

Council of Atlantic Premiers' Communiqué

**Atlantic Premiers Endorse Accord to Strengthen Health Care Collaboration and
Discuss Energy and Trade Priorities**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2021 - Atlantic Premiers have endorsed a regional accord that will enhance collaboration in delivering health care services to Atlantic Canadians.

Premier Blaine Higgs of New Brunswick chaired the meeting of the Council of Atlantic Premiers. He was joined by Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston, Prince Edward Island Premier Dennis King and Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey.

The Accord of Guiding Principles states that the Atlantic Provinces will collaborate on the recruitment and retention of health professionals and create a sustainable work environment for the health care sector. Provinces will work together to develop and maintain specialized care services for the region, limiting duplication while ensuring local needs are met. Provinces will also collaborate on the introduction of new technology and learning to improve health care delivery.

Atlantic Premiers also discussed key priorities for regional alignment to improve health care services. Premiers directed their Ministers of Health to develop priority actions based on the Accord.

Premiers reaffirmed their commitment to work together to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus within the region. They thanked the region's health care workers for their efforts in controlling the virus and continue to urge all Atlantic Canadians to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and follow Public Health guidance and advice.

Premiers discussed the current suspension of PEI potato exports to the United States. While the restrictions are limited to Prince Edward Island, the economic and social impacts of this decision are not. The exportation of safe, high-quality potatoes from Prince Edward Island supports jobs in various sectors across the region. When one Atlantic Canadian province is impacted, the entire region feels the effects.

The Atlantic provinces and the federal government have worked together to support and promote increased international trade and access to new export markets. Trade decisions that go against prevailing science and historical protocols hurt our industries, damage our reputation and set undesirable precedents. Atlantic Premiers are united in their desire to see a swift resolution to this trade disruption.

Premiers reiterated this message to the Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, federal Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, in a conversation focused on developing the region's energy potential and other shared priorities for Atlantic Canada. Premiers strongly urged the Minister to partner with them to support a shared vision for the development and transmission of reliable, affordable and sustainable energy to meet the region's present and future needs, which will also contribute towards national climate change goals.

Premiers thanked Premier Higgs for his leadership as chair of the Council of Atlantic Premiers over the past year. Premier Houston of Nova Scotia will assume role of chair on January 1, 2022.

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