

**Presentation to the Law Amendments Committee by the Green Party of Nova Scotia on Bill 57, Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act
November 1, 2021**

Good Afternoon and thank you for providing this time for me to offer comments on Bill 57 on behalf of the Green Party of Nova Scotia. I'm sure the significance of what we are doing here today is clear in the context of the meeting of world leaders who are tackling Climate Change in Glasgow Scotland in COP 26. We are all being called to do our part in this Global challenge which is of apocalyptic proportions. If we succeed then future generations will look back and celebrate what we have done today. I urge all of you to ensure Nova Scotia, when judged, stands on the right side of history. It is incumbent on all of us to act in the best interest of coming generations who have put their future in our hands.

I want to begin by congratulating Minister Halman and the Government for introducing this Bill. It is not often a political party goes beyond what it promised on the campaign trail. Bill 57 does that and as Greens we applaud you. We believe this bill should pass for the good of the province and our country. However, and here is the 'BUT' you were all no doubt expecting, we would like to see amendments to strengthen this bill.

In the interest of time I will touch on the ones that we consider most significant. I would point out that the bill uses the word “encourage” six times. I would suggest that the government is not a cheerleader that stands on the sidelines and shouts encouraging words to the team on the field. You are the quarterback; you call the plays. If we are to win you need to be fully in the game. Look at those areas where you have used the word encourage and decide what concrete action you will take to get the result you want.

In section 6 (a)...you set your targets...oh so close...to continue with my football analogy you are on the 7 yard line...and you decide not to go for it. You are about to waste your third down...set your sights on the actual goal. To keep global temperatures below 1.5 degrees celsius, by 2030 Nova Scotia needs to aim to be 60% below 2005 levels. Please raise the goal.

Congratulations on moving ahead the date to phase out coal fired electricity generation. We believe you could also move ahead the dates of other goals, for example you could start right now prioritizing leased Government space to buildings that are climate resilient and net zero...no need to wait 9 years. And

addressing and mitigating barriers for testing and treatment of rural wells shouldn't be put off 5 years.

The implementation of the recommendations of the Lahey report should start now, immediately, no need to wait until 2023. If you implement the Lahey recommendations now you can start working on implementing other sustainable forestry practices and eliminate clear-cutting. Also, we applaud the government's goal in Section 12 to modernize the environmental assessment process. However, no need to wait 3 years, and we would suggest that "Social License" be added to the list of matters to be taken into consideration.

In Section 14, a) we would refer you to the "What We Heard" report done by Clean Energy for the previous government. It heard from close to 1500 Nova Scotians on a number of the issues covered by this Bill. There was a strong show of support from those who were consulted for a phasing out of open-pen fin fish farms by 2025. The government of BC and the Federal government will start phasing out open-pen fish farms next year. It is important that Nova Scotia send a signal to the industry that new farms will not be licensed and a plan is being put in place to transition away from the open-pen farms we now have. Ample advanced warning is in the best interests of the industry allowing it to better plan around an

orderly transition. The government should also start work on establishing the criteria for land-based fish operations to ensure that a high bar is set for this emerging industry in this province. World leaders in this field are currently operating in Nova Scotia. Now is the time to encourage this industry to grow sustainably rather than play catch up in the future.

In the next section, 15, a) we are also calling for you to be more specific. Again, you don't have to take our word for it, the majority of those consulted in the Clean Energy report, What we Heard, and the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities are calling for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for paper and packaging. It is already in place in 5 provinces, BC, Sask., Man., Que. and Ont. and is under development in NB. Once paper and packaging are addressed, mattresses, mercury-containing lamps, lithium batteries, sharps (needles), propane cylinders, and other difficult-to-manage hazardous household wastes could be added in the future.

We're almost done...in section 19 and 21, the act makes reference to the Round Table. We are pleased to see that the Premier will meet with the group. We would like to ask the government to consider adding a representative of the Green Party of Nova Scotia to the Round Table. It would be a way to give the nine-thousand Nova Scotians, who obviously feel strongly about sustainable prosperity

and voted Green, a way to be heard on these critical issues. We would also suggest that 21, clause 2 be strengthened by changing the wording from “The minister may seek advice from the Round Table,” to “the Minister WILL seek advice from the Round Table.”

Before I conclude I to acknowledge the elements of the act that point to including Mi’kmaq teachings and practice and the principle of ensuring this act serves all Nova Scotians equally. It talks of working with racialized and marginalized communities to create sustainable funding “for climate change solutions and support for community-based solutions and policy engagement.” These are laudable goals and could go a long way toward dealing with environmental racism but there don’t appear to be any concrete or measurable actions outlined in the Bill. We will be watching to make sure these words become reality in the near future.

And finally, in Section 21-3....the date given for the annual report is on or before July 31st...given that we now know our next election is July 15th 2025, I suggest that the date for this report to be submitted should be changed to June 30th.

I’m a firm believer that we can’t let Perfect Be the Enemy of Good. This is a good start. The bill could be better. As Greens we are proud to consider ourselves the vanguards of sustainable prosperity, and therefore we are pleased to see some

of our vision and values reflected in this government's priorities. We encourage both the government and the opposition to consider the suggestions we have made to amend this Bill in the interest of all Nova Scotians.

Submitted by Jo-Ann Roberts, Deputy Leader, GPNS