

## **Council of Atlantic Premiers' meeting communiqué**

### **Atlantic Premiers Advance Agenda for Sustainable Growth in the Region**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CHARLOTTETOWN, PE (June 28, 2015)** – Atlantic premiers are working together to advance an agenda for sustainable growth through collaboration on apprentice mobility, regulatory alignment, health care, climate change, energy and promoting Atlantic Canada. Premiers are focused on improving the lives of Atlantic Canadians by working to help create the conditions to further grow the economy and create more skilled jobs. Premiers also discussed regional priorities in advance of the annual summer meeting of Canada's Premiers to take place in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, on July 15-17.

Premier Wade MacLauchlan of Prince Edward Island welcomed Premier Brian Gallant of New Brunswick, Premier Stephen McNeil of Nova Scotia, and Deputy Premier Steve Kent of Newfoundland and Labrador to the 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of Atlantic Premiers.

#### **Apprentice Mobility**

Premiers signed an Atlantic Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Apprentice Mobility. This agreement provides seamless mobility for apprentices, which will enable provinces to better meet the labour demands of businesses in the region, and make it easier for apprentices to capitalize on employment opportunities by gaining access to the on-the-job training and work experience needed to complete their certification.

The agreement is the first of its kind in Canada and has generated national discussions on apprentice mobility. These efforts will support economic growth in our provinces, our region and our country.

The agreement signed today is a part of the Atlantic provinces' \$7.9 million Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project, undertaken with the support of Employment and Social Development Canada, to align rules, processes and standards for apprenticeship across Atlantic Canada. This will enhance consistency and efficiency in the way Atlantic Canadians obtain trade certification.

#### **Regulatory Alignment**

Premiers are committed to improving the regulatory climate for private-sector businesses by taking a balanced and targeted approach to ensure that business regulation supports economic growth in Atlantic Canada.

Atlantic provinces have undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the climate for business within Atlantic Canada. Newfoundland and Labrador has been advancing a Regulatory Reform Initiative for several years, and Prince Edward Island has begun Project Addressing Red Tape. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have established a joint Office for Regulatory Reform and Service Effectiveness, with a three-year mandate to identify and address regulatory methods and practices which impair business competitiveness, and have extended an invitation to Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador to join in this effort.

Creating the conditions to improve competitiveness for business in Atlantic Canada requires a partnership between government and private-sector stakeholders to identify key sectors and priority initiatives for regulatory reform and harmonization. Under the Atlantic Red Tape Reduction Partnership, provinces will work together to ensure that the needs of the business sector are reflected in making government regulation more efficient and effective.

### **Health Care**

A number of factors are accelerating the cost of delivering health care services to Atlantic Canadians, including meeting the unique needs of rural communities, aging populations, increased demand for health care services, introduction of new technologies, and higher drug costs. Premiers agreed that the Atlantic provinces must continue to work together to improve the sustainability and efficiency of health care delivery across the region.

Premiers directed their ministers of health to enhance efforts for increased collaboration in such areas as joint procurement of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, including generic drugs, rural health care delivery, and adolescent mental health. Ministers will report back to premiers at the end of August.

Atlantic premiers continue to seek a partnership with the federal government to support the unique health care needs of Atlantic Canadians, including the challenges of delivering health services in rural areas and meeting the needs of an aging population.

### **Climate Change**

Premiers affirmed their commitment to work together on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, noting that the impact of climate change does not recognize provincial/territorial or national borders.

The Atlantic provinces have been effective in the area of climate change adaptation, working with communities to protect lives and infrastructure from the impacts of sea level rise, coastal erosion, extreme storm events and flooding, and providing knowledge and capacity to develop strategies to prepare for these events. Premiers continue their commitment to regional collaboration on initiatives to improve resilience to climate impacts.

Premiers agreed on the importance of showing leadership in tackling climate change and discussed ways to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as focusing on energy efficiency, technological innovation, and promoting renewable energy, building on the following work already underway in each province:

- By substantially reducing emissions from electricity generation, New Brunswick has reduced its overall emissions by 32% since 2001 and achieved its initial target of reaching 1990 levels by 2012;
- Completing Phase I of the Lower Churchill Project at Muskrat Falls in 2017 will enable Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to displace an estimated 1.2 million tonnes (Mt) of greenhouse gas emissions annually from its oil-fired thermal generating station in Holyrood – this is over 10% of the province’s current emissions. With Muskrat Falls, the Newfoundland and Labrador electricity system will be 98% renewable, emission-free energy. Further, the project will support an estimated reduction of up to 3 Mt in other locations in North America;
- By implementing measures such as hard caps on emissions from the electricity sector, Nova Scotia is on track to meet its 2020 GHG reduction targets;

- Prince Edward Island is achieving reductions in emissions as a result of a move to cleaner fuels by manufacturing industries and transition from the use of home heating fuel to air source heat pump electric heating, a transition that will be sustained through the construction of the new cable transmission project.

Premiers committed to identifying further areas of collaboration in the fight against climate change, while noting that solutions must be tailored to meet the needs of the unique economies, resource profiles and geography of each province. Premiers highlighted the importance of developing energy infrastructure to facilitate GHG emission reduction and noted the federal government has a key role in advancing this objective.

### **Energy**

The responsible development of Atlantic Canada's abundant energy resources will help ensure continued growth and prosperity for Atlantic Canadians, while assisting in the efforts to mitigate climate change. It is important that electricity transmission in Atlantic Canada is coordinated and sufficient to allow for the efficient and reliable flow of energy for environmental benefits and trade. Premiers continue to support strategic energy infrastructure such as the Energy East Pipeline, the Northumberland Strait Cable Project, and the Muskrat Falls Project.

Atlantic premiers affirmed their commitment to a Canadian Energy Strategy based on the principles agreed to by Canada's Premiers in 2014: intergovernmental collaboration and transparency; recognition of the importance of socially and environmentally responsible energy development that addresses climate change; and energy security and stability, including ensuring a secure supply of energy for all Canadians through open, non-discriminatory and safe transportation and transmission of energy resources.

New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador are co-chairs of the Premiers' Canadian Energy Strategy working group. Atlantic premiers will stress the importance of strategic energy infrastructure with their colleagues at the upcoming summer meeting of Canada's Premiers, to be held in St. John's, NL.

### **Promoting Atlantic Canada**

Atlantic premiers are committed to working collaboratively to help expand and grow the economy for the betterment of all four provinces.

By working together, Atlantic premiers can maximize opportunities to enhance and build relationships, expand education and research partnerships, explore trade opportunities, access new export markets, attract investment, and promote Atlantic Canada as a tourism destination. Priority markets include the European Union and the Eastern United States. Today and tomorrow, premiers will meet with government and business leaders from the Southeastern United States. In late August, premiers will meet with New England governors in St. John's, NL. The United States continues to be Atlantic Canada's largest trade partner, accounting for 74% of all exports from the region.

To strengthen trade, tourism and education partnerships, premiers announced today they will lead a mission to the European Union in 2016. The European Union is the world's largest single common market, foreign investor and trader. Comprised of 28 member states with a total population of over 500 million and a GDP of \$17.4 trillion, the EU is a key strategic market for Atlantic Canada.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Council of Atlantic Premiers will be hosted by Nova Scotia.

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