



THE PREMIER
Halifax, Nova Scotia

September 14, 2021

Honourable Jill Balsler
Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration

Dear Minister Balsler,

Thank you for agreeing to serve Nova Scotians as Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

Governing is about people. On August 17th, 2021, we were given a mandate by Nova Scotians to activate solutions. They responded to our platform, *Solutions for Nova Scotians*, and its vision for our Province. Nova Scotians share the hope you and I have for our beautiful province and its potential.

A brighter future starts with a shared belief in what our province can do. A belief in each other. A belief in our communities. A belief in fellow Nova Scotians. We can put Nova Scotians on the path to financial sustainability and fix healthcare. We can support our traditional industries and build an environment plan that fights climate change. We can make our province a magnet for doctors, students, new residents, investors and tourists alike, and remain proud of our traditions and our heritage.

Fixing healthcare and rebuilding our economy is not for the faint of heart. It will require strong leadership and a willingness to take bold action. Working together, we can get the job done.

The success of all Nova Scotians and improvement of their health, access to health care and quality of life will be our collective success.

We have committed to listen to and respect all Nova Scotians. We have also committed to lead a government which represents all Nova Scotians and is reflective of the modern societal makeup of Nova Scotia, inclusive and respectful of all demographic, cultural and ethnic diversities to advance our collective growth and prosperity.

You have been chosen for Cabinet because of your track record and capabilities as a problem solver, as a “solutionist,” as someone who gets things done and is not deterred by complexity. You are a known collaborator who will work with your colleagues on solutions that need all the capabilities of the Government and the public service pulling in the same direction.

As Minister, your leadership and your team will play a critical role in contributing to the commitments we have made and to providing solutions. You are responsible for the conduct of the department(s) you oversee and

must be aware of and adhere to the public service's *Code of Conduct and Respectful Workplace Policy* in your interactions with the public service. Most importantly, you are part of a team of solutionists who share a common vision and commitment to *Solutions for Nova Scotians*.

As Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration you will:

- Within the first 90 days of your mandate, prepare a timeline for completion of all tasks below over the next four years. The initial timelines are to be updated quarterly thereafter.
- Work with businesses, the community college and the labour sector to modernize our apprenticeship programs.
- Set a goal of a population of 2,000,000 by 2060 by attracting on average 25,000 people per year working with partners across the province in pursuit of this goal.
- Target a minimum of 10,000 to 15,000 new migrants each year from across Canada with 1) an introduction to NS with a powerful promotional campaign; 2) ensuring the job opportunities are available for them and/or the opportunities and business climate is attractive for them to start and grow their businesses here.
- Achieve our population target through a combination of migration from other parts of Canada and a strategic immigration plan including a targeted advertisement campaign.
- Encourage moves to areas outside of Halifax that have been experiencing a decline.
- Focus on attracting key groups and attracting them to rural areas of our province:
 - Individuals who can work remotely and have flexibility to move.
 - People who grew up in Nova Scotia and would now consider moving home.
 - Current and former students who attend or attended university or college here and fell in love with the province.
 - Individuals who love the outdoors and have always dreamed of living a more laid back lifestyle, close to the ocean.
 - People who have visited Nova Scotia as tourists.
- Implement, within six months of forming government, an initial marketing program shared between costs of production and direct media buys.
- Attract a mix of entrepreneurs and youth to all parts of our province.
- Advance an immigration and population growth policy that is bold, decentralized and is focused on immigration and population growth as an economic development tool and a fiscal opportunity.
- Work with the Federal government to establish a provincial immigration program that is fair and allows Nova Scotia to grow at an equitable rate as compared to other provinces.
- Establish (or grow) regional Immigration offices.
- Negotiate for an increase in our federal immigration numbers – proposing 1.5% of our population, which could add 15,000 individuals per year.
- Work with the Federal government to establish a regional nominee program for Nova Scotia.

As Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration, you will also support your Ministerial colleagues as they execute their responsibilities. In particular, you will support:

- The Minister of Health and Wellness, Minister responsible for Mental Health and Addictions, and Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care in Health Human Resource recruitment efforts.

- The Minister of Economic Development as they actively encourage innovative, sustainable and green businesses to establish or relocate to the province and provide access to financing for innovative, sustainable and green business start ups.
- The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to ensure that all students at the junior high level receive a presentation before entering High School on options for taking a skilled trade and what training and labour opportunities are available for them with that skill.
- The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to increase opportunities for students to begin learning a trade in high school.
- The Minister of Finance and Treasury Board to implement More Opportunities for Skilled Trades (MOST). No provincial personal income tax on the first \$50,000 of earnings for anyone working in the construction industry who is under the age of 30.
- The Minister of Health and Wellness as they develop the Clinical Health Services Plan.
- The Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care to reinstate the CCA training grant that was cancelled in 2013.
- The Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services to ensure that a component of the tender application will consider whether bidders employ and participate in apprenticeships with students.

As we progress through our mandate, we will work together to identify further refinement and priorities of focus.

Within the first six months, and as part of your Department's mandate, you will work with me and other Departments in reviewing the role and effectiveness of Agencies, Offices and Crown Corporations with a goal of ensuring the most efficient and accountable methodology for the undertaking of their respective tasks.

We have a clear mandate and the vision and the determination to take decisive action to solve problems for people by giving them hope for health, universal mental health care, dignity for our seniors and a new opportunity for aging well. We will invest in our future. We will build a Nova Scotia with more people, more jobs, better jobs and more housing and infrastructure for people. We will do this with an overriding commitment to sustainable prosperity, establishing Nova Scotia as a world leader.

We will overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving the incredible opportunities within our reach to improve the well-being and quality of life every Nova Scotian deserves.

I look forward to working with you to improve the lives of all the people of Nova Scotia and change the course of our Province now and for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Honourable, Tim Houston, M.L.A.
Premier of Nova Scotia

Copy to: Ava Czapalay, Deputy Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration
Nicole Johnson Morrison, Associate Deputy Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration