

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING On Climate Change

Between  
THE UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MUNICIPALITIES  
And  
THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

**WHEREAS:** The Province is responsible for the implementation of the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* and the *Climate Change Action Plan*; and

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) is responsible for provincial/municipal relations; and

Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) is the provincial body responsible initiating and coordinating action on climate change;

**AND WHEREAS:** The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) represents the provincial interests of municipalities in Nova Scotia;

**AND WHEREAS:** The Parties share a common understanding that climate change is unequivocal; that actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build adaptive capacity in Nova Scotia are essential; and that the Parties can benefit from a more coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing common climate change challenges and opportunities.

**THEREFORE,** the purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to outline the terms and conditions upon which the Parties agree to work together to address the challenges and opportunities of climate change.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles set out in this MOU form the basis of the relationship between UNSM and the Province with respect to climate change. The principles serve as statements of intention between the Parties regarding climate change however this MOU is not intended to create legal or binding obligations.

### 1. The basis for cooperation rests on the common understandings that:

- 1.1. Acting on climate change is a priority of the Parties;
- 1.2. Climate change is unequivocal and human activity is the primary cause;

- 1.3. The impacts of a changing climate are already being observed in Nova Scotia;
- 1.4. The Parties recognize that failure to address climate change will result in significant long-term environmental, economic and social consequences.
- 1.5. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and enhancing the capacity of all Parties to adapt to new climate trends (adaptation) will have economic, health and environmental benefits for individuals, families, municipalities and the province;
- 1.6. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change may require significant up-front resources from all Parties but may also generate new economic opportunities and savings over the long-term; and
- 1.7. Immediate and collaborative action is needed by the Parties in order to meet provincial and municipal climate change commitments.

**2. The Parties acknowledge that each has an important role to play:**

- 2.1. The Province will continue to implement the commitments made in the Nova Scotia Climate Change Action Plan (2009), in the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (2007)* and continue to work with the New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers committees.
- 2.2. Municipalities will continue to take action on climate change impacts through direct actions including policy development, land-use planning initiatives, emission reductions, the development and implementation of Integrated Community Sustainability Plans and through the initiatives of the UNSM Municipal Sustainability Office.

**3. The Parties share the common goals of:**

- 3.1. Encouraging stronger inter-governmental and inter-municipal cooperation on the subject of climate change;
- 3.2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- 3.3. Enhancing capacity to adapt to and increase resilience to climate change impacts;
- 3.4. Identifying and removing legislative, regulatory, policy or other barriers to mitigating and adapting to climate change; and
- 3.5. Implementing programs, policies, or legislative actions, within their respective jurisdictions, that facilitate reduced greenhouse gas emissions and enhance adaptation capabilities and actions, where appropriate.

## **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

The Parties agree to establish a provincial-municipal coordinating committee on climate change to oversee the establishment and implementation of goals and targets for municipal-provincial cooperation on climate change. The coordinating committee will comprise at least one representative from each of SNSMR, NSE, and the UNSM or as otherwise agreed to by the Parties. This committee will be established within one (1) month of the signing of this MOU.

The coordinating body will report, at a minimum, on a yearly basis to:

- The Provincial/Municipal (UNSM) Roundtable;
- The Ministers of SNSMR and Environment; and
- The UNSM Board of Directors and its members.

## **COMMITMENTS**

Upon signing of the MOU, the Parties, via the work of the coordinating committee, commit to the actions outlined in Appendix A. The coordinating committee will:

- Establish an implementation plan for the commitments within 6 months of signing of this MOU;
- Report annually on the progress made with respect to the commitments; and
- Make any recommendations regarding changes to the commitments and the implementation plan.

## **REVIEW OF THE MOU**

The Parties will review the MOU within one year of its adoption and annually thereafter, unless all Parties agree otherwise, to ensure its relevance and appropriateness, to maintain a common understanding of its meaning, and to monitor progress towards the achievement of the deliverables and goals and commitments set out herein.


## **OVERSIGHT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE MOU**

Oversight with respect to this MOU rests jointly with the President of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and the Minister of Nova Scotia Environment. The lead contacts for ongoing administration and action related to the MOU are the UNSM's Sustainability Coordinator, the Director of Nova Scotia Environment's Climate Change Directorate and the Executive Director of the Municipal Services Division, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.


**COMMITMENT**

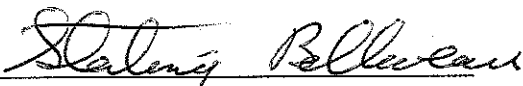
The Parties are signing this Memorandum of Understanding on the **6th** day of November, 2009.

**SIGNED** on behalf of the **PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA** by:

  
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Ramona Jennex, Minister  
Service Nova Scotia and Municipal  
Relations

**SIGNED** on behalf of the **UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MUNICIPALITIES** by:

  
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Warden Lloyd Jones, President  
Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

  
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Sterling Belliveau, Minister  
Nova Scotia Environment

## APPENDIX A: ACTION ITEMS

### EXISTING COMMITMENTS

The Parties recognize that actions have already been initiated with respect to climate change. Where applicable, reference to the action item in *Towards a Greener Future: Nova Scotia's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP)* is provided.

