

**REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT**  
**REGARDING**  
***THE ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY***  
***ACT (EGSPA)***

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Letter to the Minister of Environment

From: Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity

March 30, 2012

Hon. Sterling Belliveau  
Minister, Department of Environment  
5151 Terminal Road  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Belliveau:

As requested in the mandate letter you issued on September 26, 2011, the Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity has carried out a public review of the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*. This review was part of the legislative requirements of the Act, which state that a review be conducted every five years. As per the Act, the findings of the review are outlined in the attached report which has been completed within the required six month frame.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with advice concerning proposed amendments in the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*. While the process was challenging and in many aspects the issues were complex, I can report that the Round Table achieved a high degree of consensus. We believe that the Act, which already has served a number of worthwhile purposes, holds the potential to play an even more useful role as Nova Scotia takes the next significant steps towards integration of environmental and economic sustainability. With that intention foremost, this review and recommendations are respectfully submitted.

I would also like to mention the exemplary support and assistance provided throughout the process by the secretariat provided by your department. Without their scrupulous attention and diligent effort this initiative would not have come to its best and timely conclusion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marty Janowitz', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Marty Janowitz  
Chair, Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity

# **REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY ACT (EGSPA)**

## **MANDATE FOR THE REVIEW OF EGSPA**

This review was part of the legislative requirements of the Act, which state that a public review be conducted every five years by the Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity. The Round Table was issued a mandate letter on September 26, 2011, by the Minister of Environment to establish the scope, process, and timing for the review (see Appendix A.) As per the six-month time frame established in the Act, the Round Table was requested to provide the Minister with a report on amendments and improvements to the Act by March 31, 2012. The Mandate suggested that the Round Table consider a number of questions in reviewing the Act, and to develop recommendations on “improving and strengthening the linkages between the environment and economy in the context of current Government priorities.”

## **ENGAGING THE PUBLIC**

To gather public feedback on the Act, the Round Table offered opportunities to submit written feedback and to participate in public workshops. These opportunities to engage in the review were communicated to the public through a series of advertisements in newspapers across the province, as well as on the website for Nova Scotia Environment.

Written feedback was gathered from the public on a series of questions about the Act (see Appendix B). To increase accessibility, members of the public could submit feedback via mail, e-mail, or an online form. The original deadline of December 16, 2011, was extended to January 31, 2012, to allow more time for responses.

The Round Table hosted five workshops to further engage the public’s input as part of the review process. Evening workshops were held in Halifax, Truro, Sydney, Wolfville, and Yarmouth between January 30, 2012, and February 15, 2012. A teleconference was also offered as an additional opportunity to participate for those living in other regions, but was cancelled due to lack of interest.

The Round Table received over 80 written submissions as part of the review and over 70 participants attended the public workshops. Feedback was provided from a wide variety of stakeholders, including environmental groups, industry associations, municipalities, members of the public, and many more. The Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia also made representations through organizations representing both on- and off-reserve peoples. These diverse viewpoints meant that in some cases there were divergent opinions on issues and differing suggestions on the best path forward. A summary of the public feedback is provided in Appendix C. This feedback was a key consideration for the Round Table in forming the following recommendations on amending and improving the Act.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS ON EGSPA**

### **BACKGROUND**

Nova Scotia's *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* was proclaimed in June of 2007. At the time of its proclamation and to this date it remains one of the pioneering pieces of North American legislation on the topic of sustainable development, seeking to foster an integrated approach to the health of the environment, the economy, and the people of Nova Scotia. This Act became law with the full support of all political parties. This was a testament to the importance, and broad support for this integrated approach, in the vision of Nova Scotia as small jurisdiction nonetheless exemplifying a large vision for societal progress. Despite a change in Governments and the stressors generated by one of the most difficult economic recessions of recent decades, the Act continues to be broadly supported, politically and amongst sectors and communities throughout our province. Generally speaking, there is still clearly voiced agreement that the overall intentions and objectives of the Act are worthwhile as it champions and moves forward our vision of a sustainably prosperous Nova Scotia. That said, the consultation process and deliberations of the Round Table revealed a wide variety of perspectives on approaches to improve the ability of the Act to advance the cornerstone of this underlying intention: 'to fully integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity.'

