



Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

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Hon. Kevin Murphy, Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Committee for the period from September 2019 to August 2020 of the Sixty-third General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Lohnes-Croft'.

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, MLA, Lunenburg
Chair
Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development

Halifax, Nova Scotia
2020

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INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, an all-party Committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the Second Session of the Sixty-Third General Assembly. Pursuant to Rule 60(2)(d) of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly*:

(2)(d) The Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee is established for the purpose of considering matters relative to natural resources and economic development including agriculture, aquaculture, business, energy, the environment, fisheries, forestry, infrastructure, marketing, mines, public works, science, technology, tourism, trade and transportation 1987 R. 60(2); am 1993; am. 1996; am. 2018

MEMBERSHIP

There shall be no more than nine Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to this committee. On August 31, 2020, membership of the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee was as follows:

Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, MLA (Chair)
Lunenburg

Hon. Pat Dunn, MLA
Pictou Centre

Keith Irving, MLA (Vice Chair)
Kings South

Tory Rushton, MLA
Cumberland South

Brendan Maguire, MLA
Halifax Atlantic

Claudia Chender, MLA
Dartmouth South

Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
Clayton Park West

Lisa Roberts, MLA
Halifax Needham

Bill Horne, MLA
Waverley-Fall River-Beaver Bank

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- Tory Rushton, MLA replaced Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, MLA in January 2020.
- Bill Horne, MLA filled a vacant seat in August 2020. That seat and the Vice Chair position had become vacant in February 2020 when Hugh MacKay, MLA resigned from the Liberal Caucus to sit as an Independent member in the House of Assembly.
- Committee member Keith Irving, MLA became Vice Chair in August 2020.

PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee traditionally meets once a month. These meetings are usually held on the fourth Tuesday of the month in the Legislative Committees Room, 1700 Granville Street, Granville Level, One Government Place.

Because of physical distancing protocols observed during the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair cancelled the April 28 meeting. On April 29, 2020, she announced that all further meetings of this committee were cancelled until further notice.

NOTICES, TRANSCRIPTS AND REPORTS

NOTICES

Notices of committee meetings are sent to all members of the committee, caucus office staff, legislative staff and Communications Nova Scotia. The notices are also posted in Province House and are on the Nova Scotia Legislature website at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/get-involved/calendar/>

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Library in Province House, the Legislative Committees Office or on the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee web page at:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/natural-resources-and-economic-development/archive/natural-resources-and-economic-development>

REPORTS

All reports of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development are compiled by the Legislative Committees Office and forwarded to committee members for consideration. Upon completion of the review and approval of the report, the Chair tables the report with the Speaker of the House of Assembly or with the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

Distribution of the report is as follows:

To the Speaker and the Clerk of the House of Assembly, committee members, all witnesses who appeared before the committee, the Nova Scotia Legislative Library, caucus offices and the media. This report is available to the general public upon request from the Legislative Committees Office, and is available on the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee web page at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/natural-resources-and-economic-development/reports>

RESEARCH MATERIAL

All research for the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee is compiled by the Legislative Library in consultation with the committee clerk. Research material is compiled in electronic format and is distributed by the committee clerk prior to the meeting to committee members, staff and witnesses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The committee wishes to extend its gratitude to all witnesses for their time and co-operation. Special appreciation is extended to the Legislative Committees Office; Hansard Reporting Services; Legislative Television and Broadcast Services; and the Nova Scotia Legislative Library.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

WITNESSES

Department of Energy and Mines

Simon d'Entremont – Deputy Minister

Don James – Executive Director

Mining Association of Nova Scotia

Sean Kirby – Executive Director

Rick Horne – Geologist

Peter Oram – Environmental Specialist

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The committee discussed the meeting's presentation on uranium exploration. A motion was made:

- Given the significant public concern about the risks of uranium mining, resulting in recommendations of the 1985 inquiry to issue a moratorium on the industry and subsequent legislation by the NDP government in 2009, I would like to introduce a motion that the committee reaffirms its support of the ban on uranium mining.
 - Moved by Lisa Roberts, MLA
 - Motion carried.

