

Council of Atlantic Premiers' meeting communiqué

Atlantic Premiers Collaborating to Grow the Economy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Steady Brook, NL (February 20, 2017) – Atlantic Premiers are working together to find innovative solutions to grow the region's economy and address the challenges facing Atlantic Canadians.

Premier Dwight Ball of Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed Premier Wade MacLauchlan of Prince Edward Island and Premier Brian Gallant of New Brunswick to the Council of Atlantic Premiers' meeting, with Premier Stephen McNeil of Nova Scotia participating by teleconference.

Premiers discussed ways to enhance regional collaboration in areas such as international trade, regulatory alignment, clean growth, and health care.

International Trade

Premiers discussed the importance of continuing to build Atlantic Canada's trade links in traditional and emerging markets. The United States is Atlantic Canada's largest trading partner. In 35 of the 50 states, Canada is their largest trading partner. Given the importance of this relationship, Atlantic Premiers committed to work with the Prime Minister and other Premiers to demonstrate to both Americans and Canadians the benefits of keeping our borders open to trade, and our economies closely integrated.

Maintaining and strengthening our economic partnership will be a key theme when Atlantic Premiers meet their New England counterparts at the annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, to be hosted by Premier MacLauchlan in Charlottetown in August 2017. The conference will, for the first time, feature business-to-business meetings to enhance trade and commercial relationships.

Premiers applauded the recent ratification by the European Parliament of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. Premiers announced they will lead a mission to Europe in June 2017 to strengthen trade, tourism and education partnerships in this important market.

Economic Growth

Atlantic Premiers are taking action to align government regulations to make it easier to operate and do business in more than one Atlantic province.

Premiers' success in improving regulatory efficiency across the region includes simplifying business processes with workers' compensation, and standardizing requirements for trucking companies to improve the ease of moving goods throughout the region.

Other new actions – approved today – include:

- Moving from four separate provincial licenses to one regional licence for each trade related to technical safety, taking a phased-in approach;
- Mutual recognition across the region of safety equipment for head and foot protection, and training for occupational health and safety committees and first aid; and
- Adopting a streamlined licensing process for insurance adjusters to allow swift movement within the region to respond to severe weather events and emergencies

Premiers will continue to enhance regulatory efficiency to make it easier for businesses to succeed and expand throughout Atlantic Canada.

Premiers affirmed the importance of relevant federal funding for skills training that meets the evolving labour market needs and priorities of the region.

Collaboration with the Government of Canada through the Atlantic Growth Strategy has great potential to drive development and growth in immigration, innovation, trade and investment, clean growth and climate change, and infrastructure. Atlantic Premiers look forward to accelerating work in these priority areas with the region's federal ministers to maintain momentum in advance of the next meeting of the Leadership Committee, to be held in Newfoundland and Labrador this summer.

Premiers reiterated their support for the federal government's focus on investing strategically in key infrastructure. Premiers look forward to continued collaboration to ensure that federal infrastructure funding, including funds for social housing, reflects each jurisdiction's priorities and fiscal plans. Premiers reiterated their call for a base-plus per capita infrastructure funding model that recognizes the unique challenges faced by smaller jurisdictions. Premiers agreed that new federal investments to support trade and transportation need to include key roads and bridges in Atlantic Canada, which are vital for the efficient flow of goods and services. Improved access to high-speed internet continues to be a priority for Atlantic Premiers.

Health Care Collaboration

Premiers underlined their commitment to address the health care needs of Atlantic Canadians. The region's aging population and relatively high incidence of chronic disease represent significant challenges to the delivery of cost-effective and efficient health care services. Premiers discussed two initiatives aimed at enhancing the sustainability of health care.

Premiers directed their Ministers of Health to work together to review public drug plan coverage to identify opportunities for further collaboration. This review will focus on service improvements, cost containment and addressing high-cost areas such as therapies for rare diseases.

Premiers also directed their Ministers of Health to collaborate on strategies for chronic disease management and prevention, beginning with diabetes.

Clean Growth and Climate Change

Premiers discussed opportunities to collaborate to maximize the benefits of the region's vast potential to produce and export clean energy. Atlantic provinces continue to welcome federal partnership in developing strategic energy infrastructure in the region, including investments in new clean technologies, improvements to energy efficiency, and investments to help make our infrastructure more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.

The Atlantic provinces are leading the country in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Atlantic Premiers are committed to further reducing GHG emissions in their jurisdictions and contributing to national action against climate change through the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, as well as the clean growth and climate change pillar of the Atlantic Growth Strategy.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council of Atlantic Premiers will be hosted by New Brunswick in spring 2017.

For further information, please contact:

Michelle Cannizzaro, Office of the Premier, Newfoundland and Labrador (709) 729-3960

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

David Jackson, Office of the Premier, Nova Scotia (902) 424-6600

Mary Moszynski, Office of the Premier, Prince Edward Island (902) 368-4400