

Council of Atlantic Premiers' meeting communiqué

Atlantic Premiers are focused on economic growth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, NS (May 16, 2016) – Atlantic premiers are working together to improve the lives of Atlantic Canadians through focused efforts to strengthen the region's economy, improve health care, enhance energy cooperation and address climate change.

Premier Stephen McNeil of Nova Scotia welcomed Premier Brian Gallant of New Brunswick, Premier Wade MacLauchlan of Prince Edward Island, and Premier Dwight Ball of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Economy

Population growth and workforce development were underlined by Premiers as critical to expanding Atlantic Canada's economy. Premiers discussed continued collaboration with the federal government to grow immigration levels, including maximizing pathways for international post-secondary students and ensuring that businesses are able to attract and retain global talent. Premiers expressed their continued support for the settlement of refugees in Atlantic Canada.

Premiers reinforced their commitment to work with stakeholders to reduce red tape and barriers to business in the region to support economic growth. As part of modernizing business regulation, priorities were identified in consultations led by regional business organizations. Premiers agreed to work toward the following priorities:

- Use of the *One Business One Number* system for Workers' Compensation Boards and Commissions;
- Mutual recognition of targeted occupational health and safety equipment and safety training standards; and
- Assessment of options for standardizing the carrier profile system in the trucking sector.

These initiatives will make it easier to do business across Atlantic Canada and will contribute to the ability of businesses to expand throughout the region.

Premiers also discussed the vital importance of fast and reliable access to high speed internet across Atlantic Canada. Improved connectivity is vital to attracting new jobs to the region. Premiers are working together to expand access to high speed internet, particularly in rural communities.

Energy and Climate Change

Open and non-discriminatory transportation and transmission of energy within Atlantic Canada and beyond supports economic growth. Strategic energy infrastructure projects such as the Energy East Pipeline and Muskrat Falls are crucial economic growth initiatives. Premiers are pleased to see that work on the Northumberland Strait electrical cables project has begun. Premiers discussed how these initiatives together with improved grid integration and system management can improve security of supply and expand export opportunities.

Atlantic Canada is leading the nation in mitigating the impacts of climate change and these efforts will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

As a coastal region, Atlantic Canada has unique considerations with respect to climate change in terms of understanding risks and vulnerabilities. Identifying opportunities to mitigate climate change impacts, foster resilience and build local solutions will remain a priority. Atlantic provinces are participating fully in the significant work underway to develop a pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

Health

Premiers are committed to improving the efficiency, sustainability and quality of health care in the Atlantic region, with a focus on patient-centred care and improved health outcomes. Premiers are pleased to announce that the Atlantic Provinces are moving forward with joint procurement of anaesthesia and ultrasound equipment. It is estimated that this new collaboration will save \$6.1 million over the next three years, with more savings to be realized in coming years as governments identify further joint purchasing opportunities.

Premiers are committed to a regional approach that focuses on innovation to address the determinants of health, chronic disease management and the unique needs of Atlantic Canada in providing health care services to an aging population.

Support for Fort McMurray

Atlantic Premiers and the people of Atlantic Canada support the people of Fort McMurray impacted by the Alberta wildfire. All communities in our region have close ties to Fort McMurray and Atlantic Canadians are personally reaching out to help in this time of need. Last week the Atlantic provinces provided \$250,000 to the Canadian Red Cross to support relief efforts in Alberta.

– 30 –

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