The Parties hereby confirm their intention to commit to the following actions:

EXISTING COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY(IES)*	ASSOCIATED ACTION FROM CCAP**
1. Using funds from the federal Gas Tax Agreement, continue to fund UNSM's Sustainability Coordinator.	SNSMR	Action 45
2. Work cooperatively to amend Gas Tax Agreements with municipalities by 2010 to require climate change strategies in municipal Integrated Community Sustainability Plans.	SNSMR & UNSM	Action 48
3. Through the ecoNova Scotia Municipal Program, invest \$7.5 million in municipally led projects that will result in greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions reductions until March 31, 2011.	NSE ( <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/econoNovaScotia">www.gov.ns.ca/econoNovaScotia</a> )	
4. Continue to support municipal anti-idling initiatives including the development of a model anti-idling by-law and municipal best practices guide.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM	
5. Using funds from the federal Gas Tax Agreement, provide funding in 2009 to help municipal governments plan for climate change.	SNSMR & NSE	Action 46
6. UNSM and pilot municipalities*** will work with the Province and project partners to achieve the adaptation goals of the Atlantic Adaptation Collaborative. This includes producing flood risk, erosion and sedimentation maps under different climate scenarios and using those scenarios to develop appropriate adaptation policy and planning in the designated vulnerable coastal and inland areas of this study.	NSE, UNSM, Municipal Pilot Coordinators (a representative from the pilot communities)	Action 59

<p>7. The Province will develop a web-based clearinghouse of information and tools to support adaptation to climate change in Nova Scotia in 2009. The Province will work with the UNSM and staff within select municipalities to ensure the database meets the needs of local municipal planners, engineers and emergency management personnel.</p>	SNSMR & NSE	Action 57
<p>8. Create a climate change Adaptation<sup>1</sup> Fund within Nova Scotia Environment to encourage adaptation research and development starting in 2009. Municipalities will be eligible to apply for funding to advance adaptation research and policy planning in their own municipalities</p>	SNSMR & NSE	Action 53
<p>9. The Province will develop, in consultation with municipalities, Provincial Statements of Interest on adaptation by 2010.</p>	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM	Action 54
<p>10. Every two years the Province will conduct a vulnerability assessment of Nova Scotia to climate change. This will provide municipalities with critical information on local climate impacts and help identify information gaps, adaptation barriers and policy priorities.</p>	NSE	

\* SNSMR- Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, NSE- Nova Scotia Environment, UNSM- Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

\*\* CCAP- Climate Change Action Plan, Province of Nova Scotia

\*\*\*Pilot municipalities include: Halifax Regional Municipality, Municipality of the County of Cumberland, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, Municipality of the District of West Hants, Municipality of the County of Kings, Municipality of the District of Yarmouth, Town of Hantsport, Town of Oxford, Town of Amherst, Town of Wolfville, Town of Windsor, Town of Kentville, and Town of Yarmouth.

<sup>1</sup> Climate change adaptation refers to the recognition that changes in our climate are already occurring, and Nova Scotia must prepare for their impacts by adapting current policies and infrastructure to better cope.

### NEW COMMITMENTS

The Parties recognize that substantial effort is needed by all Nova Scotians to address the challenges and realize the opportunities presented by climate change.

The Parties hereby confirm their intention to commit to the following new actions:

NEW COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY(IES)*
1. Conduct a policy scan to determine changes to regulations, legislation, policy or other activities that may be required to enable municipalities to meet climate change goals/targets by 2012.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
2. Identify funding opportunities to help municipalities reach their climate change goals/targets and promote these resources via a central 'clearing house' by 2011.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
3. Share information and explore additional opportunities to support climate change mitigation and adaptation at the municipal level and promote these resources via a central 'clearing house' by 2011.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
4. Work with Nova Scotia municipalities to complete a municipal corporate inventory of greenhouse gas emissions using UNSM's Corporate Energy & Emissions Inventory Toolkit, with the goal to have all municipalities complete their inventory by 2011.	NSE & UNSM
5. Research climate change action plans and develop a model that outlines best practices in greenhouse gas reduction measures for Nova Scotia municipalities.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
6. Work with Nova Scotia municipalities to develop climate change action plans to meet corporate greenhouse gas emissions targets, with the goal that all municipalities have plans completed by 2013. This plan will include recommendations and initiatives such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishment of corporate greenhouse gas emissions targets;</li> <li>b. Increase the overall energy efficiency of municipal operations by 20% over 2008 levels by 2020; (Action 4 from CCAP**);</li> <li>c. Adopt environmental building standards for new municipal buildings and retrofits (such as LEED Silver, BOMA BEST); or: Require that all new government-owned buildings achieve LEED Silver Certification after 2010 and be carbon neutral after 2020;</li> <li>d. Require that climate change impacts are considered in the design/construction of new buildings (Action 37 from CCAP);</li> <li>e. Develop and adopt a sustainable procurement policy by 2012 (Action 44 from CCAP);</li> <li>f. Develop land use planning documents (i.e. compact, mixed use development, etc) to encourage sustainable transportation, and mitigate against future climate impacts (Action 19 from CCAP); and</li> <li>g. Commit to purchase or lease vehicles that are in the top 20% of their class for energy efficiency by 2010; (Action 42 from CCAP).</li> </ol>	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM

NEW COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY (IES)*
7. Continue to develop model renewable energy by-laws that provide clarity for development and encourage municipalities to adopt them, where applicable, by 2011.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
8. Develop a best practices document that focuses on the impacts of sea-level rise and its implications for land-use planning and the design of waste water treatment plants.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
9. Develop an education and awareness program by 2011 through UNSM's Municipal Sustainability Office to build local government's capacity to plan and implement climate change initiatives	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
10. Cooperate in the research, development and execution of a provincial Sustainable Transportation Strategy.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
11. Establish adaptation goals and targets for municipalities (such as coastal mapping for sea-level rise and storm surges) and incorporate results in planning strategies by 2012.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
12. Identify one or more new Statements of Provincial Interest relating to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation to be incorporated into the MGA by 2011.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM
13. Establish a municipal "Climate Change Leaders" program to recognize Nova Scotia municipalities that demonstrate leadership through early action on climate change.	SNSMR, NSE & UNSM

\* SNSMR- Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, NSE- Nova Scotia Environment, UNSM- Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities