

August 8, 2021

Kathleen Yurchesyn, CEO
Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce

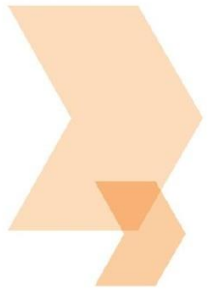
Dear Kathleen Yurchesyn, membership and Board of Directors of the CBRCC,

Please find below the NDP response to your questions. For further details on many of these commitments as well as other areas of our plan, please read our Vision Document, Something Better for Nova Scotia, available at <https://www.nsndp.ca/something-better-nova-scotia>.

1. The economy of Cape Breton Island has been in decline for decades. Out-migration has been an upward trend, and population decline has become an ongoing challenge for the entire island. Now more than ever, Cape Breton shows great promise in reversing this trend and working toward achieving sustainability. The CBRM is the second-largest economic centre in the Province. Population growth and job creation are two integral pieces of ensuring our region's sustainability and economic health. As the leader of our Province, how do you specifically plan to address population decline and unemployment in Cape Breton Island and help positively change our economic future?

The NDP has a plan to invest in Cape Breton that is based on the real needs of people on the Island. The NDP recognizes that reversing the trend of out-migration is essential. We are committed to working to stabilize the population of the CBRM by providing the investments that are needed to make Cape Breton communities livable for all generations.

An NDP government will invest \$50 million per year for three years in direct economic stimulus funding to the CBRM to provide the resources required for a path to sustainability. In addition, we will invest in health care, long term care, and mental health care in Cape Breton so that people can access the care they need in their communities. We will address the housing crunch by investing

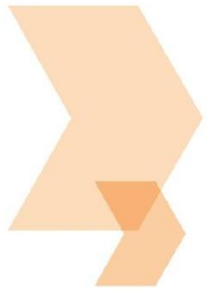


\$31.7 million in capital funds to build affordable housing units in CBRM and provide \$4 million per year in support to non-profit housing organizations. We will ensure that the CBRM is a viable place to raise a family by investing in regional schools and ensuring that Cape Breton families have access to affordable child care.

Cape Breton must be front of mind as we plan to tackle the climate crisis while supporting workers and creating new, green jobs. Representatives for the CBRM would be included in the Green Jobs Task Force as we plan to transform the Nova Scotia economy into a sustainable one with maximized employment opportunities. The NDP is committed to investing in community-led programs to train people in Cape Breton for the jobs that are created by addressing climate change. This includes free NSCC or university tuition and dedicated training streams for energy efficiency and renewable workforces. An NDP government would also commit to ensuring that there are no job losses for Nova Scotia Power workers in Cape Breton.

The NDP has a vision for a Nova Scotia where the health care you need is the care that is provided, where every person and family has an affordable place to live, where the climate emergency is addressed with unprecedented investments in green jobs and a transition to a renewable economy, and where paid sick days, decent wages, and access to quality child care are available to everyone. An NDP government will stand up for Cape Breton to make sure that this vision is realized in the island's communities.

2. The CBRM has the highest commercial tax rate in the Province of Nova Scotia and one of the highest taxation rates in Canada. Commercial and residential tax rates fall under the jurisdiction of the Province. High commercial tax significantly prevents us from a) attracting investment in existing infrastructure b) the ability to attract developers for the construction of new infrastructure and c) the capacity for some small businesses to afford to own or rent space throughout our region. As Premier, how would you work directly with CBRM Mayor and Council to address this issue and develop a strategy to lower our tax rate to be more attractive for investment and affordable for our commercial taxpayers?



An NDP government will act as a partner to the CBRM in addressing issues that are impacting investment in the region. At the core of CBRM's high tax rates is a fiscal situation that has been left unchecked and unsupported by the governing Liberals. We know that the CBRM is in need of stimulus support which is why an NDP government will invest \$50 million per year for three years to begin the process of reinvigorating the municipality. The NDP recognizes that CBRM's disproportionately high tax rates are not sustainable and will work in consultation with the CBRM to develop further solutions.

