

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Atlantic Premiers Examine Changes to Employment Insurance

Halifax (Thursday, June 6, 2013) – Atlantic Provinces are moving forward on their commitment to jointly review the impact of the federal government's recent changes to the Employment Insurance (EI) Program. This regional consultation and research initiative was announced by Atlantic Premiers after their meeting in White Point, Nova Scotia, in April.

"This is an important issue for all Atlantic Canadians," said Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter, Chair of the Council of Atlantic Premiers. "The EI system has a significant impact on ensuring a stable workforce, which is an important part of our ability to grow the economy and attract new jobs to Atlantic Canada. It's vital we have a full understanding of the implications the reforms are having on workers, employers and communities."

The Atlantic Premiers' Panel on Impacts of Changes to Employment Insurance is comprised of a representative from each Atlantic province. The panel will work throughout the summer to analyze impacts of the changes in preparation for consultations in September. A final report by the Atlantic Premiers' Panel is anticipated in October.

Members of the panel are Danny Cavanagh, President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Nova Scotia; Iris Petten, Chair of Memorial University's Board of Regents; Ian MacPherson, Executive Director of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association; and Pierre-Marcel Desjardins, Economist and Professor at Université de Moncton. Mr. Desjardins will serve as chairperson of the panel. Panel members were selected from labour, business and academic sectors based on their extensive experience, community involvement and understanding of the Atlantic economy, labour market, and industries.

Premiers established the Atlantic Premiers' Panel on Impacts of Changes to Employment Insurance to obtain a more complete understanding of the federal government's unilateral changes to the national program, which is funded by employers and employees. The federal government's decision to implement major changes was carried out without essential research and consultation. Atlantic Premiers have called upon the federal government to share relevant Employment Insurance data.

"Access to EI data held by the federal government is critical to the success of this initiative," said Premier Dexter. "We would like to move forward in cooperation with the federal government and to work together to make sure Atlantic Canadians are getting the employment supports they need."

Specific changes to the EI program that will be reviewed by the appointed panel include the introduction of the Connecting Canadians with Available Jobs Initiative, changes to the Working While on Claim Pilot Project, the expiry of the Best 14 Weeks Pilot Project and the Extended Employment Insurance Benefits Pilot Project, as well as changes to the EI appeals process and the new Social Security Tribunal.

The report will provide a detailed analysis of the impacts of the EI reforms, including economic forecasts and the effects on workers, communities, and businesses, in particular seasonal industries. The final report will also include recommendations on next steps.

For more information about the Atlantic Premiers' Panel on Impacts of Changes to EI, please visit <http://www.cap-cpma.ca/images/EITask%20ForFinal.pdf>.

– 30 –

For further information, please contact:

Jesse Robichaud, Office of the Premier, New Brunswick (506) 453-2144

Jennifer Tulk, Office of the Premier, Newfoundland and Labrador (709) 729-3960

Cathy MacIsaac, Intergovernmental Affairs, Nova Scotia (902) 424-4312

Geoff Townsend, Office of the Premier, Prince Edward Island (902) 368-4400

Backgrounder:

Panel member biographies

Danny Cavanagh was first elected as President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Nova Scotia in April 2005. In October 2005, he was elected Regional Vice President, representing Nova Scotia on the National Executive board of CUPE and its 625,000 members across Canada. Mr. Cavanagh is a member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Executive, currently serving as a Vice President at large and Chair of the Education Committee. In 2009, he was appointed by Premier Dexter as a labour representative on the Premier's Economic Advisory Council and continues to serve in that role. Mr. Cavanagh is a 28-year member of the Bible Hill Volunteer Fire Brigade. He serves as a National Executive Board member for CUPE's literacy committee and is a Literacy Nova Scotia board member. Mr. Cavanagh holds provincial certifications in water distribution, water treatment and sewage collection and has worked for the Town of Truro since March 1980.

Pierre-Marcel Desjardins has a Ph.D. in economics and has been teaching economics at the Université de Moncton since 1990. He is also a researcher at the Canadian Institute for Research on Public Policy and Public Administration. He is vice-president of the Fédération des caisses populaires acadiennes, the executive director of the Canadian Regional Science Association, a member of the board of directors of the Caisse populaire Kent-Sud, and a member of the advisory committee for the Sainte-Marie-de-Kent local service district.

Ian MacPherson has a keen interest in both the agricultural and fishery sectors in Atlantic Canada and issues that impact these industries. He has an extensive senior management background in both private and corporate business. This has included multiple location management of operations in Canada and the United States. The majority of his career was spent with an international Fortune 100 company. His background includes specialization in human resources, conflict resolution, strategic planning and negotiation. Mr. MacPherson is currently the Executive Director of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association. He is also involved with the Food Security Network, the Belfast Historical Society and is currently the Vice Chair of the Farm Centre Board of Directors in Charlottetown. Past involvements have also included executive positions in various Chambers of Commerce, community groups, event and project organizing committees. Mr. MacPherson brings a diverse goal focussed background to the organizations and causes that he participates in.

Iris Petten is a Memorial University Alumna with experience as a corporate board member within private, publicly traded, crown and non-profit corporations. Ms. Petten graduated from Memorial University in 1984 with a Bachelor of Arts in Economic Geography and Business Administration. She then graduated with a Bachelor of Vocational Education in 1997. She is a senior executive with over twenty years experience in the fishing industry. Ms. Petten has served as Corporate Director of Canship Uglan Ltd., Penney Uglan Ltd., Canada Post Corporation and Oceanex Income Trust. Her work and volunteer experience with many organizations, including Kids Eat Smart, Newfoundland and Labrador Angel Network Easter Seals, and the Advisory Committee of the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University, illustrates her exceptional versatility and adaptability within a variety of organizations. Ms. Petten currently serves as the Chair of Memorial University's Board of Regents.