



**People's  
Alliance**  
of New Brunswick

**L'Alliance  
des Gens**  
du Nouveau Brunswick

## **2014 Election Platform**

*Offering New Brunswick a Fresh Start*



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## Leader's Message

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What you now hold in your hand is the ignition switch to launch New Brunswick into a brighter future.

Our policy committee has worked tirelessly, listening to experts and professionals in every field as well as consulting with people just like you. The results of these efforts are both creative and solidly grounded in common sense.

We realized that we must not continue to do the same things we have always done and expect a different outcome; new ideas were needed for NB, and that's where the creativity came in. We also realized that our over-regulated and bureaucratic complexities often add to the problems

that they were originally designed to fix; practical ideas were needed for NB, and that's where the common sense came in. By implementing innovative policies and eliminating unnecessary regulatory burdens, we can create a vibrant business atmosphere and set sustainable objectives for social policy.

It is clear that New Brunswick faces a crossroad of monumental proportions. Years of government mismanagement have left us holding an ever-increasing debt and deficit, a poor economy, and an unemployment rate that is one of the highest in Canada. We cannot allow this dire situation to continue.

I am convinced that the ideas contained in these pages will work. They have the potential to lower our debt, reduce and eliminate our annual deficit, bring new jobs to NB, and create a more efficient and effective means of providing services to our citizens. As you continue to read these pages, I am confident that you will agree.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our message.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kris Austin'.

**Kris Austin,**  
**Leader of the People's Alliance of New Brunswick**

## A Return to Fiscal Balance

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The People's Alliance realizes that returning to fiscal balance is among the most important tasks our government will tackle. The first step is to get our spending in check so that we can begin to pay back our debt.

The projections below are the results of a "1.0% expense growth budget" beginning once the People's Alliance government has implemented our strategy of eliminating waste (following fiscal year 2015-2016).

The goal is to balance the books by fiscal year 2017-2018 with a forecast surplus of \$54 million. Continuing until we reach a \$100 million surplus, which will be put toward the debt every year.

Following these payments, next year's interest will decrease. The excess interest savings each following year will be used towards targeted tax cuts, but only to the point where we maintain a \$100 million surplus.

Recognizing that expenses for items such as wage increases for civil servants will occur, we will seek to fund that using savings we have identified elsewhere in this platform.

\*\*All figures are using the Department of Finance's forecasts via the main estimates released February 2014.  
(numbers in millions)

| Fiscal Year           | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Forecast Revenue      | \$8,036   | \$8,281   | \$8,564   | \$8,865   |           |
| Higgs Expense         | \$8,427   | \$8,543   | \$8,693   | \$8,746   |           |
|                       |           |           |           |           |           |
| Deficit/Surplus       | (\$391)   | (\$262)   | (\$129)   | \$119     |           |
|                       |           |           |           |           |           |
| PANB Forecast Revenue | \$8,036   | \$8,281   | *\$8,447  | *\$8,616  | *\$8,788  |
| PANB Expense          | \$8,400   | \$8,393   | \$8,447   | \$8,562   | \$8,690   |
|                       |           |           |           |           |           |
| Deficit/Surplus       | (\$364)   | (\$112)   | (\$30)    | \$54      | \$98      |

\* Lower revenue growth forecast to more conservative rate of 2.0% of banking forecasts due to a slight drag due to elimination of waste in government.

The above projections have been lowered from Minister Higgs' more generous forecast of 3.2% in 2016-2017, and from 3.2% in 2017-2018 (GDP growth expected due to west-east pipeline, Tungsten mine projections beginning that year). In 2018-2019, People's Alliance expense growth will not exceed revenue growth rate.

## A Path to Economic Prosperity

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### Corporate Subsidies

## Perform a Complete Audit

In order to eliminate the deficit we need to cut waste. Annually, over \$100 million per year of our tax dollars is handed over to private business in the form of subsidies. At the same time we continue to lose thousands of jobs. This practice doesn't work. A People's Alliance government would immediately initiate a complete audit of all corporate subsidy programs. All programs will be evaluated based on the goals of the program and its effectiveness. Any program that cannot be proven effective will be eliminated.

## Reduce Corporate Subsidies and Eliminate the Small Business Tax

In an effort to help level the economic playing field in New Brunswick, the People's Alliance of New Brunswick will eliminate the small business tax on income of up to \$500,000. The plan is estimated to cost \$9 million annually, but will be offset by slashing the amount government pays out in large corporate subsidies. Between 2006 and 2011, the provincial government handed out on average \$109 million dollars annually in some form of subsidy.

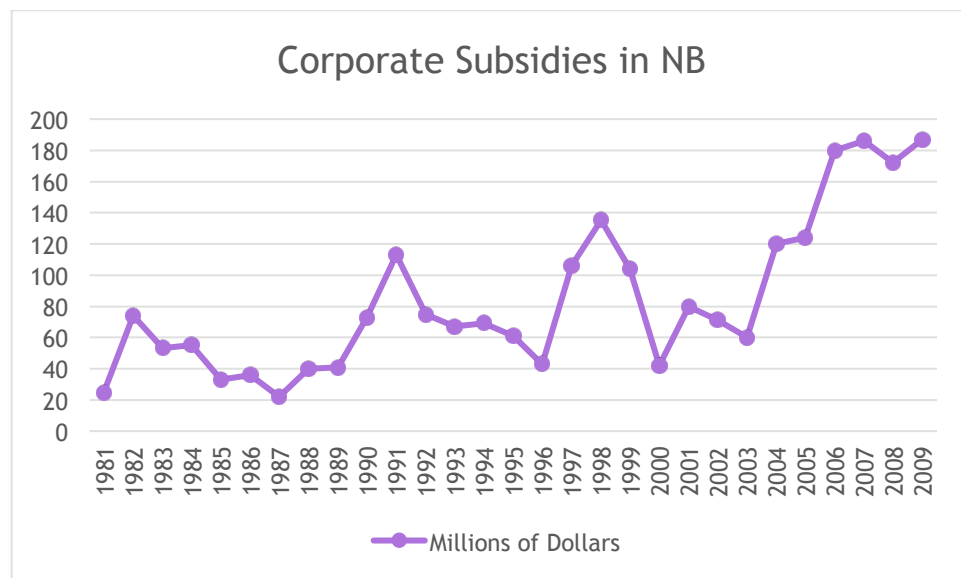
Cost Estimate for small business tax reduction, according to figures received from the Legislative Library of NB:

For the 2014 taxation year, the Department of Finance has estimated that the approximate value of the Small Business Corporate Income Tax would be \$9.0 million. This tax rate applies to the first \$500,000 of active business income of Canadian Controlled Private Corporations.

Costs: \$9 million annually in revenue loss

Savings Estimate from eliminating corporate subsidies, according to statistics in report from the Fraser Institute:

The Source: <http://www.fraserinstitute.org/uploadedFiles/fraser-ca/Content/research-news/research/publications/government-subsidies-in-canada-a-684-billion-price-tag.pdf>



The average corporate subsidy amount from 1981-2009 was roughly \$84,379,310 million dollars. In the years from 2000-2009 the subsidies provided to corporations was roughly \$122,200,000

A Canadian Press report from February 27, 2012 reported on corporate subsidies, using data obtained under an access to information request. It revealed that between the years of 2006-2011, the New Brunswick government handed over \$653 million in “repayable loans, loan guarantees, equity investments and various forms of grants to companies”. Our estimate of \$109 million is conservative and may likely be higher if we include energy rebates and property tax relief for large industrial users.

The Source: <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/23-per-cent-of-n-b-economic-agency-s-funds-went-to-failed-companies-1.774251#ixzz3B2G0TWfT>

## Merge Invest NB into Economic Development, Efficiency NB into NB Power

The People's Alliance will merge Invest NB's duties into the department of Economic Development. Overlapping services, such as strategic emergency assistance, will thus become one. The direct result will be a program that is less costly to administer, allowing more resources and focus on achieving results which will provide a measurable return to New Brunswickers. Invest NB as a part of Economic Development will adopt a new investment strategy as mentioned in our policy on converting Invest NB into a venture capital fund.

