



Presentation for Law Amendments

Bill 136: The Green Economy

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is the voice of agriculture in Nova Scotia. Since 1895, we have represented the interests of Nova Scotia's agricultural community. Today, our members account for over 95% of all agricultural production in Nova Scotia. With an organizational structure that includes representation from 13 county and regional federations, 27 recognized agricultural commodity groups, the Federation brings together over 2400 individual farm businesses representing all aspects of primary agriculture.

The Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act lists a number of goals that coincide with the environmental stewardship and best management practices implemented by Nova Scotia farmers in day to day business. Protection of ecosystems and wildlife habitats, protecting air quality, securing our valuable water resource and working toward renewable energy technologies are common practices.

We whole heartedly agree with the goal to protect our environment for generations to come.

The Federation also strongly supports a stronger connection between our environment and the economy. Economic prosperity should not come at the expense of the environment. The farm community, through our environmental farm plans and nutrient management planning, provide safe, high quality products in a responsible manner. The same can be said in reverse, protecting the environment should not come as a burden on our economy. Prosperous rural and urban communities exist from support for our local Nova Scotia businesses. The farm community is a prime example of this, having existed for centuries; farms in Nova Scotia generate 2.1 billion dollars of capital investment each year in the province's rural economy.

Agriculture in Nova Scotia is the key component to grow a green economy. The Federation of Agriculture has had discussions with Ecology Action Centre and we agree with the food strategy goals presented today by EAC. We would like to see a Nova Scotia food strategy as an actionable goal included in EGSPA.

The NS Federation of Agriculture believes that it is time for Nova Scotia to develop a food strategy in order to insure an economically, environmentally, socially responsive, and



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sustainable food system that will provide increasing amounts of nutritious, safe, affordable, local food.

It is imperative that Nova Scotia develop a long term food strategy that will provide citizens with the secure understanding that we will be able to feed ourselves and contribute to the world's food needs in the years to come through sustainable production, processing and distribution of food.

A Food Strategy for Nova Scotia with goals under the Green Economy Act would ensure the economic and financial sustainability of farmers. Having healthy, profitable farm businesses would create jobs and vibrant rural infrastructure. It would encourage new entrants and more growth in the Industry. The Food Strategy would recognize that the need for food is central to the policies and that food is more than just a commodity. The Nova Scotia food strategy would localize food systems and reduce distances between farmers and consumers. There are broader opportunities and benefits from development of such a strategy. There would be an opportunity to educate the public on the health benefits of safe local food.

The Federation of Agriculture believes that we need to increase spending on local food and support a Buy Nova Scotia First type of legislation. The Federation would like to see goals set that will increase our local food dollar spending, grow the number of new farmers, to explore future policy for local food procurement and protect our agricultural lands for generations to come.

Specific goals as alluded to by Ecology Action Centre include:

- 20% of our food spending from local farms by 2020 and increased local procurement by government. A study would be necessary to define measureable goals and benchmarks.
- A 5% increase of new farmers to the Nova Scotia Farm Registration System by 2020
- Protecting farmland with conservation easements. A goal for a specific amount of farmland to be protected should be outlined by 2014 and included in the 2020 EGSPA goals.

Farming, like fishing and forestry are important natural resources to Nova Scotia. These industries are economic drivers and wealth generators. Inclusion of goals for a Nova Scotia Food Strategy within the Green Economy Act makes economic sense and provides environmental longevity.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring you the view of the farm community with regard to the amendments of Bill 136.