

**NOVA SCOTIA ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR**

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

**FOR THE**

**FISCAL YEAR 2006-07**

**December 2007**

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## 1. **Accountability Statement**

The accountability report of Nova Scotia Environment and Labour for the year ended March 31, 2007, is prepared pursuant to the *Provincial Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against Nova Scotia Environment and Labour's business plan information for the fiscal year 2006-07. The reporting of department outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements and opinions by department management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of department management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department business plan for the year.

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Minister

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Deputy Minister

## 2. Message from the Minister

I'm pleased to provide you with highlights of our achievements for the fiscal year 2006-07 through our latest Accountability Report.

Together with our many partners, Environment and Labour staff work to protect and promote:

- the safety of people and property;
- a healthy environment;
- employment rights;
- and consumer interests and public confidence in pension services, and in the alcohol and gaming sectors,

by providing a regulatory regime which is effective, sustainable, and supportive of Nova Scotia's economic viability and competitiveness.

The department made commitments in each of these areas of responsibility in its Business Plan for the last fiscal year, which ended on March 31, 2007. I'm pleased to say the department has achieved or made significant progress on all of them.

The department's approach to regulation is reflected in its many commitments. The goal is to help businesses and the Nova Scotia economy flourish while protecting the things that are important to Nova Scotians, including public health and safety, a clean environment and a safe workplace. Environment and Labour's commitment to working better together is reflected in the collaborative approaches taken on broad, cross-cutting issues such as drinking water, the green plan and the newly introduced Bill 146, and workplace safety. On these, and other such issues, the department recognizes that integrated action is key to achieving real progress.

I believe in the importance of accountability to Nova Scotians, and I believe this report shows that their investment has been well spent.

Sincerely,

Honourable Mark Parent  
Minister of Environment and Labour

### 3. Introduction

This Accountability Report provides information on Nova Scotia Environment and Labour (NSEL)'s performance in relation to the goals, priorities, performance targets, and budget expenditure targets presented in its 2006-07 business plan.

During 2006-07, NSEL continued to promote safe and health workplaces and practices, and safe facilities and equipment. A number of supporting activities, education campaigns, consultations and partnerships resulted in notable progress in the Workplace Safety and Insurance System. Successes are reflected by 140,000 fewer days lost to injury and an improved return to work rate. Additionally, public consultation was conducted on violence in the workplace, moving us closer to a comprehensive Workplace Violence Strategy.

The Department continues to champion sustainable management and protection of the environment, natural areas and public health through various activities including the introduction of Bill 146, *the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*. This bill consists of twenty-one specific goals that embody two overarching objectives: having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by 2020; and improving our economic performance to a level that is equal to or above the Canadian average by 2020.

Promotion of employment standards, fair processes for wage compensation, effective labour-management relations, fairness for injured workers and protecting the interests of pension plan members remains a top priority for the department. Among other progresses, on October 1, 2006, the *Trade Union Act* was successfully amended to create new processes that provide access to justice for unions, union members, and employers.

In 2006-07, the Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative Strategy was developed in support of continuous improvement of our regulatory system and good regulatory practice. The strategy vision is for the department to be a leader in regulatory excellence within Nova Scotia and across Canada. This has included choosing and designing quality tools, making it easier for business to achieve compliance, improving compliance with our regulatory programs, and continuously improvement of our regulatory programs.

The Department's Human Resources Strategy continues to build capacity to meet future needs, create a climate that promotes growth and development and a work environment that is safe, supportive and diverse. The launch of initiatives such Recognition, Healthy Workplaces, Diversity, and French Language Services strives to help the department reach its mandates, employees realize their potential, and government to better serve the public.

In February, 2006 responsibility for the *Insurance Act* and *Securities Act* was transferred from NSEL to the Department of Finance and responsibility for credit unions and trust and loan companies was transferred to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

More detailed information on the results achieved by NSEL in 2006-07 can be found in:

- Section 4 of the report which outlines the results achieved in each of NSEL's core business areas:
  - ▶ Public Safety and Occupational Health and Safety
  - ▶ Environmental Protection and Natural Areas Management
  - ▶ Employment Standards, Workers' Advisers, Labour Services and Pensions
  - ▶ Alcohol, Gaming, Theatre and Amusements Regulation
  - ▶ Support for Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunal
  - ▶ Competitive and Compliance Initiative
  - ▶ Developing our People
- Section 5 of the report which summarizes the financial results achieved in NSEL for 2006-07; and
- Section 6 of the report which presents the results achieved for the performance measures established for each of NSEL's core business areas.

NSEL's 2006-07 business plan is available on our website at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/pubs/docs/NSELBusinessPlan07.pdf>. If you wish to receive a printed copy of the business plan, please contact the Policy Division at 902-424-4944.

## 4. Department Progress and Accomplishments

**Core Business Area 1: Public Safety and Occupational Health and Safety**  
**Priority: Promote safe and healthy workplaces and practices, and safe facilities and equipment.**

*Improve the overall safety of Nova Scotia workers through an integrated workplace safety strategy that combines: effective initiatives on accident prevention and education developed and implemented collaboratively with Workplace Safety Insurance System (WSIS) and other partners; improved compliance with existing laws and regulations; and ongoing development and refinement of occupational health and safety regulatory and non-regulatory instruments focussing on priority issues such as compliance with the elements of the internal responsibility system and violence in the workplace.*

- Stakeholder groups developed key indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Workplace Safety and Insurance System. Notable statistics indicating its success include: 140,000 fewer days lost to injury, a reduction of 13% from the previous year; a 7% drop in the total injury rate; and improved return to work rate led to savings of \$4.5 million in short-term disability payments.
- Some of the key activities carried out included:
  - ▶ employer workshops, prepared and delivered jointly by agency partners;
  - ▶ two social marketing campaigns - one targeted to young workers and the other to the general public;
  - ▶ a discussion document was released in December 2006 on the prevention of workplace violence with public consultation taking place in March 2007 in conjunction with a conference;
  - ▶ continued to implement the multi-year plan for regulation review to address significant health and safety risks;
  - ▶ multiple releases of a new service delivery channel that provides employers with on-line access to claims data, assessment payments, and business tools;
  - ▶ health care partnerships;
  - ▶ fruitful stakeholder consultation sessions, which contributed to the updating of the System Strategic Plan.

*Regulatory management initiatives will include: working with the Department of Energy to ensure that Occupational Health and Safety inspectors have the authority and tools needed to regulate occupational health and safety in liquified natural gas plants; implementing an effective regulatory regime for underground coal mining, through consultation and collaboration with the Labour Program of Human Resources and Social Development Canada; amendments to the General Blasting Regulation, in consultation with the Department of Education to transfer blaster certification to Education and reduce unnecessary overlapping permitting requirements.*

- A draft regulation has been reviewed with involved departments and the industry participants to ensure that OH&S Safety inspectors have the authority to regulate

occupational health and safety in liquified natural gas plants. Progress will continue into 2007-08.

- Consultation was conducted with Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Canada Salt, Xstrata Coal and the NS Federation of Labour, toward updating and upgrading the Underground Mining Regulations and finalizing administrative arrangements to provide the most effective regulatory regime for underground mines, including the proposed new Donkin coal mine.
- Consultation was conducted with the Department of Education and all certified blasters, with the goal of updating and upgrading the regulations regarding handling explosives, including the creation of an improved certification system for those who handle explosives and the elimination of a redundant magazine license.

***Improve public safety by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of regulatory programs related to equipment safety by updating legislation. In 2006-07 this will include a review of the Steam Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act and the Crane Operators and Power Engineers Act, including identifying opportunities for legislative streamlining to reflect technology change and improve consistency by enabling the adoption of standard tools such as a common compliance model.***

- In January 2007, changes to the Crane Operators Regulation took effect. The new regulation allows operators to qualify for certification faster and adopts the most current national standards.
- The Power Engineers Regulations were amended in 2007 to address stakeholders concerns about impediments to effective operations while not compromising safety.
- The Fuel Safety Regulations were changed in October 2006 to make them easier to interpret, to address safe management of more fuels and ensure their currency.

***Work with the fire service, municipalities and fire training community to improve access to training and support for fire protection services across the province.***

- Enhancements to the volunteer fire system in 2006-07 improved on-the-job safety for firefighters and a well-prepared fire service for Nova Scotians and included:
  - ▶ long-service and bravery medals recognized in legislation
  - ▶ a grant of \$12,500 to the Fire Service Association to assist its work in presenting a series of training programs on the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters
  - ▶ and an annual grant of \$190,000 to fund the training programs of the NS Firefighters School in Waverley was awarded.

## **Core Business Area 2: Environmental and Public Health Protection and Natural Areas Management**

**Priority: Promote sustainable management and protection of the environment, natural areas and of public health**

***NSEL will continue to lead implementation and ongoing development of the Province's Green Plan by building upon commitments in each of the four pillar areas of the Green Plan.***

- Bill 146, the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, was introduced on March 22, 2007. This piece of legislation builds on the foundation established by the original Green Plan and Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity. It marks the beginning of an important new phase in government's commitment to become leaders in the clean and green economy. The Act sets out 21 specific, measurable goals that government must report on annually. They include a 35 per cent greenhouse gas reduction, protecting 12 per cent of our land mass, to ensuring that at least 18.5 per cent of our electricity comes from renewable sources.
- There are also two overarching objectives: having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by the year 2020; and improving our economic performance to a level that is equal to or above the Canadian average by the same year.
- The Deputy Ministers Forum on Sustainable Prosperity has been formed and, led by Economic Development and Environment and Labour, will help guide the implementation of the Act.

***Leading by Example - apply best practices for pollution prevention, green procurement, and sustainable transportation to departmental operations; communicate best practices to companies and other departments in order to help them become more environmentally and economically sustainable.***

- Worked with provincial government departments (Nova Scotia Economic Development, Nova Scotia Energy, Nova Scotia Communications, Nova Scotia Transportation and Public Works) to promote government-wide green procurement initiatives including vehicle policy, greening of information technology and communications, printing and publication, and general office supplies.
- Consulted with the janitorial business sector and catering sector for guidance in developing specifications and guidance for greening government initiatives.
- Promoted pollution prevention approaches to ready mix business association and development of best practices guide for aggregate removal operations.
- Provided support for the continuation of the Eco-Efficiency Business Assistance Program for small and medium sized businesses.

***Sustainable Communities - increase opportunities for stakeholder engagement on a variety of environmental issues, including air management, watershed management and brownfield re-development; through partnership with stakeholders and the Department of Natural Resources continue to work towards a comprehensive system of protected areas for Nova Scotia; work with other departments to enforce and implement provisions of the Off Highway Vehicles Act (OHV) to protect environmentally sensitive sites.***

- The Environmental Home Assessment Program (EHAP) saw great strides in this initial startup year with partnerships being established, educational materials developed and procedures and criteria being created which all resulted in the program's public introduction on October, 2006. Four environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGO's) were contracted to provide the 400 home assessments to rural Nova Scotians all of which were completed.
- Provided support for academic studies to enhance knowledge of air quality issues in the province which will lead to science-informed policy development.

- In April 2006, a science forum was conducted on brownfield redevelopment. The forum provided an opportunity for participants to expand their knowledge of brownfield redevelopment challenges and opportunities.
- Continued implementation of the Drinking Water Strategy and the Inter-Departmental Drinking Water Management Committee completed its review of the next steps required to effectively manage all water resources in Nova Scotia. Recommendations for developing a more comprehensive water resource management strategy to deal with a broader range of water quality and quantity issues were approved by Cabinet in March 2007.
- NSEL has initiated a process to develop a comprehensive system of protected areas for Nova Scotia. The initial step, underway since July 2006, includes working with Nova Scotia Natural Resources and partners through the Colin Stewart Forest Forum (CSFF) on identifying high priority areas for potential protection using science and best practices in protected area planning. The CSFF is also looking at creative ways to mitigate impacts of new protected areas on wood supply for the forest industry.
- In July 2006 the government designated five properties under the Special Places Act as Nature Reserves. In March 2007, the province acquired 10,050 ha of land from Bowater Mersey and committed to conserve 100% of the land. Also in March 2007, the government acquired four private land in holdings in existing Wilderness Areas for protection.
- In partnership with DNR, compliance efforts were increased related to OHV use in wilderness and protected areas.

***Human Health and Environmental Quality - support development of a Canada-wide strategy for managing municipal wastewater effluent, and develop best management practices for biosolids and operation of septage lagoons; work with industry and the public to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide, mercury and nitrogen oxide in accordance with the Energy Strategy and national and international agreements; improve Nova Scotia's hazardous waste program in order to enhance environmental protection; build upon the success of the Drinking Water Strategy by addressing a broader range of water quality and water quantity issues, including increasing our water monitoring, reporting and decision making capacity; work with communities to help Nova Scotians become more aware of the need for monitoring and maintenance of their individual water and waste water systems.***

- Supported the development of a draft Canada-wide strategy for managing municipal wastewater effluent and held eight stakeholder consultation sessions across the province. It is anticipated the strategy will be completed in the spring of 2008.
- Established a Stakeholder Advisory Committee and a Science Committee (representatives from academia, research and various levels of government) to review the existing biosolids guidelines with the goal of improving our biosolids measurement regime.
- In July 2006, NSEL hired an Airshed Planner who will have the responsibility to engage stakeholders in discussions related to airshed management.
- Continued to work with federal government and other provincial jurisdictions to develop national standards in air pollutant measurement methodologies.
- Conducted a pilot study on the development of an Air Quality Health Index.
- Water monitoring, reporting, and decision-making capacity was increased by adding ten new wells to our groundwater observation well network and one new automated

station to our surface water monitoring network. A Groundwater Observation Well Network web page was also launched which provides quarterly reporting to the public on groundwater levels across the province.

***Sustainable Growth - streamline hazardous waste program by reducing jurisdictional duplication and providing greater flexibility and predictability for business so that they can comply with regulations; support the environmental economy by helping to increase the export capacity of firms involved in environmental planning and management; implement a program for recycling waste electronics and promote their use in development of new products; streamline the process to get an approval for on-site sewage disposal systems while increasing the number of field inspections conducted.***

- Continued to review evolving hazardous waste programs in other jurisdictions to ensure compatibility and improve compliance.
- Electronic Waste Regulations were developed and approved in February 2007.
- New government wide computer procurement standards were adopted.
- The first electronic stewardship agreement is under consideration for approval.
- Reduced the On-Site Sewage Disposal System approval turnover time to less than a third of the average times calculated in 2005.
- Implemented a new auditing process which resulted in the decrease in the number of detailed application reviews by a third.

### **Core Business Area 3: Employment Standards, Workers' Advisers, Labour Services and Pensions**

**Priority: Promote employment standards, fair processes for wage compensation, effective labour-management relations, fairness for injured workers and protect the interests of pension plan members.**

***Continue to work with the Canadian Association of Pension Supervisory Authorities (CAPSA) on development of model pension law; revise reciprocal agreement between pension regulators; and improve access to knowledge with the release of a Pension Guide.***

- The Department continues to work with CAPSA to achieve greater uniformity in pension regulation; the reciprocal agreement between pension regulators was revised; and a Pension Guide was released.
- A program was implemented to unlock pension funds due to financial hardship.
- The Pension Benefits Regulations were temporarily amended to permit universities and municipalities to establish different targets or funding.

***Maintain existing service response times for conciliation requests as required by the Trade Union Act; continue to offer Preventative Mediation Programs to promote harmonious labour management relations; and create infrastructure to implement and manage amendments to the Trade Union Act related to "expedited arbitration" and the "duty of fair representation".***

- On October 1, 2006, the *Trade Union Act* was successfully amended. As a result, new processes were implemented that provide access to justice for unions, union members,

and employers.

- Duty of Fair Representation complainants are now able to file complaints directly with the Labour Relations Board as opposed to proceeding through the court system.
- Expedited arbitration will deal with lengthy time delays in proceeding to arbitration and obtaining a binding award.
- The Arbitration Advisory Committee was also established to advise the Minister on arbitration selection and on matters related to arbitration in the province. This committee has equal representation from employers and trade unions as well as a neutral chair.

***Continue to improve labour standards service delivery response times; implement year two of the divisional compliance strategy with a focus on awareness; implement “Gas and Dash” legislation; and continue to support the work of the Minimum Wage Review Committee.***

- Labour standards service delivery response times were reduced by > 40%.
- Year two of the compliance strategy resulted in an increase in audits of employers and an increased emphasis on awareness including education, advertising, and website updates.
- In July 2006, the Labour Standards Code was amended to establish rules around cases of “Gas and Dash”.

***Maintain existing service levels to injured workers and participate in initiatives of the strategic plan for the Workplace Safety and Insurance System (WSIS) which relate to the Workers’ Advisers Program.***

- Service delivery levels were maintained during 2006-07.
- Workers’ Advisers Program is a continued participant of the WSIS Committee which is made up of the Workers Compensation Board, Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal, OH&S and Workers’ Advisers Program. The goal of this committee is to improve the system-wide appeals process.

**Core Business Area 4: Alcohol, Gaming, and Theatre and Amusement Regulation  
Priority: Protect the public interest with respect to gaming, sale of liquor, operations of theatres and amusements, and distribution of film products in Nova Scotia.**

***Modernize the Liquor Regulations to make them more relevant to industry and consumer demand. Assist the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation in the review of new initiatives to improve the charitable sector’s fund raising capabilities within the Province. Strengthen the working relationship with the Utility Review Board in the delivery of our programs. Within the mandate provided by the Gaming Strategy, oversee the completion of a socio-economic study on gambling.***

- Discussions with all stakeholders were conducted with the goal of significant modification to the Liquor Licensing Regulations early in the 2007-08 fiscal year.
- The Alcohol and Gaming Division and Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation held presentations with various licensees throughout the province regarding initiatives to

promote and enhance charitable fund raising activities. Additional presentations are planned for 2007-08.

- Quarterly meetings are held by senior management of the Utility and Review Board and the Alcohol & Gaming Division to discuss common issues affecting both organizations.
- A contract was awarded to Anielski Management Inc. to conduct the socio-economic study on gaming; work is scheduled to commence May 1, 2007.

**Core Business Area 5: Supporting Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals**  
**Priority: To assist the more than twenty-two agencies, boards, commissions and tribunals established pursuant to legislation administered by NSEL, to fulfill their statutory mandates.**

*Ensure that appointments to these entities are carried out in accordance with provincial procedural standards and with applicable statutory and operational requirements; providing resources to implement Board policy and procedures; and participating effectively in inter-jurisdictional discussions related to policy and programs within the domain of these entities. A list of the departments agencies, boards, commissions and tribunals is included in Appendix B.*

- Three boards (Nova Scotia Insurance Review Board, Nova Scotia Securities Commission and the Credit Union Deposit Insurance Corporation) were transferred to the Department of Finance.
- The creation and implementation of the Arbitration Advisory Committee required the appointments of a Chair and six members. The implementation of the Duty of Fair Representation, the Labour Relations Board, increased its size to include three additional Alternate Vice-Chairs and an equal number of Labour and Management Members. We also witnessed the repealing of the Fuel Safety Regulations, NS Reg. No. 120-99 which caused the revocation of the Fuel Safety Advisory Board and its members, and the implementation of new Fuel Safety Regulations with the creation of the Fuel Safety Board of Examination and the appointments of three members.
- Approximately 90 appointments were made using the Adjudicative and Non-Adjudicative Appointment Protocols, ensuring the boards were able to continue with their legislated mandate. The department ensured these appointments were made in accordance with the governments' diversity and regional representation requirements, and provided the necessary administrative support for these appointments to occur in a timely manner.

**Core Business Area: Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative**  
**Priority: To promote continuous improvement in the quality, coherence and effectiveness of the department's regulatory systems in protecting the public interest and in supporting sustainable economic competitiveness.**

*Implement a regulatory policy framework to improve the quality of our regulatory tools, strengthen the consistency and effectiveness of regulatory program performance, establish*

***a departmental compliance framework and provide meaningful evaluation and measurement tools to enable continuous improvement.***

- In 2006 Environment and Labour developed and began to implement its Regulatory Management Policy. The policy sets out a consistent approach and guiding principles for department staff so they can consider how best to tackle a regulatory problem when regulation is one of a number of possible solutions.
- Building on the existing Environmental Compliance Model, the department has developed a framework that offers a consistent approach to achieving compliance across our department.

***Encourage compliance promotion initiatives to improve awareness of regulatory requirements and increase the ability of business to comply with regulatory/ non-regulatory protection objectives.***

- In the past year, Environment and Labour reduced its paperwork burden for business by 4.5% since last year and has made a number of changes to regulatory programs in order to make compliance easier for business, including streamlining and increasing public health and environmental protections for on-site septic systems. The department has also begun developing Compliance Promotions Strategies, such as in the Labour Standards Division where they recognize that lack of awareness is the greatest barrier to compliance and are therefore increasing emphasis on helping employers and employees to get information about their rights and responsibilities under the Labour Standards Code.

***Implement a multi-year science strategy which ensures that the best available science is reflected in the work of the department, and that science is readily available to staff and external stakeholder groups.***

- The department hosted Science Forums on Water Resource Management, Violence in the Workplace, and the Internal Responsibility System. The Science Forums facilitated the exchange of knowledge with stakeholders and the public in order to build our mutual capacity and awareness on the science behind the issues.
- Environment and Labour also made access to external science expertise easier by broadening the consulting services standing offer.

***Implement a multi-year regulatory learning strategy to ensure staff have the specialized skills and training – in such areas as inspections, investigations, enforcement, regulatory policy (including impact assessment and regulatory instrument selection), priority science, community and stakeholder relations and client service – to develop and deliver quality regulatory programs.***

- The department delivered professional training for inspectorate staff in 2006. Inspectorates now have access to the knowledge and tools they need to identify opportunities for increasing compliance and improved service, which ensures protections for Nova Scotians.
- Training was also delivered on how to implement the Regulatory Management Policy and Procedures. The training included guidance on how to use the policy and

procedures and a session on awareness of the various policy tools that are available for solving problems.

***Improve activity tracking systems (ATS) by enabling electronic access to client records by inspectors in order to improve the quality and timeliness of client interactions. In 06-07 this work will focus on the Occupational Health and Safety division but will later expand to other inspection divisions.***

- The Activity Tracking System was implemented in the Occupational Health and Safety division in 2006-07. The improved data and reporting capability will allow the department to target the inspections and activities for those areas that have the greatest risk.

**Core Business Area: Developing our People**

**Priority: To manage and build the department's human resources capacity to meet future needs.**

***NSEL's Human Resources Strategy will help build capacity of our people to fulfil our regulatory and advisory responsibilities and contribute to the Provincial economy. This year's initiatives include development of a learning strategy including specialized regulatory training; recognition of outstanding individual and team performance; succession and career management; promoting a healthy workplace and work/life balance; ongoing workforce planning and development; diversity management; contingency planning; and French language services.***

NSEL completed its first year of the Human Resource Initiatives which included:

- The Senior Management Human Resource Advisory Committee was established to ensure that strategies and processes aimed at achieving our human resource goals are developed and achieved.
- In 2006, a Recognition Initiative Committee was established to develop strategies which will provide formal and informal recognition programs and create a culture of recognition. The Recognition Initiative was launched with the development of a formal program for the Minister's Award of Excellence.
- Career Planning Implementation included workshops in Career Development Planning and Career Coaching and a Talent Review Process was completed for staff that completed Career Development Plans identifying critical roles and development needs.
- The Healthy Workplaces Committee was established in April 2006 to develop and initiate programs that represent the needs of employees and the Provincial Health Workplace Program. There was a launch of the Healthy Workplace Initiative during National Healthy Workplaces Week in October 2006 and included nutritional seminars, stress management lunch and learns, blood pressure clinics, hiking and walking activities, and bike safety seminars.
- The Diversity Initiative was launched through the Department Diversity Forum in March 2007. The objective of the forum was to provide staff with an opportunity to better understand the concept of diversity and identify activities that would enable the department to meet its goals. A Diversity Work Team was established to move

NSEL's diversity initiative forward.

- Continued to implement that French Language Service Initiative by: continuing to participate on French-language Service Coordinating Committee to coordinate the Department response to the French Language Services Initiative; established a departmental French Languages Services Committee to develop and implement a French Language Services Plan; undertook French language capacity surveys to assess departmental ability to provide French language services and identified staff interested in acquiring French language training scheduled to begin in April 2007; provided presentation to staff on the French Languages Services Act to increase awareness, support, understanding, and promote interest and involvement; and translated a number of key documents and added a French component to several public consultation processes.

## 5. Financial Results

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour's 2006-07 expenses and staffing levels are summarized below.

<b>Nova Scotia Environment and Labour Budget and Actual Expenses</b>		
<b>Program and Service Area</b>	<b>Estimate 2006-07 (\$ thousands)</b>	<b>Actual 2006-07 (\$ thousands)</b>
<b>Ordinary Revenues</b>	\$7,063	\$8,025
<b>Gross Expenses</b>	\$46,843	\$28,391
<b>Net Program Expenses</b>	\$30,064	\$28,391
<b>Salary and Employee Benefits</b>	\$31,915	\$29,904
<b>TCA - Capital Purchases</b>	\$1,025	\$837
<b>Provincially Funded Staff (FTEs)</b>	469.1	426.0

## 6. Performance Measures

### **Core Business Area 1: Public Safety and Occupational Health and Safety**

#### **The Outcome: A safe work environment**

A safe work environment is a desired outcome within the department's core business area of public safety and occupational health and safety. The department works with employers and employees to promote compliance with a legislative framework that reflects current workplace standards. Creating safe working environments, minimizes workplace hazards and risk. In turn, this reduces the likelihood of accidents resulting in workers' compensation claims.

Three measures are used to track progress toward this outcome. The first tracks targeted inspections for which an occupational health and safety (OHS) order is not issued. The number of Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) claims and duration claims due to injury provide the basis for the remaining measures under this outcome.

#### **The Measure:**

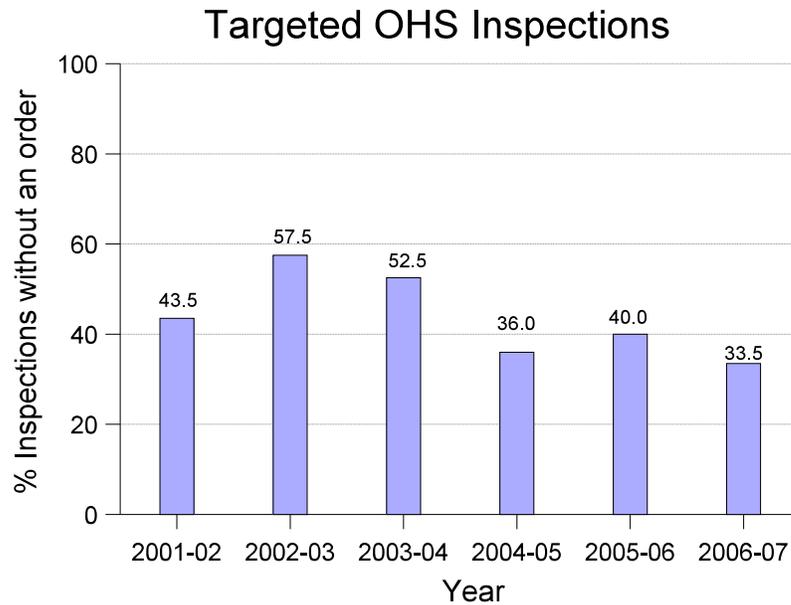
*Annual percentage of targeted inspections where an occupational health and safety order is not issued.*

#### **What Does the Measure Tell Us?**

Workplace inspections provide an important tool to promote compliance with the legislative framework. A targeted inspection system has been established in which firms that have higher accident frequencies are identified and inspection of these firms is given priority over general inspections. If a workplace does not comply with OHS legislation, an officer can issue a compliance order. Tracking the total number of targeted inspections where an order is *not* issued provides an indication of the level of compliance with OHS legislation in these firms. From this measure the department can monitor trends in compliance levels over time.

#### **Where Are We Now?**

In 2006-07, the percentage of targeted inspections that did *not* result in an order being issued, decreased to 33.5 per cent, down from the 40 per cent reported in 2005-06. This finding demonstrates that the basis of our targeting program, higher accident frequencies, are associated with firms that are not complying with current occupational health and safety laws. The finding also supports that the division's targeting practices are bringing officers to workplaces which are most in need of regulator intervention.



#### **Where Do We Want To Be?**

The department's target is to increase the percentage of targeted inspections where no order is issued from the 2001-02 base year measure of 43.5 per cent. This will be achieved by ongoing compliance promotion and education of clients relative to the OHS requirements.

#### **The Measure:**

*Annual average number of new registered Workers' Compensation Board loss time claims per hundred estimated WCB registered employees, compared to the national average.*

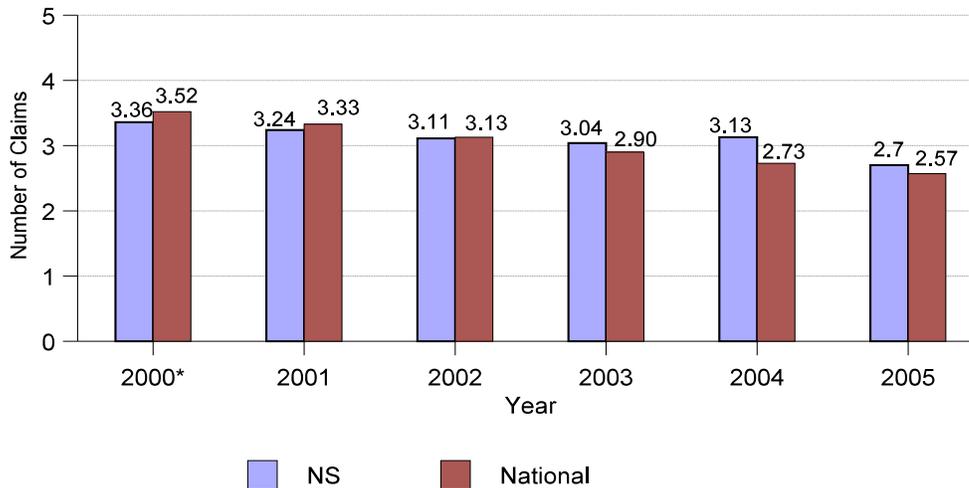
#### **What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

The average number of registered WCB loss time claims per hundred employees is indicative of the number of workplace injuries occurring in the workforce covered by WCB. This is calculated based on the Injury Frequency measure used by the Association of Workers' Compensation Board of Canada, as reported for all jurisdictions across Canada. The measure allows government to monitor trends, compare to national averages, and set targets for reductions in accidents. The measure for Nova Scotia is compared to the national measure for Injury Frequency.

#### **Where Are We Now?**

The most recent available data for Nova Scotia (2005) indicates an average of 3.03 claims per 100 estimated employees. This is slightly higher than the national average of 2.57. Although the trend indicates fewer claims over time, the rate of reduction at the national level is at a faster pace than that within the province.

## # Registered WCB Claims per 100 registered employees



(\*Rates are reported for calendar year, rather than fiscal).

### Where Do We Want To Be?

The Department's ongoing target is to be at or below the national average. From 2000 to 2002 this target was met. The number of claims in Nova Scotia in 2005 was 2.7 per 100 employees, which was slightly higher than the national average of 2.57. We will strive to reduce the number of claims by working closely with the Workers' Compensation Board to identify high accident firms and sectors and frequent types of accidents, and to use this information to target compliance promotion activities and inspections more effectively.

### The Measure:

*Average five-year composite duration of Workers' Compensation lost-time claim compared to the Atlantic Canada average.*

### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

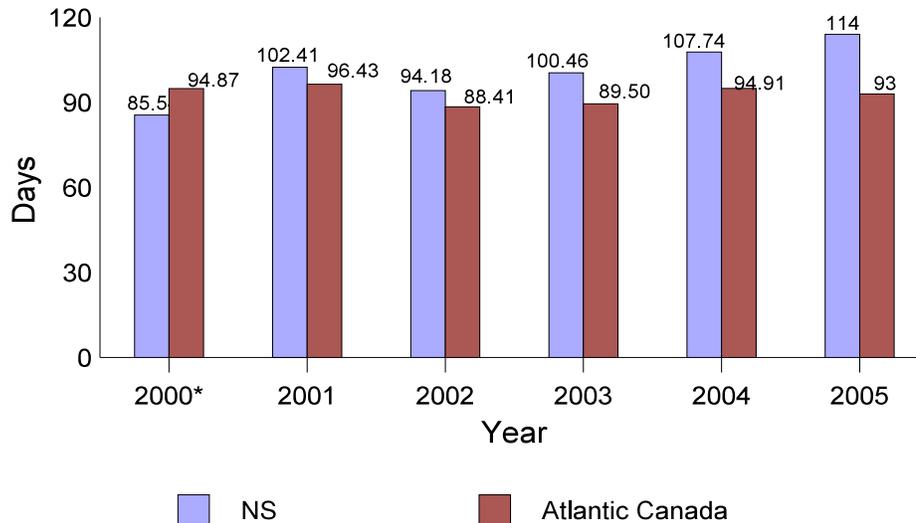
This is calculated using the Average Composite Duration of Claim measure, as reported by the Association of Workers' Compensation Board of Canada for all jurisdictions across Canada. Measuring the average duration of loss claims receiving benefits over a five year period helps to indicate the severity of injuries occurring in the workplace. Usually, the longer a worker receives benefits, the more severe the injury. Other factors may influence this measure, however, such as shifts in healthcare policies and practices.

### Where Are We Now?

In 2005, the average number of compensable days in this category in Nova Scotia was 114 days. The Atlantic Canada average for the same period was 93.0 days. This is consistent with the performance of last year.

## WC Lost-Time Claims

Average 5-yr composite duration



(\*Rates are reported for calendar year, rather than fiscal).

### Where Do We Want To Be?

Together with the WCB and other WSIS partners, the department's target is to have the average five year composite duration of lost-time claims in Nova Scotia below the Atlantic Canada average. The department will continue to work closely with the WCB to identify high accident firms and sectors and frequent types of accidents, and to use this information to target compliance promotion activities and inspections more effectively.

### The Outcome: Safe public places

Safe public places is a desired outcome within the department's core business area of public safety and occupational health and safety. Elevators and escalators represent one area of risk to public safety. The department addresses this risk through regulations and inspection processes.

### The Measure:

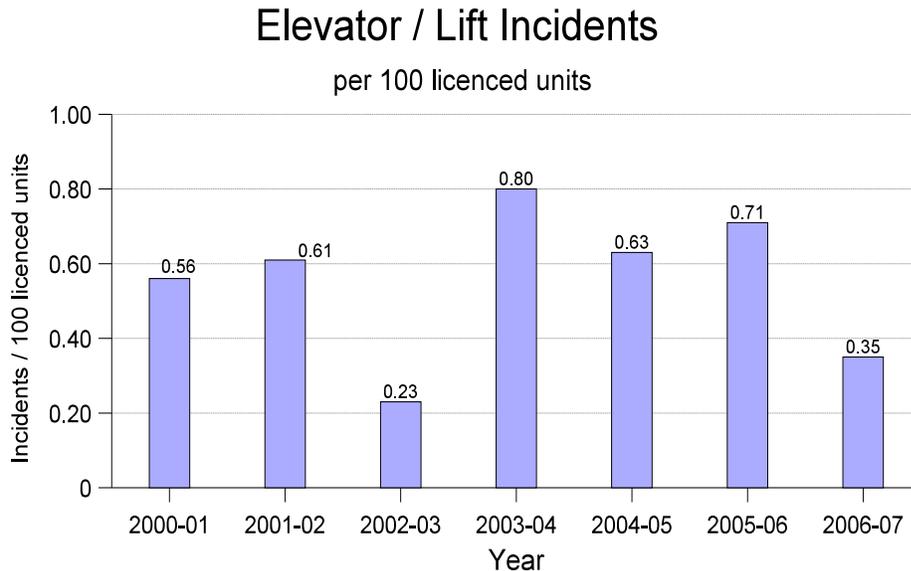
*Annual number of incidents reported involving injury from elevators and lifts per 100 units licensed in the province.*

### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

Any incidents (involving injury) that occur relating to elevators and lifts are required to be reported to the Chief Elevator Inspector. By tracking the number of incidents that occur each year on elevators and lifts, the department is able to measure the effectiveness of the safety system in place for these devices, monitor trends, and tailor inspection and enforcement initiatives appropriately.

### Where Are We Now?

In 2006-07, there were 0.35 incidents reported per 100 licensed units. This means that incidents involving injury occurred in less than 1 per cent of the licenced units. This represents a decrease from the 2000-01 base year measure of 0.56 incidents per 100 licenced units.



### Where Do We Want to Be?

The department's target is to keep the number of elevator and lift incidents at or below the base year number of 0.56 incidents per 100 licenced units. The department will continue to achieve this target by ongoing consultation with the industry, inspections and enforcement of the *Elevator and Lift Act* and regulations.

## Core Business Area 2: Environmental and Public Health Protection and Natural Areas Management

### The Outcome: Clean and safe drinking water

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour (NSEL) is committed to sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural areas. A desired outcome in meeting this commitment is clean and safe drinking water.

### The Measure:

*Percentage of population served by municipal water supplies that receives water meeting the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality, as stated in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality, at all times during the calendar year.*

### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

Approximately 60 per cent of Nova Scotians obtain their drinking water from municipal water supplies. Health Canada, together with provincial health and environment ministries, has established the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*. This document specifies the

health-based criteria for a number of parameters, including bacteria content. NSEL tracks the proportion of people serviced by municipal water supplies who have access to drinking water meeting the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality. This measure helps to provide an overall picture of access to quality drinking water. It also helps to gauge the effectiveness of *NSEL Guidelines for Monitoring Public Drinking Water Supplies* and the *Water and Wastewater Facilities and Public Drinking Water Supplies Regulations*.

### **Where Are We Now?**

NSEL's boil water advisory database provides a tracking system for municipal water quality based on the health-based criteria for coliform bacteria (in the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*). In 2006-07, 98.7 per cent of the population served by municipal water supplies received water meeting the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality at all times during the calendar year. This is comparable to 2005-06 results and shows improvement over the results obtained in the previous four years (2001-02 - 96.5 per cent; 2002-03 - 96.5 per cent; 2003-04 - 95.7 per cent; 2004-05 - 98.4 per cent; 2005-06 - 98.0 per cent; 2006-07 - 98.7 per cent).

### **Where Do We Want To Be?**

Our on-going target is to maximize the percentage of population served by municipal water supplies that meet the health-based criteria for bacteriological quality. NSEL is contributing to this outcome by implementing Nova Scotia's drinking water strategy, supporting development of municipal water supply protection plans, and enforcing the *Water and Wastewater Facilities and Public Drinking Water Supplies Regulations*, including *NSEL Guidelines for Monitoring Public Water Supplies*.

### **The Outcome: Clean air**

Clean air is an essential component of a healthy environment as well as human health. Many contaminants affect Nova Scotia's air quality and the department works actively to reduce them. Measuring the air emissions of sulphur dioxide, mercury, and nitrogen oxides helps to track the progress made toward this outcome, as described below.

### **The Measure:**

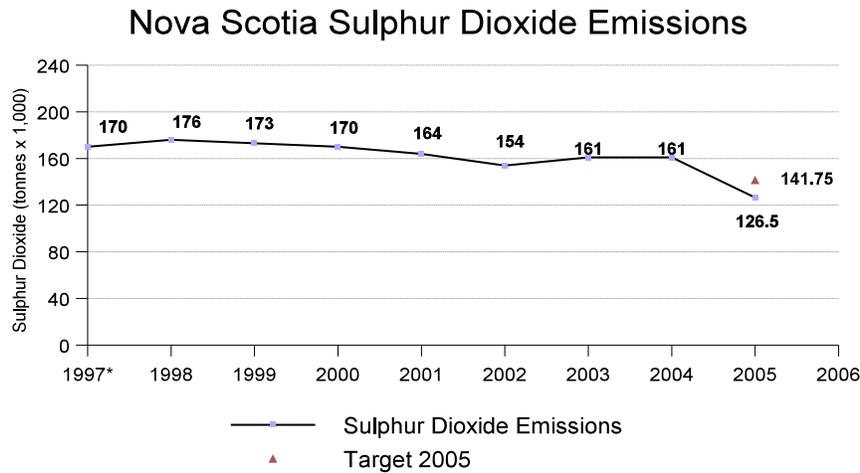
*Annual total sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) air emissions (tonnes) in the province.*

### **What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) is a major contributor to acid rain and smog, and can have significant effects on human health if concentrations are elevated. Improved air quality is therefore partly dependent upon reduction in SO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Through reductions in SO<sub>2</sub> emissions, we are effectively working toward our clean air outcome.

### **Where Are We Now?**

Sulphur dioxide emissions have fluctuated over the past five years (see graph below). In 2004, approximately 161,000 tonnes of SO<sub>2</sub> were emitted in the province, primarily through electricity generation. In 2005, this was lowered to 126,500 tonnes as a result of the amended *Air Quality Regulations*. This is below the target of 141,750 tonnes.



(\*Rates are reported for calendar year, rather than fiscal).

#### Where Do We Want To Be?

The *Air Quality Regulations* were amended in March of 2005 and included a lowering of the provincial SO<sub>2</sub> emission cap to 141,750 tonnes per year. Bill 146, the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, has established a target of reducing the sulphur dioxide emissions by fifty per cent of the 2001 levels, by the year 2010. Reductions will be accomplished by working with major industries and establishing a requirement to reduce SO<sub>2</sub> emissions through the use of lower sulphur fuels and process upgrades.

#### The Measure:

*Annual total mercury (Hg) air emissions (kg) from electrical power generation in the province.*

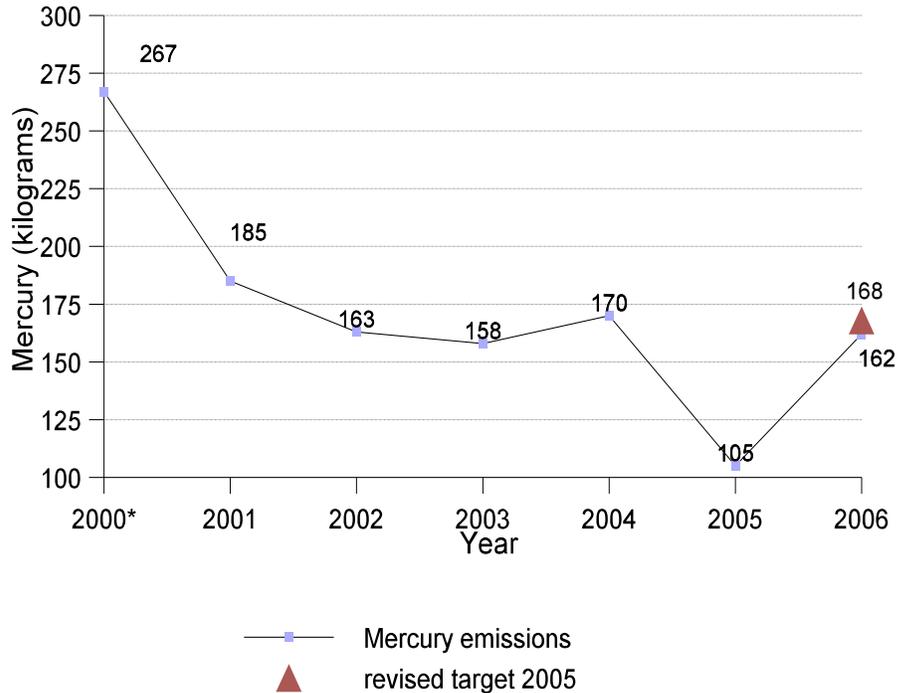
#### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

In Nova Scotia mercury emissions are produced primarily by thermal electrical power generation. Mercury has serious effects on both human and environmental health. Through reductions in total mercury emissions, we are effectively working toward our clean air outcome.

#### Where Are We Now?

Nova Scotia's electrical power generation sources emitted approximately 170 kg of mercury in 2004. In 2005, this was lowered to 105 kg. In 2006, it is estimated emissions will increase to 162 kg of mercury but remains beneath the regulated cap. This increase is attributed to Hurricane Juan which required Nova Scotia Power to obtain additional coal supplies which were of lesser quality. Emissions are significantly less than the baseline measure of 267 kg in the year 2000 (see graph below).

## Nova Scotia Mercury Emissions



Source: Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, National Pollutant Release Inventory; Data for 2005 is estimated

(\*Rates are reported for calendar year, rather than fiscal).

### Where Do We Want To Be?

The *Air Quality Regulations* were amended in 2005 and established an annual mercury emission cap of 168 kg, commencing March 1, 2005. This target has been met in 2006. This target is consistent with the province's Energy Strategy and supports commitments in the Northeastern Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Climate Change Action Plan. Nova Scotia has recently adopted to a new Canada-wide standard for mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants. As a result, the mercury cap will be reduced to 65 kg in 2010. Bill 146, the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, has established a target of reducing mercury emissions by seventy per cent of the 2001 levels, by the year 2010.

### The Measure:

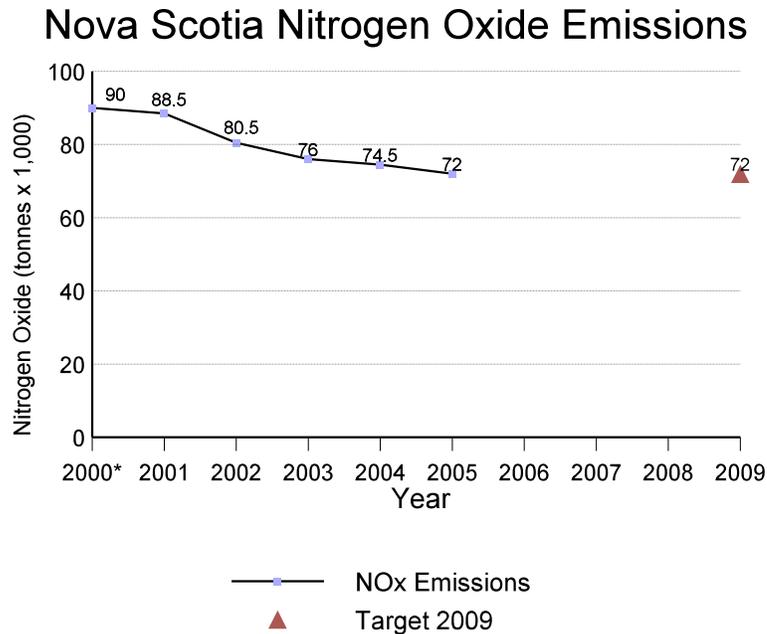
*Annual total nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) air emissions (tonnes) in the province.*

### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

In Nova Scotia, nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) emissions are produced by a variety of sources, including thermal electrical power generation, industrial processes and the transportation sector. Nitrogen oxides are a pre-cursor to ground level ozone (smog) and acid rain, and therefore have serious environmental impacts. Through reductions in nitrogen oxide emissions, we are effectively working toward our clean air outcome.

### Where Are We Now?

The NO<sub>x</sub> data shows a steady decline from the 2000 base year measure of 90,000 tonnes to 72,000 tonnes in 2005. This meets the provincial emission target for 2009.



*Source: Nova Scotia Environment and Labour; National Pollutant Release Inventory; Data for 2005 estimated*

(\*Rates are reported for calendar year, rather than fiscal).

### Where Do We Want To Be?

By working with industry, the department is targeting a 20 per cent reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions (from 2000 base year levels) by 2009. This sets our target at 72,000 tonnes of NO<sub>x</sub> by 2009. Nova Scotia Power's annual NO<sub>x</sub> emissions cap of 21,365 tonnes will take effect in 2009. Bill 146, the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, has established a target of reducing nitrogen oxide emissions by twenty per cent of the 2000 levels, by the year 2009. Our strategy is to work with major industrial sources to reduce emissions, and require the use of low NO<sub>x</sub> burners for new and upgraded facilities. Federal initiatives on cleaner vehicles, engines and fuels will also contribute to NO<sub>x</sub> emission reductions.

### The Outcome: Protected Natural Areas

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour is committed to sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural areas. A desired outcome in meeting this commitment is establishing and maintaining a network of protected natural areas.

### The Measure:

*Total hectares of land protected through NSEL program options.*

### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

Protected areas are representative examples of the province's natural landscapes as well as

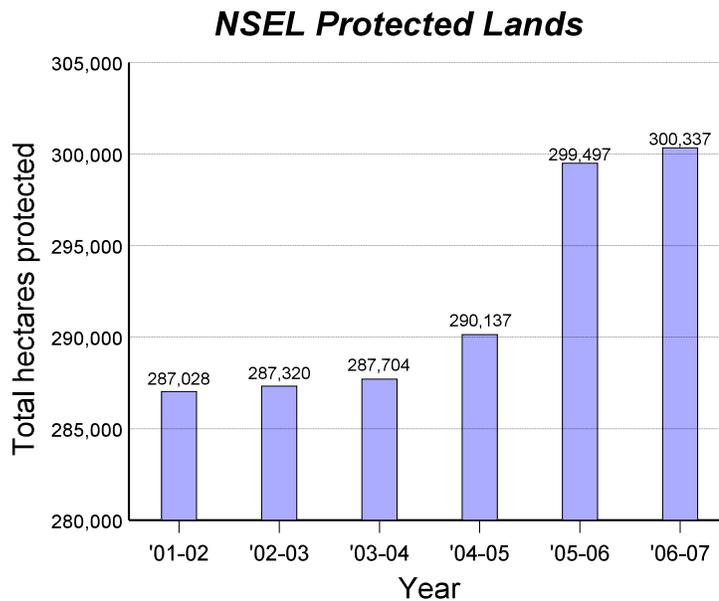
sites and features of outstanding natural value. The department supports a number of program options for protection, including:

1. designation of Wilderness Areas and Nature Reserves;
2. acquisition of department priority properties through partnership programs;
3. protection of Crown lands in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources; and
4. voluntary private stewardship for significant lands.

Measuring the hectares of provincial land protected through department programs helps track the progress made in meeting provincial and national commitments to establish systems of protected areas. This measure also provides an indication of the state of biodiversity conservation in the province, as protected areas provide habitat for a wide range of species.

### Where Are We Now?

Through its various program options, the department protected a total of 300,337 hectares throughout the province in 2006-07. This represents an increase of 13,309 hectares protected, when compared to the base year measure (2001-02). In March 2007, the province acquired over 10,000 hectares of land from Bowater Mersey for conservation purposes. It is anticipated that most of these lands will be designated as protected by December 2008.



### Where Do We Want To Be?

Bill 146, the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, has established the target to legally protecting twelve per cent of the total land mass of the Province by 2015. The department is proceeding with the process to designate additional Wilderness Areas and Nature Reserves. We have established a process with Department of Natural Resources and key partners through the Colin Steward Forest Forum to work towards a comprehensive system of protected areas to help meet this target. We will also continue to work with industry and land conservation groups to identify and protect new sites on private land.

## The Outcome: Shared responsibility for environmental management

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour is committed to sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural areas. Environmental management is most effective when responsibility is shared across all sectors and levels of society. Two measures are used to track progress in this regard. The first helps to gauge community participation in waste diversion, while the second helps to measure industry stewardship.

### The Measure:

*Annual municipal solid waste disposal rate per capita (Kg/person) compared with the regional and national disposal rates.*

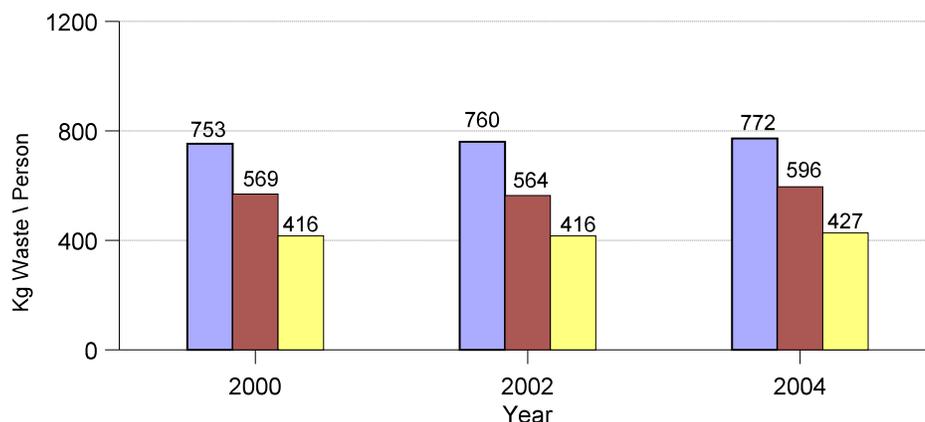
### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

Communities share responsibility for environmental management through efforts like managing solid waste responsibly. Nova Scotia is working actively to ensure community participation in reuse, recycling, composting, and other waste management initiatives. The average amount of waste discarded by each person per year is an indicator of the level of participation in waste diversion programs. Low disposal rates suggest that more material is being diverted from the waste stream, either through reduction at source, reuse, recycling or composting. By comparing disposal rates in Nova Scotia with those of the Atlantic region and Canada as a whole, we can assess Nova Scotia's performance, relative to the rest of Canada.

### Where Are We Now?

Statistics Canada reports provincial solid waste disposal data every two years with a delay of approximately two years. As the graph indicates, the national per capita disposal rate in 2004 was 772 kg per person. In Nova Scotia, we disposed of slightly more than half of this amount in 2004, at 427 kg per person. This figure gives Nova Scotia the lowest provincial disposal rate in Canada.

### Solid Waste Disposal Rates



Source: Statistics Canada

Canada Atlantic Nova Scotia

(\*Rates are reported for calendar year, rather than fiscal).

### **Where Do We Want To Be?**

We will continue to maintain a disposal rate below the national disposal rate. Bill 146, the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, has committed to an even more ambitious disposal target of 300 kg of waste per capita by 2015. The department will support this goal through industry/product stewardship, promotion of best management practices, research and development, continued public education, and compliance of the *Solid Waste-Resource Management Regulations*.

### **The Measure:**

*Total number of product sectors under voluntary or mandatory stewardship agreements.*

### **What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

Private sector participation in environmental stewardship improves environmental performance and helps develop environmentally responsible business sectors. Management agreements with industry sectors reduce waste and increase the use of recyclable materials. Voluntary and mandatory agreements encourage industry to modify products and packaging to reduce disposable waste and to increase product or packaging recyclability. This measure provides an indication of the numbers of products for which an agreement has been negotiated with the Province.

### **Where Are We Now?**

As of the end of fiscal 2006-07, the Province has negotiated industry stewardship agreements with nine product sectors - an increase from eight sectors in the previous year.

In February 2007, the Province added the electronic product sector to its list of regulated stewardship programs. Effective February 1, 2008 a collection and recycling program will be in place for computers, TVs and printers, with additional products being incorporated into the program the following year (February 1, 2009), including telephones and fax machines, audio-visual equipment and cell phones/wireless devices.

Other industry stewardship agreements in the Province include dairy containers, daily/weekly newspapers, residential sharps, beverage containers, tires, used oil, paint and telephone books. In addition, there are stewardship initiatives that are active in the province, but not counted in the measure, including national programs for rechargeable batteries and cell phones.

### **Where Do We Want To Be?**

The department's target is to develop stewardship agreements with 13 product sectors by 2009. It should be noted that some product sectors covered by agreements capture several different product categories. For example, the Province's most recent stewardship regulations for electronics encompass nine categories.

The department continues to explore stewardship opportunities for additional product sectors by working with the Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB) Nova Scotia, industry, and municipalities.

### **The Outcome: Proactive environmental management**

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour is committed to sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural areas. Proactive environmental management — addressing potential environmental issues before the environment is damaged — is a desired outcome in meeting this commitment.

#### **The Measure:**

*Total number of business sectors and municipalities participating with NSEL in environmental management and/or pollution prevention programs and initiatives.*

#### **What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

The department actively works with business sectors and other levels of government to incorporate sustainable environmental management into their operations through the use of pollution prevention plans, environmental management systems, best management practices, and other environmental management tools. This cooperative approach helps to minimize the long term environmental impacts of business and municipal operations. The greater the number of business sectors and municipalities involved, the greater the environmental benefits.

#### **Where Are We Now?**

In 2006-07 there were 18 sectors participating in department programs ranging from investigating pollution prevention options with municipalities, to implementing best environmental management practices in hospitals. This increased from 14 sectors in 2005-06, and 5 from the base year of 2001-02.

#### **Where Do We Want To Be?**

The target for 2006-07 is to increase the number of business sectors and municipalities participating in these types of initiatives. This will be accomplished by providing technical assistance to businesses, municipalities and provincial government departments, and partnering with business associations, non-government organizations, funding agencies and other levels of government.

### **The Outcome: Efficient and effective program delivery**

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour is committed to sustainable management and protection of the environment and natural areas. A desired outcome in meeting this commitment is the delivery of efficient and effective environmental programs to clients. Two measures are used to track progress in this regard. The first measures the application of a risk-based inspection and auditing program and the second tracks average processing time for on-site sewage disposal system approvals.

**The Measure:**

*Percentage of industrial facility approvals in operation for at least one year to which a risk based inspection and auditing program has been applied.*

**What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

Regulatory compliance plays an important role in the department's ability to promote sustainable environmental management. The terms and conditions that are developed for approvals stipulate discharge criteria for the facility that will adequately protect the receiving environment. The department targets inspections by using information on primary receptors, performance criteria, treatment controls, scope, and level of impact and reporting requirements as evaluation criteria to rate the facility's risk of negatively impacting the environment. Facilities with the highest rating are inspected more often to determine whether the facility is operating in compliance with the terms and conditions of the approval and whether the facility self-monitoring results accurately represent the discharges from the facility. This measure illustrates the progress made in applying this risk based inspection and auditing program to industrial facilities in Nova Scotia. It also provides an indication of the department's effectiveness in allocating inspection resources, as this program focusses an inspector's time on facilities that pose a higher risk to the environment.

**Where Are We Now?**

By the end of the fiscal year 2005-06, it was determined that approximately 90 per cent of industrial facilities that have been in operation for at least one year have had a risk based inspection and auditing program applied to them. However, this number was based on desk top review of physical files that involved some estimation as that was the only means available. To address this, in 2005, the data and information management system that tracks the status of all applications for approvals that are required under the *Activities Designation Regulations* (EIMAS), was enhanced to accept risk scoring data, and automatically schedule the resulting inspections. The exercise of entering information into that system has identified an actual measure for 2005-06 of 69%. As the risk-based inspection and auditing is conducted at the end of the year of the facilities operation, actual percentages for 2006-07 cannot be calculated until 2007-08.

**Where Do We Want To Be?**

The target continues to be to apply a risk based inspection and auditing program to at least 90 per cent of industrial facility approvals. Progress will continue to be made in this area by validating data-based assessments at facilities and adhering to the schedule for risk based inspection audits.

**The Measure:**

*Average administrative time (days) to process applications for the approval of the installation of on-site sewage disposal systems.*

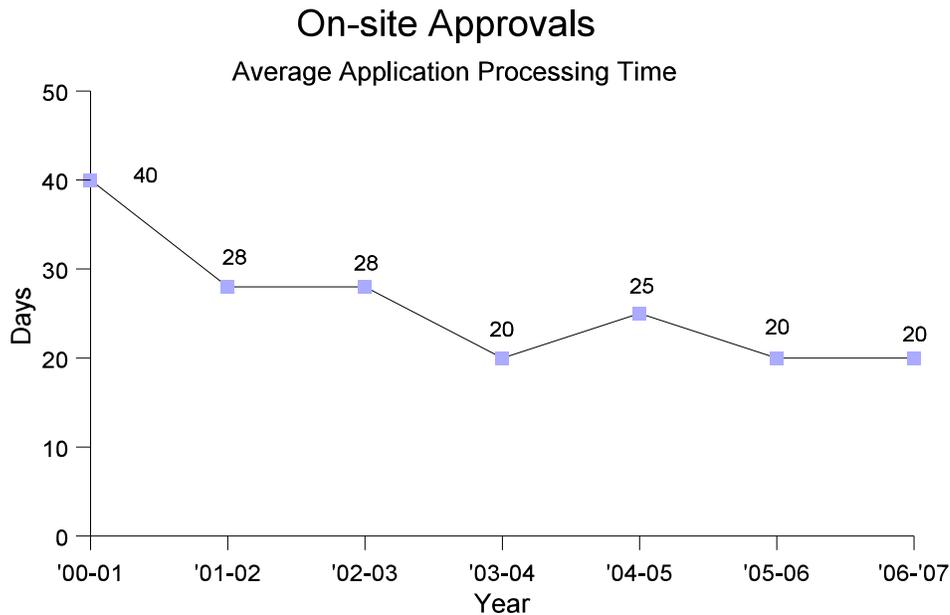
**What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

The department recognizes that while environmental protection is a priority, it must also provide timely service to its clients. When a proposed building project requires an on-site sewage disposal system, municipal units require that an approval for the installation of the

system is issued from the department prior to granting a building permit. Reduced turnaround times in the processing of on-site sewage disposal system approvals benefit developers and home builders by minimizing delays in obtaining their building permit and in construction.

**Where Are We Now?**

In 2006-07 the average administrative time to process applications for on-site sewage disposal systems was 20 days for the second year in a row. This is a significant reduction from our 2000-01 base-year measure of 40 days, and well within our legislated time requirement of 60 days.



**Where Do We Want To Be?**

The target is to maintain average turn around time to 20 calendar days or less. The department will work to achieve this through ongoing process re-design and improvement.

**Core Business Area 3: Employment Standards, Workers Advisers, Labour Services and Pensions**

**The Outcome: Efficient and effective client service**

Employment standards, workers advisers, labour services and pensions represent a core business area for Nova Scotia Environment and Labour. A desired outcome in meeting this core responsibility is the delivery of efficient and effective service to clients. Three measures contribute to the assessment of this outcome, including two that measure staff assignment times, and one that measures client satisfaction.

**The Measure:**

*Average time (weeks) for Labour Standard Code complaints to be assigned to an officer.*

**What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

This measure provides an indication of effectiveness in assigning complaints made under the *Labour Standards Code*.

**Where are We Now?**

This was a new measure for which baseline data was developed in 2005-06. The time of assignment for Labour Code complaints had been 1.07 weeks. In 2006-07, the time of assignment is 0.6 weeks.

**Where Do We Want To Be?**

The department has set a target of assigning complaints made under the Labour Standards Code to an officer within two weeks of receipt. The department will work to achieve this target through streamlining the Labour Standards Code complaint intake system, along with updating technology, and training staff.

**The Measure:**

*Average Workers' Advisers Program service response time (weeks) for injured workers seeking legal advice and representation.*

**What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

This measure tracks the average time that elapses from when an injured worker first requests service from the Workers' Advisers Program, until an Adviser meets with the worker.

**Where are We Now?**

This measure was introduced by Workers' Advisers Program in the 2005-06 Business Plan to measure timeliness of client service. In 2004-05, clients waited an average of 1.9 weeks to meet with an Adviser. This was down slightly from the wait time in 2003-04 of 2.1 weeks. The average wait time increased slightly in 2005-06 to 2.3 weeks and again in 2006-07 to 3.0 weeks but remains within the target.

**Where Do We Want To Be?**

The department has been successful at keeping the wait time for injured workers seeking services from the Workers' Advisers Program below the target of 4 weeks. This is achieved by maintaining an efficient and timely intake process and by upgrading technology.

**The Measure:**

*Percentage of clients satisfied with Workers' Advisers Program service at the time of case closure.*

**What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

This is a new measure, compiled from a client satisfaction survey distributed to all Workers' Advisers Program clients, upon closure of each case file. It gauges the level of client

satisfaction with the quality of service provided by staff.

### **Where are We Now?**

Results from the 2006-07 client survey indicate that 86.4 per cent of the respondents felt that staff did their very best to provide the best possible service. This is decreased from the previous year's results but remains within the target (2004-05 - 94 per cent, 2005-06 - 94 per cent, 2006-07 - 86.4 per cent).

### **Where Do We Want To Be?**

A client satisfaction rate of 80 per cent has been established as a minimum target. The department will continue to strive for excellence in client service through an efficient intake system, training for Advisers and implementation of best practices.

### **The Outcome: Stable labour relations environment**

A stable labour relations environment is a desired outcome within the department's core business area of employment standards, workers advisers, labour services and pensions. One way to measure the stability of the labour relations environment is to track the percentage of work time lost due to strikes and lockouts in the province.

### **The Measure:**

**Percentage of working time lost per year due to strikes and lockouts in NS compared with the annual national average.**

### **What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

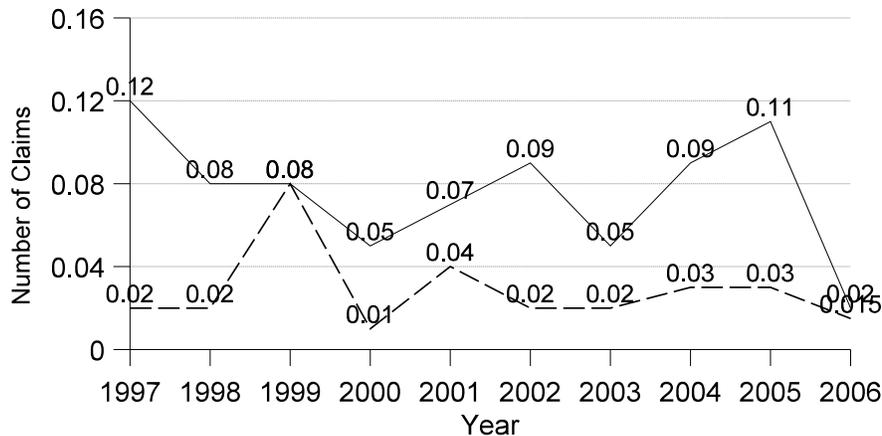
This measure is one indicator of labour stability, an important factor for economic competitiveness. Comparison with national rates helps the department monitor trends, set targets, and determine priorities.

### **Where Are We Now?**

In recent years Nova Scotia has shown a high degree of labour stability. Time loss in the economy has been consistently at or below the national average (see graph below). The percentage of working time lost due to strikes and lockouts was 0.015 per cent for Nova Scotia and 0.02 per cent nationally in 2006.

## Work Stoppages

time not worked as a percentage of total working time



(revised data)

————— Canada      - - - - - Nova Scotia

(\*Rates are reported for calendar year, rather than fiscal).