In an effort to find more cost savings from less administration, Efficiency New Brunswick will be rolled into a function of NB Power. Funding for the program will still come from the Government of New Brunswick. Significant cost reductions will be found by merging the necessary working skill set from Efficiency New Brunswick into an arm of our crown utility and by using existing NB Power infrastructure.

### Savings estimate:

Estimated savings at \$10 million annually due to eliminating duplicate services and staffing. An example of duplicate services between the two is the “Strategic Assistance” program, which, currently, ED and Invest NB administer jointly with separate budgets.

Cost savings: \$10 million yearly

## Transform Invest NB into a Venture Capital fund

The People's Alliance realizes that New Brunswick is in dire need of a sustainable plan to make it attractive for employers to choose the province as a place to expand their businesses. When businesses expand within New Brunswick, jobs are created, unemployment drops and more disposable income is fed into our economy, helping everyone.

Invest NB currently provides what amount to "corporate handouts" in the form of loans (some of them forgivable) to companies who choose to expand their operations in or into New Brunswick. The People's Alliance would work to change this approach to one that is more in line with venture capitalism, wherein Invest NB would make strategic investments to small start-ups and larger established companies based on their likelihood to succeed in the market place while generating jobs and positive impact on the economy. Instead of providing loans, in this model Invest NB would provide investment to qualifying companies and get equity in return, which could later be divested to cover the cost of the investment and ideally yield returns that could then be invested elsewhere.

The People's Alliance feels that taking a venture capital approach is a much more responsible way of using tax dollars to stimulate the economy, and also will help to encourage more New Brunswickers to create new, innovative businesses and home grown jobs without resorting to corporate hand outs.

Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government.

## Initiate a Natural Resource Royalty Review

Natural resource development plays a vital economic role for the people and province of New Brunswick. The People's Alliance will continue to support the environmentally responsible development of our natural resources, and work for the people of New Brunswick to ensure job growth and adequate royalties are received.

The People's Alliance will order a complete audit of all royalties/rates and make any necessary changes to ensure the people are receiving fair value on all natural resources.

### Why Review Royalties?

#### *Potash*

Currently, potash royalties are 5.25% due to the royalty holiday; that figure will increase to 6.25% once the holiday ends. NB potash production was 800,000 tonnes in 2012, with an expected increase to one million tonnes in 2013 and a further increase to almost 2 million tonnes once the secondary mine begins producing. The current market price of potash, as of April 2014, is \$300/tonne.

Saskatchewan collects royalties in a much different way than NB does. That province collects \$11 per tonne extracted, as well as a profit royalty of up to 35%.

Adding the \$11/tonne extraction fee, as Saskatchewan does, would automatically bring the province an additional \$11 million based on expected 2013 production, with an increase to \$22 million once production from the new mine comes online.

Removing the holiday rate on the 1,000,000 tonnes would bring in an additional \$3 million. On 2,000,000 tonnes, an additional \$6 million annually would be realized by the province.

Revenue increase from implementing an \$11 per tonne extraction surcharge, would equal \$11 million. Revenue increase from removing the royalty holiday rate would equal \$3 million. Total revenue increase for NB would equal \$14 million annually.

#### *Shale Gas*

The royalty rates on natural gas extracted in NB are much lower than the rates in other provinces.

Cost estimate:

We would spend a maximum of \$200,000 on an independent review.



## Support the Energy East Pipeline

The Energy East pipeline has the potential to produce jobs and a significant amount of economic activity in the province. As a government, we will support the construction of the pipeline and we will work to ensure that the people and businesses of NB are the primary beneficiaries of this economic activity. The People's Alliance also commits to consult with the public to ensure public support for the project.

The oil that passes through NB should be refined in the province before it is exported. While total volume details are still unclear, it is possible that the volume of oil destined for our province through such a pipeline may warrant the construction of a second refinery in the province. The construction, operation and maintenance of such a refinery would have a significant economic impact in the region in which it is constructed.

The People's Alliance believes that the northern part of the province is ideally positioned along the pipeline path, and is close enough to suitable ports, to allow the second refinery to be constructed in that region. A People's Alliance government would immediately initiate discussions with stakeholders in the province to determine the feasibility of constructing a second refinery in the northern part of the province.

Cost estimate: We would commit a maximum of \$200,000 to commission an independent study.

## Privatize the Retail Side of NB Liquor

In order to reduce liquor prices and provide new business opportunities to entrepreneurs, a People's Alliance government will privatize the retail outlets of NB Liquor. This privatization will be staged, with closure of corporate locations occurring after private businesses have entered the market in a particular village/town/city. Corporate locations will also be available to be purchased by entrepreneurs.

Convenience type stores will be permitted to sell beer and coolers, if they hold a valid license for the sale of tobacco products. Supermarkets will be permitted to sell alcoholic beverages, from a location separate from the grocery section of the location. For example, a grocer may build a site across the parking lot from their main location for the purpose of selling alcoholic beverages.

Most sites licensed to sell alcoholic beverages will be exclusively liquor stores. These businesses will also be allowed to sell a small selection of sodas and juices for the purpose of providing mix to consumers, which will help maintain the convenience of one stop shopping.

In order to ensure competition, and to stop predatory pricing practices, the following regulations will be placed on the liquor market in New Brunswick:

1. No licensed retailer of liquor products may sell below the wholesale price of any product.
2. No single company, individual, or affiliated companies or individuals may own more than 15% of the entire market for liquor products in NB. If market changes cause one company to own more than 15% of the market at any given time, the owner(s) will be given 6 months to sell enough sites to satisfy the regulation, or they will be compelled to close locations until they own only 15% of the market.
3. Department of Public Safety, continuing as the licensing agent, will be responsible for ensuring these market regulations are followed and any predatory business practice complaints are investigated and resolved. A fine structure will be created, with the potential for a business to lose their license if anti-competitive behaviour is extreme.

In order to safeguard against underage purchase of alcoholic beverages, an escalating fine will be set up for any location caught selling to minors. After being caught selling to minors three times, the business will lose its license to sell alcoholic beverages.

In addition to licensing new retailers, licensed restaurants will be allowed to sell bottles of wine to customers for offsite consumption. Such sales will be at the restaurant's listed price, and the product will still need to remain unopened during transportation.

The benefits of divesting the retail outlets of NB Liquor are many:

1. Reduces prices through free market competition
2. Specialization of stores to meet customer demands (i.e. specialty wine stores)
3. Improved selection of products to meet customer demand
4. Increased economic activity due to multiple owners vs. monopoly (i.e. increased advertising expenditures as companies compete for customers)
5. Increased government revenues as multiple companies will pay income taxes and property taxes

Savings estimate:

Based on information received from the NB Legislative library on the average hourly wage of a NB Liquor retail employee (\$21.56), and average employment term of 15 months, 2 weeks of severance per year of service, and the number of full time retail employees being 348, over 9 years the net present value of eliminating retail positions over a 3 year period would be \$69, 775, 182.64 with an internal rate of return of 173%.

Our costing does not include losses related to breaking facilities leases, or gains from reducing facilities management overhead.

[illegible]

Changes will be made to the annual registration renewal to a 2 year system, which will achieve immediate savings in the cost of printing and mailing the registration renewal notices.

Lastly, vehicle inspections will only be required every two years until the vehicle reaches 150,000 kilometers or six years, whichever comes first. After the first of these thresholds is reached, the vehicle will revert to an annual inspection requirement.

Saskatchewan estimated its savings from removing the front plate sticker at over \$100,000/year (population of scale). <http://www.sgi.sk.ca/about/newsreleases/2012/stickerless.html>

Cost reductions are unknown in regards to eliminating front license plates; however, it is certain that costs would be reduced. In February 2013, New Brunswick signed an agreement with Waldale Manufacturing Ltd. of Nova Scotia for the supply of NB's license plates; the contract is for \$5 million over a five-year period. It stands to reason that once the current contract expires, a new contract would be negotiated for half the amount of plates. Estimated savings would be \$500,000 annually beginning in fiscal year 2017-2018 if we are unable to renegotiate before the five-year contract ends.

Total cost savings is estimated to exceed \$600,000 annually.