The committee agreed to accept the 2019 annual report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, and to submit it to the House of Assembly. A motion was made:

- That we send the report to the Legislature.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried.

Because its regular meeting date of December 24, 2019 would have fallen during the Christmas holidays, the committee agreed by consensus to move the date of that meeting to December 12.

The committee agreed to hold an agenda-setting on November 26, 2019, following a presentation by Tourism Nova Scotia.

DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation from the Department of Energy and Mines:

- Please provide the links to the maps on the distribution of radionuclides in the province, radon risk maps, and risk maps for uranium in groundwater, etc.
- Please provide Scandinavian numbers for comparison of percentages on renewables with Nova Scotia.
- Please provide a follow-up answer to the question: “What would the health concerns or consequence or effects of someone who is drinking water with too much uranium, in excess of 20 parts per billion, be if they were drinking it regularly and over a long term?”
- Provide an update on department projections regarding renewable energy and power from Muskrat Falls with respect to the timeline and what will happen to renewable targets if those timelines have changed, as well any forecast impact on power rates if that timeline has shifted.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/natural-resources-and-economic-development/archive/natural-resources-and-economic-development>

NOVA SCOTIA TOURISM 2018 CAMPAIGN AND RESULTS

November 26, 2019

WITNESSES

Tourism Nova Scotia

Michele Saran – CEO

Anna Moran – Director of Research and Policy

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

An agenda-setting was held. The committee agreed to the following topics as put by motion:

- Efficiency Nova Scotia – Programs and Green Jobs
- Innovacorp – Nova Scotia Startup’s
- Solar Electricity for Community Buildings Program

- Halifax Port Authority – Future of the Port
- Lead in the Groundwater – Provincial Testing and Notification Regime

- Housing, Housing Affordability and Economic Development

DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested and received the following documentation from Tourism Nova Scotia:

- Statistics from the visitor exit survey and visitor enumeration which determines tourism revenue estimates for non-resident visitors, as well as Statistics Canada’s National Survey which determines estimates of spending by Nova Scotians travelling within the province.
- Information on the various categories for tourism spending.
- Information on areas of the province that are doing well versus the areas not doing well with respect to tourism.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

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WOOD USE IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS

December 12, 2019

WITNESSES

BIRD Construction (Design Construction Inc.)

Patrick Crabbe – Business and Brand Development Manager
(Vice President of Design Construction Inc.)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

There was no additional committee business.

DOCUMENTATION

The following information was requested from BIRD Construction:

- Please provide a copy of the flow chart showing the navigation of the DC350 process.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/natural-resources-and-economic-development/archive/natural-resources-and-economic-development>

WITNESSES

Department of Energy and Mines

Simon d'Entremont – Deputy Minister

Nancy Rondeaux – Director, Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy

Department of Environment

Frances Martin – Deputy Minister

Efficiency Nova Scotia

Stephen MacDonald - CEO (EfficiencyOne)

Town of Bridgewater

Leon de Vreede – Sustainability Planner/Smart Cities Project Lead

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The next meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development has been scheduled for February 5, 2020 with the Forestry Transition Team. The Chair noted that this meeting would substitute for the regularly scheduled meeting of February 25, 2020, so as not to conflict with the House of Assembly sitting.

DOCUMENTATION

The committee requested the following documentation:

- With respect to wood energy as part of EfficiencyOne programs, please provide information on your larger projects that involve district heating/energy and whether or not they have involved any biomass or wood burning.
- The results of a wood heat-based energy study undertaken with the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/natural-resources-and-economic-development/archive/natural-resources-and-economic-development>

VITAL WORK OF THE FORESTRY TRANSITION TEAM

February 5, 2020

WITNESSES

Forestry Transition Team

Kelliann Dean – Chair and Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Julie Towers – Deputy Minister of Lands and Forestry

Ava Czapalay – Associate Deputy Minister of Labour and Advanced Education

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Motions

After the presentation by the Forestry Transition Team, a motion was made:

- That we bring the transition team back again within a month's time and go over further questions and review of what has taken place.
 - Moved by Tory Rushton, MLA

An amendment was proposed:

- To wait until after the House session, which would probably be two or two-and-a-half months or so.
 - Moved by Keith Irving, MLA
- Amendment carried.
- Amended motion carried unanimously in a recorded vote.

DOCUMENTATION

Tabled Documentation

The following documentation was tabled:

- Forestry Transition Team Terms of Reference
 - Tabled by Tory Rushton, MLA
- Correspondence to Minister of Department of Energy and Mines from PC Caucus re: the fallout associated with the closure of Northern Pulp
 - Tabled by Tim Houston, MLA
- Correspondence to Minister of Department of Lands and Forestry re: imminent closure of Northern Pulp
 - Tabled by Tim Houston, MLA
- Forestry Sector Transition Update
 - Tabled by Kelliann Dean, Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Chair of the Forestry Transition Team
- Brief from Information Morning (February 22, 2019) – Premier McNeil

- Tabled by Tim Houston, MLA
- Correspondence from the Office of the Premier to Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party re: latest correspondence regarding the forestry transition team.
 - Tabled by Tim Houston, MLA

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript of this meeting can be found online at the following address:

<https://nslegislature.ca/legislative-business/committees/standing/natural-resources-and-economic-development/archive/natural-resources-and-economic-development>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - MOTIONS

The following is a list of motions introduced by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development:

September 24, 2019

The committee discussed the meeting's presentation on uranium exploration. A motion was made:

- Given the significant public concern about the risks of uranium mining, resulting in recommendations of the 1985 inquiry to issue a moratorium on the industry and subsequent legislation by the NDP government in 2009, I would like to introduce a motion that the committee reaffirms its support of the ban on uranium mining.
 - Moved by Lisa Roberts, MLA
 - Motion carried.

The committee agreed to accept the 2019 annual report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, and to submit it to the House of Assembly. A motion was made:

- That we send the report to the Legislature.
 - Moved by Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA
 - Motion carried.

November 26, 2019

An agenda-setting was held. The committee agreed to the following topics as put by motion:

- Efficiency Nova Scotia – Programs and Green Jobs
- Innovacorp – Nova Scotia Startup's
- Solar Electricity for Community Buildings Program

- Halifax Port Authority – Future of the Port
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February 5, 2020

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- That we bring the transition team back again within a month's time and go over further questions and review of what has taken place.
 - Moved by Tory Rushton, MLA

An amendment was proposed:

- To wait until after the House session, which would probably be two or two-and-a-half

months or so.

- Moved by Keith Irving, MLA
- Amendment carried.
- Amended motion carried unanimously in a recorded vote.

APPENDIX B – DOCUMENTATION

The following is a list of documentation requested by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development:

September 24, 2019

The committee requested and received the following documentation from the Department of Energy and Mines:

- Please provide the links to the maps on the distribution of radionuclides in the province, radon risk maps, and risk maps for uranium in groundwater, etc.
- Please provide Scandinavian numbers for comparison of percentages on renewables with Nova Scotia.
- Please provide a follow-up answer to the question: “What would the health concerns or consequence or effects of someone who is drinking water with too much uranium, in excess of 20 parts per billion, be if they were drinking it regularly and over a long term?”
- Provide an update on department projections regarding renewable energy and power from Muskrat Falls with respect to the timeline and what will happen to renewable targets if those timelines have changed, as well any forecast impact on power rates if that timeline has shifted.

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- Information on the various categories for tourism spending.
- Information on areas of the province that are doing well versus the areas not doing well with respect to tourism.

December 12, 2019

The committee requested the following documentation from Bird Construction.

- Please provide a copy of the flow chart showing the navigation of the DC350 process.

January 28, 2020

The committee requested the following documentation:

- With respect to wood energy as part of EfficiencyOne programs, please provide information on your larger projects that involve district heating/energy and whether or not they have involved any biomass or wood burning.
- The results of a wood heat-based energy study undertaken with the Mersey Tobetic Research Institute.

February 5, 2020

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