ever, and Cape Breton Island will be a vibrant, integral part of that future. I encourage you to view the complete Liberal Party platform at [www.liberal.ns.ca](http://www.liberal.ns.ca)