## A Successful Future Built on a Solid Educational Foundation

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### Early Education and Childhood Development Policy Review Committee

Too often, when major changes are made to the education system, little to no consultation is done with educational professionals regarding how these changes will be implemented in practice and what resources will be required to make the changes effective. This is driven by the highly partisan nature of NB politics and the desire of the two main parties to modify or change the policies implemented by the previous government. Cancelling or modifying a program needs to be based on the effectiveness of the program and not the ideology of the governing party.

In order to ensure that we are continuously developing a better educational environment, policies need to be evaluated over time in order to determine the effectiveness of these changes. If the goals of the policy have not been met, it is important to determine why and then decide whether or not to modify or reverse the policy.

A People's Alliance government will create a non-partisan Education Policy Review Committee (EPRC) tasked with examining the impact of any proposed changes to the education system and to examine the effectiveness of any changes that are implemented. The EPRC will also recommend milestones that should be met for the specific policy, and can recommend modifications or the termination of a policy.

The EPRC will base its recommendations on information gathered from stakeholders such as the NBTA, DEC's, student/parent groups and the results from student assessments and standardized tests. The recommendations will be provided to the Minister of Education within one year of the introduction of a new policy and any current policies will be evaluated every two years.

#### Cost Estimate:

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, expenditures on legislative committees totalled \$286,800.2. There were 11 standing committees and 2 select committees in the 57<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The Early Childhood Education and Development policy review committee would replace the standing committee on Education. This would add no new expenditures to the operating budget.

### Addressing low math and literacy

It has become apparent from the results of standardized testing that primary and secondary students in NB are not achieving a level of proficiency in math and literacy that is expected. In order to build a strong economy we must have an educated workforce. This begins with our children and we have an obligation to ensure that they achieve acceptable levels of proficiency in math and literacy. No person should leave the education system without the math and literacy skills expected for the current workforce or post-secondary education environment.

In order to address low math and literacy scores, a People's Alliance government will implement the following policies:

- We will mandate that math and literacy will be taught from the basics in kindergarten; there will be no expected entry requirement.
- Give our teachers the freedom to teach in a manner that best serves each student instead of a standardized approach that does not meet the needs of the entire class.
- Allow teachers to increase the content of the curriculum in their class in situations that will allow individual children to advance to their maximum capability.
- 
- End the practice of social passing. Instead, a student's progress will be discussed between the teacher and parent and a decision will be made on whether to hold the student back.

Cost estimate:

No additional cost to government

## Address the lack of access to health and mental health services in our schools

Our children deserve the best and most timely health care available. This includes both physical and mental health. Currently, there is no coordinated effort between the government and health care providers to provide access to services in the primary and secondary education systems. The link between physical and mental health and a person's success at learning is well documented. In order to ensure the overall health of the children in our schools a People's Alliance government will initiate the following policies:

- A minimum of 1/2 hour of physical activity per day will be required in the schools. Place an emphasis on a variety of physical activity. Give discretion to teacher to determine what physical activities are best for the students.
- Initiate discussions with health care professionals to determine the most effective and efficient way to maximize the health and well-being of our children while they are in school.
- Develop a framework that will bring together health care professionals to address issues in the schools in consultation with parents.

Cost estimate:

This will be studied by our new Education Policy Review Committee, as well as through our policy of fostering better cooperation between educational institutions.

## Funding for Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD)

In the long term we cannot afford to inadequately fund EECD regardless of our poor economic situation. The People's Alliance believes that a better-educated population will ultimately lead to a better economic future. In order to ensure our children are receiving the best public education possible, we must ensure that EECD receives the resources and supports it requires. This can only happen when the government fully understands what the appropriate level of funding is. The People's Alliance will work with stakeholders through the PRC (See Policy 1) to determine the appropriate level of funding and develop long term funding arrangements for EECD.

The current approach of determining the level of teacher FTE's primarily from student enrolment does not produce the educational environment that our children deserve. It is our belief that resources need to be made available at the district level so that the challenges of classroom composition and the specific needs of the learners can be addressed on a case by case basis. The level of resources cannot be determined solely by legislators; the People's Alliance commits to work with the NBTA and other stakeholders to develop an approach that allows appropriate FTE levels to be determined, while taking into account the challenges that exist in our system.

As a starting point the People's Alliance commits that the annual increase to the EECD budget will not drop below 1% over the next four years.

Cost Estimate, according to figures received from the Legislative Library of NB:

The 2014-2015 Main Estimates provide a Total – Gross Ordinary figure for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of \$1,085,771,000.

A one-time budget increase of 1% would yield \$10,857,710.00.

An annual 1% increase for each of the next four years would yield the following figures:

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Budget</b>   |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 2014-2015   | \$1,085,771,000 |
| 2015-2016   | \$1,096,628,710 |
| 2016-2017   | \$1,107,594,997 |
| 2017-2018   | \$1,118,670,947 |
| 2019-2019   | \$1,129,857,657 |

## Ensuring Adequate Post-Secondary Preparation

All too often, the students entering post-secondary institutions are not properly prepared for the scope of the material presented in first year classes. This is especially true for courses in the STEM fields, but also for the humanities. In many cases, the post-secondary institutions deal with this by re-teaching material from scratch. This method of teaching and learning is inefficient, and reduces the amount of material that can be covered in a first year course, which subsequently harms the quality of education received by the individuals.

A People's Alliance government will implement the following policies to ensure students are fully prepared to enter our post-secondary institutions:

- Work with post-secondary institutions to determine the appropriate level of understanding that is to be expected for a student entering the post-secondary education system in NB.
- Develop a framework, in collaboration with teachers, to implement these standards into our education system.
- Work with post-secondary institutions and the Dept. of Education to implement appropriate university preparedness testing to gauge the success of the system (testing will not be used for grading purposes).

Cost estimate:

No additional cost to government.

## Commitment to our Universities and Students

### Multi-year funding agreements and tuition rate stabilization

Our post-secondary institutions are an asset that must be leveraged to aid in economic development and the long term prosperity of our province. The economic footprint of these institutions is immense (over \$1 billion) and the capacity that they have to aid in the growth of our economy cannot be overstated.

Our institutions attract exceptional academics from across the globe who provide a world class educational environment for our youth. These researchers attract millions of dollars in research funding to the institutions. They hire graduate students and post-docs, and pursue Research and Development (R&D) activities that increase the overall innovative capacity of the province. These activities need to be leveraged in order to nurture entrepreneurs and allow small businesses to grow around these institutions. These businesses then hire graduates and give them experience, allowing NB to retain and build an educated workforce.

Investing in our Post-Secondary institutions benefits all New Brunswickers. For many years, under successive Liberal and PC governments, New Brunswick's universities have not been provided with adequate long term stable funding. This has forced universities to make tough decisions regarding their capacity to teach and conduct high quality research. It is also the main driver that has led to one of the highest tuition rates in Canada. These high tuition rates force potential students to leave the province for cheaper education elsewhere in Canada.

A People's Alliance government would negotiate multi-year funding agreements with our universities. These agreements will be based on the following guidelines:

- Provide an initial multi-year funding agreement allowing for a 4% increase to the operating budgets per year for four years.
- Require that 10% of the new funding be directed towards supporting applied research activities within the universities.

In effort to stabilize rising tuition rates and provide stability for families planning to send their children to university, a People's Alliance government would:

- Freeze tuition rates for the duration of the multi-year funding arrangement.
- Continue to fund the freeze until tuition rates match the national average.

In the first year of our mandate we will initiate discussions with the stakeholders (including administration officials, faculty representatives, and student groups) to determine a sustainable path forward for each institution. These discussions will include controlling rising tuition rates, increasing student participation, and how best to maximize our academic and research capacity in the province.

In the third year of our mandate, we will sign a memorandum of understanding with each individual institution to provide stable long term funding over the following four-year interval. This will provide institutions, students, and parents a stable and predictable funding arrangement which will allow them to plan ahead for the costs of education.