### Where Do We Want To Be?

Our ongoing target through to 2005-06 has been to remain at or below the national average for percent of work time lost. This has been accomplished through effective use of the conciliation and mediation processes.

### The Outcome: Security of retirement income for members of private pension plans

A desired outcome within the department's core business area of employment standards, workers advisers, labour services and pensions is security of retirement income for members of private pension plans.

### The Measure:

**Percentage of plan members covered by pension plans registered with the province that are (a) 100 per cent funded; or (b) have a strategy in place to achieve full funding within 5 years.**

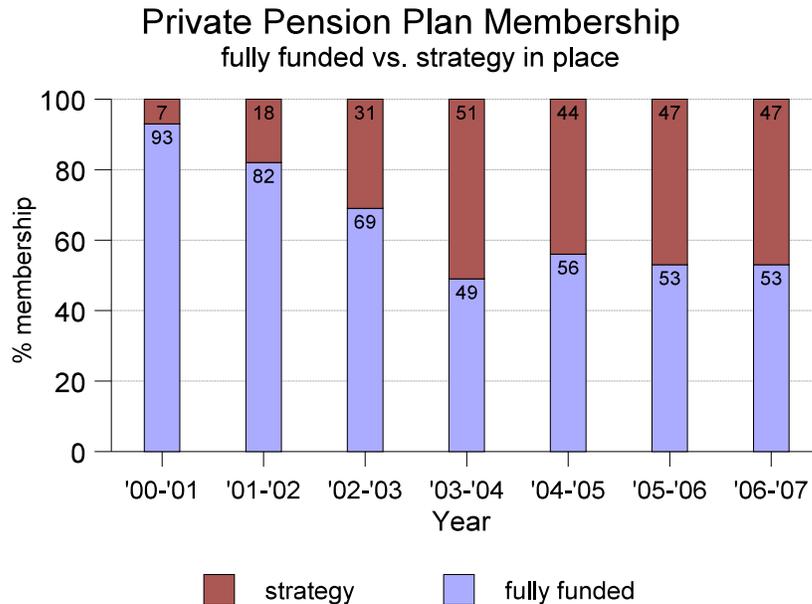
### What Does The Measure Tell Us?

The measure tracks the percentage of plan members covered by private pension plans registered under the *Pension Benefits Act* that are 100 per cent funded, compared with the percentage of members of plans that have a strategy in place to achieve full funding. The level of funding for a plan is highly dependent on market fluctuations and is expected to vary from year to year. In addition, changes to the *Pension Benefits Regulations* in 2004 have modified pension plan funding requirements. Plans are no longer required to fund "grow-in" benefits under a solvency valuation. This change means that in future reports more plans will be

included in the funded category, compared to the previous determination of funding status. This change will influence the trend of this measure over time, as each plan completes its three-year cycle of reporting.

**Where Are We Now?**

In 2006-07, 100 per cent of plan members were covered by plans that were either fully funded (53 per cent) or that have filed a strategy to achieve full funding in a five year period (47 per cent). With the exception of 2004-05, there has been a steady decline in the percentage of plan members in plans that are fully funded since the 2001 base year. This is reflective of the investment market and continued low rates of return. As each plan is assessed on a three-year cycle, the measure reflects this averaging.



**Where Do We Want To Be?**

The target is to continue to maintain 100 per cent of plan members registered in fully funded plans, or in plans which have filed a strategy to achieve full funding in a five year period. This will be accomplished through ongoing review and analysis of valuation reports and data to identify solvency and funding problems, and overseeing employer payments required under legislation to bring pension plan to full funding.

**Core Business Area 4: Alcohol, Gaming, and Theatre and Amusements Regulation**  
**The Outcome: Consumer protection related to alcohol, gaming and amusement activity**

Consumer protection is a desired outcome within the department’s core business area of alcohol, gaming, and amusements regulation. One of the department’s strategies to protect consumer interests and public confidence in the alcohol and gaming services sector is to conduct site inspections and work with licensees to ensure they comply with all applicable acts and regulations.

**The Measure:**

*Percentage of liquor, gaming and amusement licensees inspected per year that are in compliance with acts and regulations.*

**What Does The Measure Tell Us?**

Tracking the percentage of licensees inspected who are in compliance helps the department assess how well regulations are both understood and obeyed. Monitoring compliance allows the department to identify specific problem areas so that resources can be used effectively.

**Where Are We Now?**

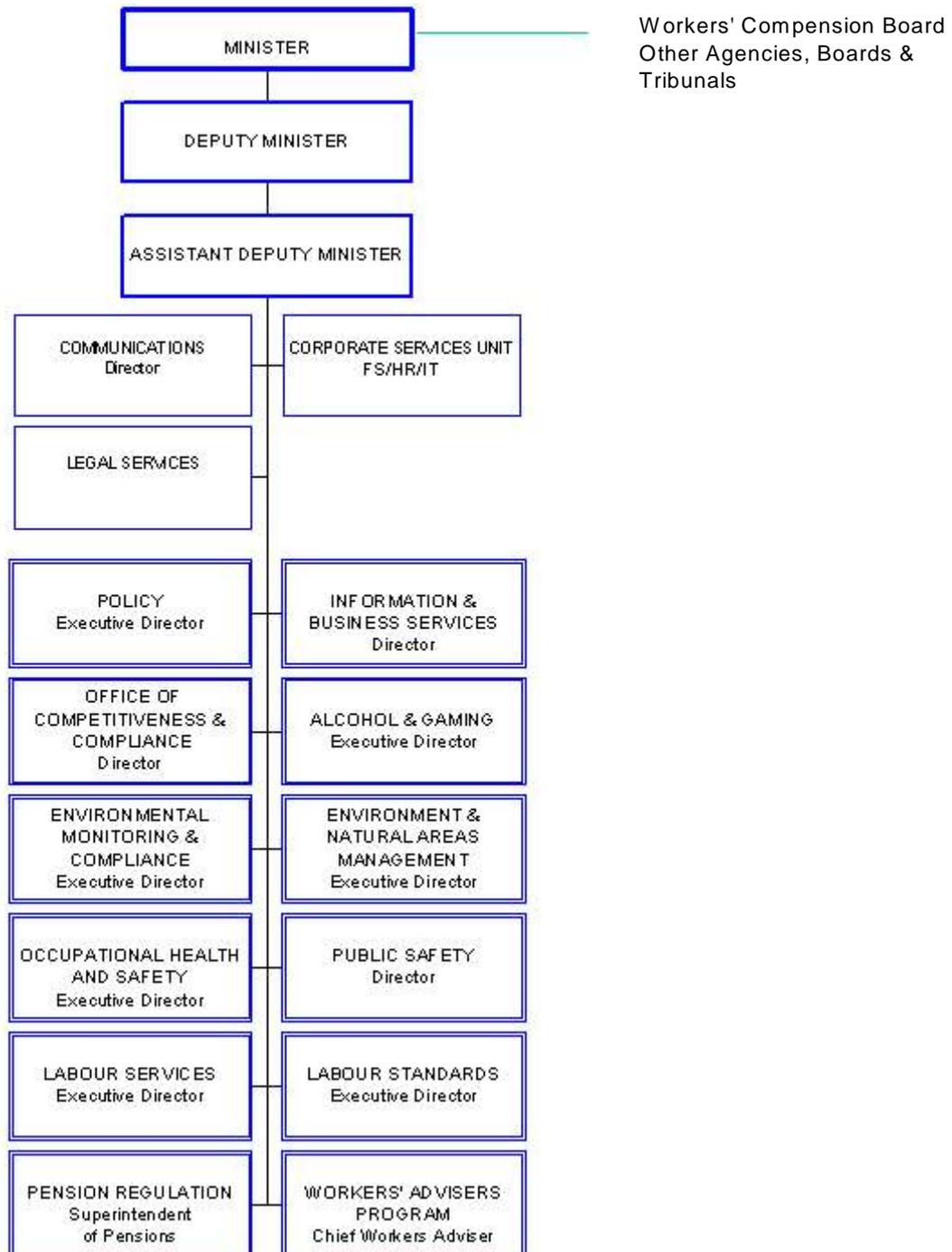
In 2006-07, 99.5 per cent, of inspected licensees within sectors involved in alcohol, gaming and amusement activities were in compliance with corresponding acts and regulations. The compliance rate has remained consistently high over the past six years (2000-01 - 98 per cent; 2001-02 - 95 per cent; 2002-03 - 96 per cent; 2003-04 - 99.8 per cent; 2004-05 - 99.8 per cent; 2005-06 - 99.4 per cent; 2006-07 - 99.5 per cent).

**Where Do We Want To Be?**

Our ongoing target to 2007-08 is to maintain a compliance percentage in excess of 95 per cent. This target is achieved by monitoring problem areas and working with licensees to increase awareness of regulations and policies.

## Appendix A

### Organizational Chart



## **Appendix B**

### **Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals**

- Arbitration Advisory Committee
- Board of Examiners for Certification of Blasters
- Construction Industry Panel
- Crane Operators Appeal Board
- Crane Operators Examination Committee
- Elevators and Lifts Appeal Board
- Environmental Assessment Board
- Film Classifiers
- Fire Safety Advisory Council
- Fire Safety Appeal Board (which is the Utility and Review Board)
- Fire Services Advisory Committee
- Fuel Safety Board of Examination
- Labour Relations Board
- Labour Standards Tribunal
- Minimum Wage Review Committee
- Nova Scotia Building Advisory Committee
- Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Council
- Occupational Health and Safety Appeal Panel
- On-Site Services Advisory Board
- Pay Equity Commission
- Power Engineers and Operators Appeal Committee
- Power Engineers and Operators Board
- Radiation Health Advisory Committee
- Resource Recovery Fund Board
- Utility and Review Board
- Workers' Compensation Board