3. Cape Breton Island lost their rail line between Port Hawkesbury and Sydney when it closed to all rail activity in 2014. The revitalization of our rail line is essential to revitalizing Cape Breton's economy. One significant opportunity before us is connecting the planned Sydney Container Port (NovaPorte) to the continental rail system. This project will enable us to advance an aggressive export strategy for Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, raising NS's trade to GDP ratio. Additionally, it will be cost-efficient and more environmentally friendly than road transportation and will strengthen Newfoundland's vital supply chain while reducing carbon emissions by shifting trucks to rail. 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 Scotia railway?

The NDP recognizes the importance of a Cape Breton rail link with the rest of Canada in order to develop the Port of Sydney and to create good jobs in Cape Breton. The NDP will work to preserve Cape Breton's commercial link with the rest of Canada and will give full consideration to a public option for the Cape Breton Rail Line.

4. There are several publicly funded infrastructure projects in progress in the CBRM right now, including significant investments in healthcare infrastructure and the construction of the NSCC waterfront campus. As Premier, how do you plan to support continued future investment on Cape Breton Island, and how do

you plan to prioritize the many other infrastructure investments before the government for our region?

The NDP knows that for Nova Scotia to be successful, CBRM needs to be successful. Our government will make a targeted investment of \$50 million for 3 consecutive years in Cape Breton to address long-standing economic inequality.

We will make significant investments in the CBRM healthcare infrastructure. Understanding that health care workers and community members in Cape Breton have the most insight into what is needed to address the health crisis in CBRM, we will work with them to create a health strategy that addresses the disparity in health outcomes between Cape Breton and the rest of the province. We will keep in-patient and emergency health care in New Waterford and North Sydney. The NDP will build a long-term care bed for every person in Cape Breton who needs one and invest \$1.4 million per year to improve staffing in long-term care in Cape Breton and bring care standards in line with what industry experts recommend. We will invest in mental health care for Cape Bretoners including new walk-in mental health clinics in Cape Breton and mobile mental health crisis teams that can respond to mental health emergencies in person in Cape Breton.

An NDP government will build housing in Cape Breton, and be a partner to the CBRM and all others working towards adequate and affordable housing on the island. We would invest \$31.7 million capital investment over 4 years to build 200 new, non-market affordable housing units in Cape Breton and commit to providing \$4 million per year for sustainable, multi-year funding for non-profit housing organizations. An NDP government would also pilot deep retrofits of public housing in Cape Breton to establish models for making public and private buildings more energy efficient.

An NDP government will make sure that families have the services they need in Cape Breton. We would commit to building a new, publicly-owned licensed child care centre in the CBRM and investing in Cape Breton schools to make improvements to accommodate increased enrollment in before and after

school programs. An NDP government is also committed to funding the design and build study for a new library in CBRM and investing the province's share of the cost of building it.

Recognizing that existing community and regional transportation are unaffordable and inadequate, an NDP government would invest in developing public and community transit networks across the province. The NDP would also invest in active transportation infrastructure across the province.

The NDP is committed to working with the CBRM to identify the real needs of Cape Breton residents, and to develop sustainable solutions that create stable, well-paying jobs.

5. Small business is the backbone of our economy. Throughout the pandemic, small businesses of all sizes have been significantly negatively impacted, especially businesses within the tourism and hospitality sector. Although there has been support for business through grants and loans, recovery is expected to take many years. How will your government support the post-pandemic recovery of our economy, and what specific investments do you plan to make?

The NDP plan for economic recovery starts with bringing together a broad taskforce to make recommendations about how we can grow the economy as we recover from COVID-19 in the next several years. We will include small businesses at the table as part of the Economic Recovery Task Force to ensure our recovery includes increasing our capacity to rely on food, energy, and goods and services that are produced here at home.

The NDP understands that many small businesses have struggled over the past year and a half, as public health measures have often had major impacts on their revenues and operations. At the same time, large corporations and the big banks have profited off small businesses' misfortune. Most small business owners just want a level playing field. An NDP government would support small businesses by reopening rural economic development offices that provide local access to information and expertise, delivering access to affordable internet across the province, establishing tax incentives for seasonal businesses that want to try to extend their season, and developing a system of portable benefits that



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could bring down the cost of benefits for small businesses. The NDP plan to increase the minimum wage and reduce the costs of basic needs like housing and child care will boost small business by increasing the amount of money being spent in the local economy.