Cost Estimate, according to figures received from the Legislative Library of NB:

The Operating Budget for the Université de Moncton, Mount Allison University, St. Thomas University, and the University of New Brunswick for 2014-2015 are as follows<sup>1</sup>:

| UdeM             | Mt.A            | STU             | UNB              |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| \$115,666,000.00 | \$45,503,000.00 | \$28,263,900.00 | \$185,800,000.00 |

With a 4% increase, the Operating Budgets would be:

| UdeM             | Mt.A            | STU             | UNB              |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| \$120,292,640.00 | \$47,323,120.00 | \$29,394,456.00 | \$193,232,000.00 |

The 2014-2015 Provincial operating grants for the universities are as follows<sup>ii</sup>:

| UdeM            | Mt.A            | STU             | UNB              | Province Total   |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| \$64,344,883.00 | \$20,334,159.00 | \$14,082,351.00 | \$110,064,308.00 | \$208,825,701.00 |

The Provincial operating grants with a 4% increase factored would be:

| UdeM            | Mt.A            | STU             | UNB              | Province Total   |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| \$66,918,678.32 | \$21,147,525.36 | \$14,645,645.04 | \$114,466,880.32 | \$217,178,729.04 |

| Year              | PSE Operating Budget Contribution (4% per year)             |
|-------------------|---|
| 2014-2015         | \$208,825,701.00 (Current university revenue from province) |
| 2015-2016         | \$217,178,729   |
| 2016-2017         | \$225,865,878   |
| 2017-2018         | \$234,900,513   |
| Total investment: | \$26.1 million  |

## Public Oversight

Universities receive a significant amount of public funding; as such, they need to be transparent and accountable. The institutions must also be able to provide an environment that fully supports and encourages the unfettered pursuit of knowledge. This can only happen in an atmosphere where academic institutions retain their independence from the government. This is critical if the institutions are to be seen as destinations on the world stage.



It has become apparent in the past decade that the internal politics within the institutions has begun to harm this educational environment. We believe that the public's desire for more public oversight in this regard must be balanced by the recognition that universities must maintain their independence.

In an effort to increase public oversight, a People's Alliance government would form a non-partisan legislative committee dedicated to post-secondary education. The goals of this committee would be the following:

- To expose legislators to primary issues faced by the institutions.
- To gather information from the stakeholders (administration, faculty associations, student groups, Board of Governors, Senate's, etc.) and produce annual reports for the legislature detailing the primary issues within each individual institution.
- Use this information to provide context to the next multi-year funding agreement.

Cost Estimate, according to figures received from the Legislative Library of NB:

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, expenditures on legislative committees totalled \$286,800.2. There were 11 standing committees and 2 select committees in the 57<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Take a maximum size of 10 members. The total cost of a standing committee dedicated to issues surrounding post-secondary education would add less than \$25,000 to the expenditures.

## Increased Cooperation between Institutions

Providing adequate and stable funding lays the foundation for our education system, however, the People's Alliance believes that it is critical for the four publicly funded universities and our community colleges to work together in a strategic way for the public good. In an effort to encourage further collaboration between institutions a People's Alliance government would:

- Facilitate dialogue between institutions in an environment that allows for open and frank discussion.
- Require that the institutions develop a shared strategic vision for post-secondary education in New Brunswick.
- Work with the institutions to develop milestones that gauge whether we are meeting our goals.

Cost Estimate,:

This will be covered by the Education Policy Review Committee.

## Applied Research Innovation Funding

Our direct investment to applied research in NB universities:

- Set up an applied research equipment grant through NBIF to be available to labs doing applied research at NB's publicly funded universities. Each grant will be valued at a maximum of \$100,000, with a total maximum of \$1 million to be awarded per year.
- Create ten NBIF Post-Doctoral Fellowships in Applied Research valued at \$60,000 per year for a maximum of three years per Fellowship.

Cost estimate:

Total investment is \$4 million plus 10 x \$60,000 per year for four years. This adds \$6.4 million to the general budget.

## Student Aid, and Reducing the Cost of Education for Students

NB is currently losing our graduating students to other parts of the country and this has a damaging effect on our economy. One of the primary drivers of this exodus is student debt and the pursuit of higher paying jobs to pay it off. In an effort to retain and build an educated workforce the People's Alliance commits to reduce student loan debt by addressing the following items:

### In-Study Work Exemption and Summer Earnings:

Students who work during the summer and during their studies should not be punished for being employed by having their earnings count against their loan assessment. The People's Alliance commits to:

- Increasing the in-study work exemption from \$100/week to \$200/week.
- Eliminate summer earnings from the student loan assessment.

#### Cost estimate:

Zero initial cost to government.

### Parental Contributions:

The average NB PSE student has \$5200 per year in unmet financial need. The People's Alliance believes that the expectation by government that parents in NB have the finances available to save and contribute significantly to their children's education shows the absolute misunderstanding of the financial distress that exists in most families. A People's Alliance government would eliminate the inclusion of the parental contribution from the assessment for student loans.

#### Cost estimate:

Zero initial cost to government.

## A Common Sense Approach to Language Policy

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### Second Language Training in Public Schools

French Second Language (FSL) and English Second Language (ESL) training in our public schools is intended to be the pillar of access to second language training in order to achieve a truly bilingual province. Unfortunately, our education system has failed in this regard and students graduate from our high school without an acceptable level of proficiency to apply for jobs in the public sector.

Since the government is currently requiring a minimum of 40.9 percent of public sector employees to be bilingual now for the purposes of hiring and promotion, and some sectors such as ANB require 50% of the staff to be bilingual, it is only right to provide every student equal opportunity to achieve bilingual proficiency by the time they graduate high school. To achieve this goal a People's Alliance government will focus on two key areas:

## Immersion Programs

Currently, schools in the francophone sector provide mandatory 'core English', but no English immersion programs.

All schools in the Anglophone sector provide mandatory 'core French' classes. Those schools which have French Immersion are currently working through three immersion programs due to changes in the immersion structure at various times by both Liberal and Conservative governments. These three immersion programs are: Intensive French, which is a short-term immersion program; Early Immersion, which starts in grade 3; and Late Immersion, which starts in grade 5.

It is vital to note that many schools in the Anglophone sector have no access to any immersion programs. The lack of access to immersion creates an imbalance in the number of Anglophones who are given the opportunity to learn French as a second language. In addition, since the entry point for immersion has been changed several times, the data available isn't clear enough to determine the appropriate entry point.

To address access to French immersion programs a People's Alliance government will:

- Maintain the early immersion entry point at grade 3.
- Initiate a review of all French second language programs through the EPRC.
- Ensure access to French immersion is available in all regions of the province where there are enough interested students to implement the system.
- Investigate alternative second language training for children in schools or regions where the demand for immersion is too low to implement in full.

### Cost to government:

In order to implement these policies, we would task the newly created EECD policy review committee with reviewing the second language options that are available and implementing those that are practical and financially within reach.

## Second Language Testing

### Current Second Language Testing in the Francophone Sector

Students in the Francophone school sector are tested for proficiency in English as a Second Language (ESL) in grade 10. They can place at one of five testing levels. In 2011-2012, 91% of the grade 10 students in the francophone sector were tested for ESL proficiency. Of the 2,103 students tested, 1,508 (71.7% of those tested, and 65.3% of the total grade 10 population) tested at the Intermediate level or higher.

### Current Second Language Testing in the Anglophone Sector

Anglophone students are tested near the end of grade 12 for proficiency in French as a Second Language (FSL). They can place at one of nine testing levels. In 2011-2012, just 27.7% of the grade 12 students in the Anglophone sector were tested for FSL proficiency. Of the 1,488 who were tested, 1,323 (88.9% of those tested, but only 24.6% of the entire grade 12 population) tested at the intermediate level or higher.

### People's Alliance Commitment to Standardized Second Language Testing

The People's Alliance commits to having a standard Second Language proficiency testing system that is equal in both sectors. This will be achieved by implementing the following policies:

- The number of testing levels for both ESL and FSL will be made identical.
- Qualifying criteria for the levels will be identical for both ESL and FSL.
- Oral testing sessions will be audio recorded. The participant's ability will be evaluated and scored off-site, via the recording, by at least two qualified bilingual evaluators, one whose mother tongue

is English and one whose mother tongue is French. Neither evaluator can be the person who conducted the oral testing.

#### Aligning School Testing With Employment Testing

Currently, many graduates who achieve the Second Language Proficiency evaluation through the education system are finding that the level achieved is inadequate for the purposes of being hired in the public sector. Even those who achieve the highest level of proficiency in school testing may not meet the testing requirements for hiring or advancement in the public sector.

- The People's Alliance commits to a Second Language testing system which is on par with the testing requirements the province is demanding for the purpose of hiring and promotion.
- A framework will be developed to bring the two testing systems into alignment.

#### Cost estimate:

Zero cost to government

## Language Freedom for Private Industry

Signage, hiring, and all other language considerations will be decided by individual business entities. Further, legislation would be enacted to disallow any municipality from enacting laws that do the same. Any business owner will logically use the language best suited to serving their customers, otherwise their business would suffer and in many cases fail.

#### Cost estimate:

Zero cost to government

## Qualifications before Quotas

The focus of every department, every agency, and every manager in the public service should be the effective and efficient delivery of services, rather than the entrenchment of language quotas.

We believe that career-specific training and any required licensing in a particular field, along with the ability to speak one of the official languages, must be the sole determining factors to be eligible for employment in our public sector; no other criteria should be used to disqualify a person from being able to be hired. Bilingual ability should be a requirement only for those positions which require the consistent use of both official languages to perform the basic and routine functions of the job, such as our 911 dispatchers.

Once a person is hired, we believe that seniority hours should be the sole determining factor for advancement through the ranks of casual, part-time, and full-time status for every employee. No other factor should be used to disqualify an employee from advancement or movement within their career, or to disqualify employees from being called in to fill shifts. Neither should any other factor be used to disqualify an employee from advancement and movement within their field.

Any bilingual staffing targets should be based on the official language demographics of the area being served, and must be implemented from a 'ground-up' basis. That is, a bilingual employee will advance in the same way a unilingual employee does, with the accumulation of seniority hours. Any perceived shortfall in bilingual personnel

can easily be addressed through the implementation and use of technology, including real-time video chat with bilingual staff.

Cost estimate:

Zero cost to government.

## Bringing NB Into the 21st Century

Government departments and agencies must implement and take advantage of translation technology and real-time translation services. Technology is improving at a rapid pace, and wireless communications enable instant access to literally hundreds of languages, including our two official languages. The cost of using technology rather than strict hiring quotas is a substantially more efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and would also allow us to better serve those whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. This approach is successfully used across North America, and must not be ignored in New Brunswick.

As an example, Ontario's health system currently serves 177 different languages, with access to those languages available immediately. It is an efficient, stable, and reasonable approach, which could be quickly and easily be implemented province-wide in NB, across all departments, sectors, and regions. It also eliminates the current NB approach of discriminating, by disqualifying them from working equally in the public sector, against our citizens who speak only one of the official languages. It would have the added positive effect of better serving newcomers to our province who speak neither official language, making our province a more welcoming environment for immigrants.

Cost estimate:

We are willing to invest \$1 million dollars initially to put the technological infrastructure in place where it doesn't already exist.

## Language in Law Enforcement

If a person requests a specific language of law enforcement, whether an official language or not, the closest available translator will be immediately dispatched to the location. In cases where the language of choice is not an official language or a translator is not available, access to a translation device or translation service will be on hand and will be immediately accessible.

Cost estimate:

Zero for equipment costs because our law enforcement vehicles are already equipped with the necessary hardware.

## A Prescription for Common Sense: Our Vision for Healthcare

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## Health Administration

A People's Alliance government would merge the two Health Authorities, Horizon and Vitalite, as well as Facilicorp, into a single bilingual administration system serving all of New Brunswick's hospitals. This move will save an estimated \$60 million annually, at conservative figures, and will continue to provide administration services in both official languages to our medical institutions.

This move will reduce costs by eliminating dual positions and expenses in administration. It will not affect front-line staffing, the number or level of health services offered, or service in the language of choice for our citizens.

### Savings to Government:

Previous internal Liberal cabinet intelligence estimate the savings in the range of \$60 million annually.

Administration within the department of health has grown from 4.3% to 4.9% of the entire health budget between 2009-2012. In 2012, administration accounted for approximately \$155 million, which does not include dual office space costs.

## Eliminating the Mandatory Phase of the Prescription Drug Plan

The People's Alliance will continue to make the provincial prescription drug plan available to citizens on a voluntary basis. New Brunswickers have the option to sign on at the current rates until September 2015.

However, the People's Alliance of New Brunswick is committed to eliminating the controversial mandatory "Phase 2" of the Alward government's prescription drug plan. New Brunswick citizens and small businesses should not be forced to turn over more of their hard earned money to government.

### Cost estimate:

Costs for the plan are already accounted for in the current government operating budget. The plan is funded with government (taxpayer) money, combined with premiums from paying customers. The government has estimated its own cost for the plan to be \$27 million in the fiscal year 2014-2015. It was estimated by the Alward government that the plan will cost \$120-150 million annually in successive years. New Brunswickers have the option to sign on at the current rates until September 2015.

No additional cost to the government beyond what has already been disclosed.

## Catastrophic Drug Program

New Brunswick citizens require a catastrophic drug program that is in line with what is available across Canada. The People's Alliance pledges to bring forward a true catastrophic drug plan, which can be fully funded by the savings realized from merging the two health authorities.

### Cost estimate:

Savings from the merger of the two health care authorities will be used to create a catastrophic drug plan. No additional cost to the government budget to implement this priority.

## Community Wellness Initiatives: Proactive and Progressive Paramedicine

The People's Alliance of New Brunswick will make use of our paramedics in expanded community health initiatives. This will include a clinic approach in which paramedics can perform their scope of practice without the ambulance moving, and through pro-active community wellness initiatives. These strategies have been successfully implemented in many other jurisdictions, and have seen immediate and significant cost reductions in the health system.

### Cost estimate:

Zero cost to government.

## Commitment to the Extra-Mural Program

The New Brunswick Extra-Mural Program allows many citizens the ability to remain home and maintain an independent lifestyle when they might otherwise need to become residents of assisted living facilities or remain in hospital. The People's Alliance believes that an investment into this program in order to expand the availability and sustainability of the numerous services provided would result in a net reduction of health care costs through reduced re-admissions and reduced length of hospital stays.

As such, the People's Alliance would work with the stakeholders of the Extra-Mural program and the entire Health department in order to determine the necessary investments to maximize the program.

Cost estimate: Zero net cost to government.

## Strengthening Rural New Brunswick

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### Investing in New Brunswick's Agricultural Future

The People's Alliance is committed to healthy living through healthy eating, innovation and diversification, small business and to rural New Brunswick. With these ideals in mind, we present the following measures to create a sustainable agricultural industry for the future.

#### **Returning unused farmland to production:**

Small farms, defined as those that are partnerships or single proprietorships, would be allowed to have any unused farmland being returned to production exempted from property tax. To qualify, at least 50% (fifty percent) of income must be directly related to agriculture.

### Cost estimate:

The cost to government on this initiative would be near zero as the exemption would be offset by an increase in economic growth for our farmland through strengthened rural communities and the traditional family farm.

**Expedited Organic Certification:**

We believe in reducing and simplifying the process for certifying organic foods. Currently, the process is expensive, cumbersome and an impediment to producers. The People's Alliance would work with our federal counterparts towards making the process cheaper and easier to navigate; this would serve as a strong incentive to food producers and would encourage an increase in "Buy Local" organic goods.

Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government.

**Encourage the cultivation of non-traditional crops:**

A People's Alliance government would work with interested stakeholders to investigate the benefits of non-traditional crops such as hemp, including the potential commercial and other economic benefits. We believe in diversification and innovation by giving farmers the option of a new range of crops.

Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government.

**Promotion of "Buy Local" and local Farmers Markets:**

The People's Alliance would partner with stakeholders to jointly fund marketing aimed at promoting the use of local farmers markets. We believe that encouraging local residents and visitors to come to markets located in rural New Brunswick would strongly promote economic spin-offs to other businesses in those areas.

Cost estimate:

We commit \$300,000 to help promote "buy local" initiatives and Farmers Markets.

## Empowering Local Governance in Rural New Brunswick

Within the province of New Brunswick, all communities that do not fall under the Municipalities Act are governed by Local Service Districts (LSD) which have been established to represent rural New Brunswick. In this current framework the LSD's are accountable to the Minister of Environment and Local Government. Members of the communities within the boundaries of an LSD are eligible to stand for election to what are called "Advisory Committees". In practice, the role of the elected Advisory Committee members is to advise public servants, who then report to the Minister. The advisory committees report to their respective Regional Service Commission (RSC), of which the province is sectioned into 12 (Twelve). Currently within New Brunswick there are a number of areas that do not have elected advisory committees to represent the views of those living within the respective Local Service Districts.

The People's Alliance, in an effort to encourage rural New Brunswick to become involved in the direction and improvement of their various communities, would reform the "Local Service District Regulations – Municipalities Act" specifically for the following purposes:

- Allow Local Service Districts the ability to pass, with approval by plebiscite, bylaws governing their area of responsibility.
- Allow Local Service Districts the opportunity to access loans. This provision would be conditional on approval by plebiscite and only on the completion of a rural plan that clearly defines the goals and conditions being presented. This would end the current push by government and the Regional Service



Commissions to implement the formation of Rural Communities such as was proposed and rejected in Notre-Dame (Kent County), or amalgamations such as the recent “Grand Tracadie-Sheila”.

- Increase transparency by mandating that Local Service Districts provide minutes of meetings to the residents they are elected to represent.
- Increase accountability in the elected Advisory Committee by creating a framework to replace or remove a chairperson or member in a special session where each affected party can make their case. Residents of the LSD would vote to recall or retain the member in question.

Our party believes that these above changes would create an environment of meaningful, accountable and transparent governance for rural New Brunswick and would encourage renewed interest in the democratic process across the province.

Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government.

## Commitment to Renewable Energy

Our party believes that New Brunswick needs a realistic renewable energy policy moving forward. We must embrace and encourage new technologies and methods to generating power in a sustainable way. Government must lead by example to encourage the average homeowner to also do their part in the scope of our vision and beyond.

An important step in this direction involves providing residents who choose to produce their own energy the ability to sell their excess generated power back to the grid. This is an important way to encourage residents of New Brunswick to be environmentally conscious about our future as a province and encourage the growth of a renewable energy sector within the province. The People’s Alliance believes that the government should make every effort to employ renewable energy sources and energy efficient components in all facilities.

Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government.

## Property Owner’s Bill of Rights

The following proposals form the People’s Alliance policy on property rights. Four main aspects are dealt with in the sections below: enjoyment of property, resources of the property, privacy expectations and government expropriation of property.

Absent from this bill of rights are changes to mortgages, liens, and other financial matters dealing with property including inheritance. It is not the intention of this Bill of Rights to change law in these areas.

Finally, nothing in this policy document is intended to limit a government’s ability to enforce laws regarding unsafe or unsightly properties. It is well known that such properties can reduce the value of adjacent properties, thus infringing on the rights of those property owners.

### **Enjoyment of Property**

1. No individual, corporation, or government may infringe upon the normal use and enjoyment of property by the owner.
2. All items affixed to a property, such as trees or structures, fall under the prerogative of the property owner. Municipalities may require licences/permits to make changes to such affixed items, but may not disallow changes to such affixed items.
3. Municipalities will be barred from requesting building permits for non-living types of structures such as wood sheds, tool sheds, dog houses, etc.
4. Normal use is anything that does not infringe on other property owners rights or create unsafe conditions on the property.
5. Governments may not impose laws forbidding or limiting home based businesses that are non-intrusive and low traffic in nature. Examples of such businesses include home child care services, IT based businesses, bookkeeping, business consulting.

## **Resource rights**

1. Property owners shall have the right to exploit surface resources such as timber, agricultural products, etc. Rivers, streams, and standing bodies of water will continue to fall under the purview of the federal government
2. Property owners shall have the right to exploit sub-surface resources such as minerals and fossil fuels. Owners may opt to allow another entity to extract these resources, and would be eligible for resource royalties at market value. This would not exclude government from charging royalties for the same resource extraction. Damages caused by extraction activities to adjacent properties will be fully compensated for by the entity performing the extraction in a similar manner as point #3 below.
3. Property owners shall be fairly compensated, based on market values, for damage done to their property by third parties during resource extraction (surface or sub-surface), regardless of royalty arrangements. The entity performing the extraction would be liable for this compensation, unless they can prove damages were caused by other factors.

## **Expropriation of Private Property**

1. Government expropriation of private property shall only occur for specified purposes (i.e. highway construction). If the land is not used for the purpose specified, it shall revert to the original owner after a period of no longer than 6 years, at no cost to the original landowner.
2. Landowners shall be fully and fairly compensated for all full and partial land expropriations. This compensation shall consider future income and future appreciation of the property.
3. Government may not use expropriated land for any purpose other than that specified at the original expropriation.
4. No property owner shall be held liable for expropriated land due to environmental contamination, safety hazards, or any other direct detriment resulting from abandonment. All liability will continue to be that of the corporation/government unless otherwise accepted and signed off by the Property owner.

5. Companies shall perform full environmental remediation immediately following a project's conclusion and prior to expropriated land being returned to owner. Any roads built for the purpose of moving equipment will be dismantled and environmental remediation conducted, unless the property owner requests the road remain.

Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government.

## Natural Resources

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### No More Back Room Deals

The Development of our natural resources will play a key role in restoring the fiscal health of the province. In order to protect the environment and for the people of NB to obtain the maximum benefit from the economic activity associated with resource development we must end the practice of signing contracts behind closed doors. A People's Alliance government will introduce legislation to ensure:

- All contracts involving resource development that involve dollar figures greater than \$100,000 are made publicly available and posted online before they are signed.

Cost estimate: No additional cost to the Government.

### Forestry Ombudsman

Stakeholders in the forestry industry have voiced concerns that there is a lack of oversight in how the rules are implemented and followed in the harvesting of Crown timber.

As such, the People's Alliance would create an ombudsman position within the department of natural resources to work as a watchdog for all stakeholders in our Crown Forest from large industry to smaller mills down to private woodlot owners and nature-loving New Brunswickers.

This ombudsman would be able to investigate with the help of DNR enforcement officials to ensure that all New Brunswick mills are receiving their allocation of Crown wood, that mills are not improperly utilizing materials more beneficial to other mills, that private woodlot owners are receiving fair market value on a regional or national standard for their product and that harvesting practices on Crown Land are not detrimental to the environment such as over-sized clear-cuts or areas in close proximity to sensitive ecosystems such as wetlands and watersheds and specific wildlife habitat such as deer yards.

The office of the ombudsman would also work as a go-between for Crown Land sub-licensees when selling or trading their wood to another mill. Under the current system, the sub-licensed mill is required to inform the main Crown licence holder when they wish to sell or trade parts of their allocation to another mill. This can create a conflict of interest for the main licence holder. The use of the ombudsman in this circumstance would eliminate such conflict.

The ombudsman would also have the authority to levy fines and penalties against any mill or contractor that harvest on Crown Land should companies be found in non-compliance of any and all rules and regulations surrounding

wood harvesting operations.

These penalties could include monetary fines and the possibility of losing the Crown allocation.

Cost estimate:

A People's Alliance government commits \$200,000 per year for salary and expenses.

## Forestry

1. Elected People's Alliance MLA's will not allow companies to use Crown Land Wood, a provincial natural resource owned by the public, to be used as a weapon against private citizens who make their living off the land by using private woodlots.

There have been instances of companies claiming the need for a greater wood supply in the province to keep mills operating. Rather than allowing more cutting on Crown Land and jeopardizing the health of our provincial forests, the People's Alliance believes the necessary supply can be sourced from private woodlot owners and, as such, will insist that provincial mediators be allowed to oversee negotiations between private woodlot owners and companies to ensure that fair market values similar to other jurisdictions are reached, to the satisfaction of both sides.

2. The People's Alliance will not allow any forestry company to cut or purchase Crown land wood if that company is not also willing to deal with its local community-based forestry products marketing board and private woodlot owners association. A wood supply contract must be signed between the two sides, however, neither side has the right to hold out and extend negotiations unnecessarily for either extremely low or higher than fair market value. The forestry ombudsmen will enter the discussion as arbitrator in the event of a stalemate.
3. The People's Alliance will not permit a forestry company to have further access to Crown land wood supply should such a company that has a mill in the province for sale decline an offer and opt to keep the mill closed rather than sell because the interested buyer is looking to make the same or similar product. Companies fully retain the right to sell to who they want, but a company that would rather hold onto an idle mill than sell to a competitor that wants to create jobs will not continue to harvest on Crown Land to simply ship the wood out of province.
4. The natural Acadian Forest consists of 32 species of vegetation including sugar maple, yellow birch, beech, red oak, white pine, hemlock and red spruce. In recent times, as consumption of wood products has increased, this natural forest has dwindled. The People's Alliance would amend the Crown Lands and Forests Act by requiring all companies clear-cutting on Crown Land to set aside five per cent of the clear-cut area to be replanted in Acadian Forest type seedlings. The holder of the Crown land License will be responsible for the actual planting of the seedlings, as well as for covering all associated costs. The Licensee may potentially include the sub-licensees in sharing costs. Existing staff within the Department of Natural Resources will be required to inspect the planting sites to ensure the five per cent requirement is being met. Failure to meet the requirement will result in fines for non-compliance, and such fines will increase each time the same licensee fails to meet the standard for replanting. Depending on the circumstances, repeated or multiple instances of non-compliance may result in a suspension of the license to harvest.
5. The People's Alliance will seek to reduce the amount of aerial herbicide spraying on Crown land. Companies managing Crown land leases will be required to reduce aerial spraying of herbicides which are used to kill vegetation for commercial purposes. For example, some herbicides destroy hardwood species in order to increase growth of spruce and fir. We will push to reduce the aerial spray amount by 50 per cent by 2020, with an immediate reduction of 10 per cent required in the first year of a government mandate. Aerial

spraying of herbicides shall be phased out completely by 2030. In place of aerial spraying, Crown land license holders will be permitted to manage vegetation for commercial purposes through manual mechanization such as thinning saws and chain saws; this measure will increase jobs in the forestry sector for everyday New Brunswickers. Aerial spraying for destructive insects and vegetation diseases would still be permitted in severe circumstances.

#### Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government.

#### Potential for Revenue:

A CIBC report presented to the province identified that our Renewable Resources will cost us \$32 million dollars. In addition the current management strategy results in a loss of more than \$100 million annually.

Source: <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/nr-rn/pdf/en/ForestsCrownLands/DonRoberts.pdf>

## Shale Gas

The development of the shale gas industry may have the potential in the years ahead to be a source of significant economic activity and prosperity for the province. All extractive industries have the potential for environmental impacts on our air and water quality and this activity must be weighed against these potential environmental impacts. The timeline of development does not need to be rapid. A People's Alliance government would take a "cautious, responsible" approach to the industry. This will allow the debate to continue, for the science to progress and for the government to consult with the people. This election is not a referendum on shale gas.

Prior to significant development taking place we must ensure not only strict enforceable regulations are in place, but also regulations are properly monitored and the penalties for infractions are severe to ensure we protect our air and water quality. These regulations must stand up to real scientific scrutiny. Also, a long term economic development strategy detailing the use of expected royalty revenues and revenue due to increased economic activity must be developed. This economic activity must be cautiously approached, to ensure that New Brunswickers receive the maximize benefits available in terms of jobs and royalties from this resource.

Finally, in order for the industry to proceed the people of this province must be consulted. This is your resource and your environment. A People's Alliance government would not proceed with the development of a shale gas industry without a clear mandate from the people of New Brunswick.

The sections that follow detail how a People's Alliance government would proceed with strengthening the current regulations, protecting property rights, maximizing the financial benefit to New Brunswick and providing the opportunity for real consultation.

## Protection of the Environment

### Water Quality

Elected People's Alliance MLA's will push for the following environmental conditions to be required by the government in regards to water quality:

- Allow for the complete classification of the watersheds in the province.
- Expedite the classification of those complete watershed applications currently in the hands of the Minister of the Environment.

- Develop a comprehensive plan to deal with waste water disposal.
- Develop a comprehensive monitoring strategy that doesn't rely primarily on measurements from the industry.
- Ensure that full baseline testing of the water quality is complete before full scale production begins.
- Companies will be required to employ experts at each site to ensure proper lining of the bore hole, and to ensure that back pressure does not contaminate surface water.
- Support the scientific community in NB in developing technologies to prevent contamination of surface water.

## Air Quality

Elected People's Alliance MLA's will push for the following environmental conditions to be required by the government in regards to air quality:

- Develop a strategy to determine the baseline air quality before production begins.
- Develop a strategy to monitor methane release at the well sites during drilling and all phases of extraction.
- Support the scientific community in NB in developing technologies to monitor and mitigate methane release.

### Cost estimate:

The cost of these policies would be minimal since they can be implemented using the funding levels currently provided annually to the Department of Environment, the NB Energy Institute and the NB Innovation Foundation.

## Protecting Citizens and their Property

Extraction of hydrocarbons has the potential to be destructive to the property and livelihood of citizens who are living adjacent to extraction points. This is especially true of new extraction processes, such as hydraulic fracturing. In order to ensure that the rights of citizens are respected, the People's Alliance of New Brunswick commits to putting the province and its citizens first through several regulatory provisions.

- The rights of New Brunswick citizens and New Brunswick landowners take precedence over the rights of companies involved in natural gas exploration and extraction.

In practical terms, this means that landowners would have the right to deny exploration or drilling on property in which they reside or conduct business, and that such activities would not infringe upon landowners rights to use and enjoy their property.

- In the event of well contamination, companies will fully compensate land owners and small business owners. This could include purchasing the property at the full market value of the property, based on value prior to contamination, as well as compensation for lost income as a result of the contamination. The full burden of this compensation would be the responsibility of the company involved, rather than the Province of New Brunswick. If any company is found to continually cause damage, the province of New Brunswick reserves the right to suspend the offending company's license. This will help to ensure due diligence is practiced during natural gas extraction activities.

### Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government. All cost is borne by the industry

## Maximizing the Financial Benefit for the Province

Since natural gas is a non-renewable resource, it is up to this generation to ensure that the benefits reaped from its extraction are properly managed. Sound economic decisions can build a foundation of economic activity and stable government funding that will benefit not only the current generation, but future generations as well.

Other jurisdictions have managed the immediate and long-term economic benefits of carbon resources, providing us with good examples of how New Brunswick should approach this industry. A People's Alliance government will implement the following policies to ensure that the people of NB are the primary beneficiaries of shale gas development.

- Royalties be competitive with other jurisdictions.

The amount of royalties that any jurisdiction claims from natural resources varies over time, but the underlying principle is one of competitive rates that are fair to both the companies performing the extraction and the Province of New Brunswick. Fair royalties will be determined through our Royalty Review.

- 50% of all royalties be used for the purpose of retiring the Provincial debt, while the remaining 50% be used for the purpose of badly needed infrastructure upgrades, such as in Health, Education, Bridges and Highways/Roadways

We have seen other jurisdictions, domestic and international, use the revenues from non-renewable resources to finance government operations. A more disciplined approach would be to ensure a portion of the royalties always goes against long term debt. Of course, this should not exclude debt reduction from other sources, if available.

- New Brunswick citizens, or expatriates, should be given priority in the hiring for natural gas extraction activities whenever possible.

Any economic benefit to the Province of New Brunswick will be compounded if the majority of people employed in the extraction of natural gas in the province actually live in NB long term. Expertise from NB expatriates working in other provinces or countries has an added benefit of providing opportunity to work back in their home province.

- Companies performing the extraction of natural gas use supplies/services purchased from New Brunswick based companies where possible.

NB based companies are any company that is owned by New Brunswickers, or conducts the majority of their business in the province. These companies should be given preference in any purchasing of equipment or services by companies performing natural gas extraction. Only if no NB companies submit bids during tendering will extraction companies be able to use services of companies outside NB.

### Cost estimate:

There is zero net cost to the government budget.

## Consultation through a General Referendum

Once the framework that has been prescribed above has been developed the people of this province will be consulted through a general referendum. The people will decide whether they believe it is in our best interest to proceed with the shale gas industry. This referendum would be during municipal elections to help offset the cost.

Cost estimate:

As referendums would be done at the same time as scheduled municipal or provincial elections, the only real cost would be for consultation with a legal professional on properly framing the referendum question.

## New Brunswick Potash

The potash industry plays an important role in the economy of the province. Optimism continues to grow as the industry continues to make further investment in the province and expands its operations. The People's Alliance will continue to support industry development, and work for the people of New Brunswick to ensure that job growth and adequate royalties are received from such a valuable natural resource.

Cost estimate:

Zero net cost to government

## Democratic Reform

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The People's Alliance of New Brunswick is committed to democratic reform. This would be achieved through several strong initiatives:

### Recall Legislation

The party would enact MLA recall legislation similar to existing legislation which the province of British Columbia has had in place since 1995.

The first step in the process would be the collection of signatures from 15% of eligible voters in the target riding. After those signatures are collected, they must be given to the Chief Electoral Officer of New Brunswick, who would approve the request to proceed with a recall vote. The resulting recall vote would be held in conjunction with a scheduled municipal vote. If 45% of eligible voters from the target riding vote in favor, the recall will be enforced.

The People's Alliance believes that measures such as MLA recall are key to bringing a democratic environment back to New Brunswick.

Cost estimate: Cost would be as needed.

### Citizen's initiated Referendum

The People's Alliance will enact a citizen-initiated referendum act, also similar to existing legislation in the province of British Columbia. In order to trigger a referendum, the proposed question will require signatures from at least 15% of all registered voters from each riding throughout the province. Approval of a referendum question would require a 50% +1 approval from eligible voters, with no less than 60% of eligible voters casting a ballot.



The referendum itself would be held in conjunction with the closest municipal or provincial election, and the results would be binding on government.

Cost estimate: Cost on an as needed basis.

## MLA salary and Pension Reform

The People's Alliance believes in leading by example, including our calls for efficiency and fiscal accountability. As such, the People's Alliance will implement the following changes:

### Reduction in the Size of Government

A People's Alliance government would reduce the size of the government executive by decreasing the number of Cabinet positions from the current eighteen (18) in the Progressive Conservative government to no more than fifteen (15), thereby seeing immediate cost savings.

### Reduction in MLA Salaries

A People's Alliance government would also reduce MLA salaries. Backbencher Members of the Legislative Assembly are currently paid \$85,000; however, salaries for other positions can vary, from \$104,750 for the Opposition House Leader to \$164,000 for Premier. The average annual salary for an MLA is \$111,107, which is \$65,107 and 142% higher than that of an average, employed and unattached male of working age.\*\*

The People's Alliance firmly believes that these numbers need to be reduced, given the shape of our provincial finances. As such, we are proposing to enact the following salary reductions in addition to decreasing the size of the government executive.

- Backbencher Members of the Legislative Assembly are currently paid \$85,000; a People's Alliance government will reduce that to \$70,000, saving \$15,000 per backbencher.
- Premier:  
Current Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$164,000  
Proposed Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$120,000. Savings: \$44,000. (\$15,000 from the base salary, and \$29,000 from the additional salary)
- Leader of the Opposition:  
Current Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$140,300  
Proposed Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$100,000, Savings: \$ 40,300. (\$15,000 from the base salary and \$25,300 from the additional salary)
- Minister and Speaker,  
Current Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$137,614  
Proposed Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$95,000, Savings: \$42,614. (\$15,000 from the base salary and \$25,300 from the additional salary)
- Deputy Speaker, Government Whip and Government House Leader  
Current Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$111,307  
Proposed Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$85,000 Savings: \$ 26,307 ((\$15,000 from the base salary and \$11,307 from the additional salary)

- Opposition Whip and Opposition House Leader  
Current Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$104,750  
Third Party Leader  
Current Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$104,730  
(Opposition Whip / House Leader/third party leader) - Proposed Combined MLA and Additional Salary: \$80,000, Savings: \$24,730 and \$24,750. (\$15,000 from the base salary for all three, and \$9,750 for the Opp. Whip/Opp. House Leader and \$9,730 from Third party leader from the additional salary )

The current cost for government, consisting of 49 MLAs and 18 Cabinet Ministers, is \$5,259,545. The total cost for 49 MLAs, 15 Ministers, and all related MLA positions under a People's Alliance government would be \$3,975,000, saving \$1,284,545 per year.

Further, under a People's Alliance government, future annual increases or decreases to the MLA base salary would be determined by the previous year's rate of wage growth in the province of New Brunswick.

Savings estimate calculation:

Estimated savings of proposed People's Alliance reforms for next government  
(compared to current Legislature make up)

|  |               |                |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Members of the Legislative Assembly Base salary                          | 49 x \$15,000 | \$735,000.00   |
| Premier (additonal)  | 1 x \$29,000  | \$29,000.00    |
| Opposition Leader  | 1 x \$25,300  | \$25,300.00    |
| Ministers and Speaker (additonal)  | 16 x \$27,614 | \$441,824.00   |
| Deputy Speaker, Gov't Whip, Gov't House leader (additonal)               | 3 x \$11,307  | \$33,921.00    |
| Third Party Leader, Opposition Whip, Opposition House leader (additonal) | 2 x \$9,750   | \$19,500.00    |
| Total: (savings)   |               | \$1,284,545.00 |

**Total Cost of current Alward Government and Opposition with 55 MLAs  
\$5,874,773**

**Total cost of Government after reducing MLAs to 49 for 2014 election  
\$5,259,545**

**Total Cost of a People's Alliance Government and Opposition  
\$3,975,000\***

*\*pertaining to salaries, compared to current Legislature makeup under 49 MLAs*  
*Savings = \$1,284,545*

## MLA Pension Reform

Currently, taxpayers contribute to the MLA pension plan at a rate that exceeds even the most generous private sector plans. Furthermore, an MLA can draw the pension after serving just two terms in the Legislature. The People's Alliance believes these conditions are unacceptable.

A People's Alliance government would replace the current MLA pension plan with an RRSP style plan for members. It would also reduce taxpayer contributions by implementing a dollar-for-dollar matching contribution comparable to plans available in the private sector; every dollar the MLA contributes to the plan, to a maximum of 5% of the MLA's gross salary, would be matched by the employer (the taxpayer).

## Transparency in Expense Reports

As part of our overall policy of bringing transparency to government, the People's Alliance would enact the following changes in regards to expense reports for MLAs:

- Members of the Legislative Assembly will be required to maintain detailed travel logs clearly indicating the distance traveled and the reason for the expense claim.
- The People's Alliance would eliminate all non-receiptable expense claims.
- A transparent expense claims history of all MLAs will be available for the general public to view online.

## Transparency in Attendance Accountability for MLAs

Our commitment to transparency includes the MLA's attendance in the Legislature. Currently, there are no attendance records kept when the Legislature is in session, and there is no way for citizens to know if their representatives are actually showing up to the Legislature to represent the people.

A People's Alliance government would institute the following accountability measures:

- When the Legislature is in session, attendance records would be kept for all MLAs.
- Attendance records for every MLA would be posted online at the end of every month when the Legislature is in session.

\*\* Page 3; 2010 Canadian Taxpayers Association Report on New Brunswick MLA pensions, salaries and expenses. Page 7 used for salary figures.

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- <sup>i</sup> [http://www.fnbfa.ca/images/UdeM\\_2014-2015\\_budget\\_and\\_the\\_appointment\\_of\\_a\\_v-p.pdf](http://www.fnbfa.ca/images/UdeM_2014-2015_budget_and_the_appointment_of_a_v-p.pdf), page 1;  
[http://www.mta.ca/uploadedFiles/Community/Administrative\\_departments/Financial\\_Services/Financial\\_reports/Budget/MTA\\_budget\\_14-15.pdf](http://www.mta.ca/uploadedFiles/Community/Administrative_departments/Financial_Services/Financial_reports/Budget/MTA_budget_14-15.pdf), page 6;  
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- <sup>ii</sup> [http://w3.stu.ca/stu/administrative/vp\\_financial/documents/St.ThomasUniversityBudgetSummaryReportandSchedules201415.pdf](http://w3.stu.ca/stu/administrative/vp_financial/documents/St.ThomasUniversityBudgetSummaryReportandSchedules201415.pdf), page 8.