Notwithstanding these divergent views, the Round Table concludes that Nova Scotians understand the need, promise and power within the concept of sustainable prosperity: the integrated and energetic relationship between environmental, economic and social aspects.

We therefore believe that *EGSPA* retains a significant role in advancing Nova Scotia's ultimate goal to fulfill our aspiration and promise to become a prosperous, caring and equitable society. The opportunity to undertake this review of *EGSPA* has allowed us the opportunity to appreciate the possibilities as well as the challenges facing our province as we strive to realize this purpose. Our review also highlighted the dynamic tension at the Act's core, as it simultaneously endeavors to serve as a 'big picture' articulation of principles around integrated sustainable development and a call to action across and beyond Government sectors, all while presenting 21 disparate time-bound goals largely focused on environmental improvements. As we considered the options towards recommendations, we ultimately concluded that rather than abandoning any one of these elements, it would best serve the potential of the Act to strengthen it across all dimensions while seeking to harmonize them all in service of the integration of environment and economy.

As might have been expected, the input received by the Round Table, in written submissions, through workshops and meetings, was wide-ranging and presented a similarly wide range of views. A summary document will endeavor to present an overview of the feedback we received from the public (Appendix C.). The Round Table, for its part, sought to keep its focus and only offer recommendations within the parameters established in the Mandate Letter received from the Minister of Environment (Appendix A attached). Therefore, while we wish to acknowledge the many interesting and worthwhile comments and representations received, and want to make clear that each and every one was reviewed and considered, a considerable number were ultimately deemed to be beyond the scope of the review or of the Act itself. For example, a number of representations offered points of view on environmental or industrial practices and policies or regulation pertaining to same, which the Round Table determined were beyond the purview of the Act, in some cases raising matters appropriately controlled by the Environment Act or other Governmental authorities or Departments. In an endeavor of this type it is also

necessary to make choices. In many cases, submissions made representations regarding changes, additions or deletions to the Goals contained within the Act. Further in this document we will frame the Round Table's cautious, overall approach to the topic of new goals. In general we looked for those opportunities to advance the Act's primary long-term objective: to advance and integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity.

*EGSPA* sought to articulate the means by which this overarching objective would be measured: 'To demonstrate international leadership by having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by 2020; and ...establish clear environmental goals while improving the Province's economic performance to a level that is equal to or above the Canadian average by the year 2020.' The Act set out 21 far-reaching Goals for the province, ranging from reduced air emissions and waste, to new energy standards for buildings and increased protection of our land and water.

## **OVERALL VIEW**

In light of both the input from the public consultation process and the Round Table's own deliberations, we conclude that the Act has and continues to make a worthwhile contribution. It has played a clear role in accelerating the province's continued progress, especially with regard to environmental improvements, noting that the 21 Goals were largely framed around environmental objectives. We are pleased that at least 13 of the 21 Goals have been completely or nearly achieved and, regarding most of the others, the province is making substantive and timely progress. Overall, we believe that the long-term benefits of achieving the 21 Goals are appreciable and will serve the overarching objective of a sustainably prosperous province. Even so, we are concerned that the long-term Goals, becoming 'one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world' and 'improving the Province's economic performance to a level that is equal to or above the Canadian average' are nebulous. While environmental progress can at least be tracked with reference to the 21 Goals, we think there is a lack of tangible evidence as to whether we are on track towards achieving the economic objective and the degree to which *EGSPA* is contributing.

That said, through the process of Annual Reviews, the Round Table has become aware that in some cases original Goals have become more difficult to achieve in light of changing circumstances. In some cases the costs of achieving Goals has been higher than perhaps originally anticipated and when compared to their benefits has raised concern as to their judiciousness in an era of growing competition for scarce public and private sector dollars. Further, the record with regard to linking and integrating these environmental achievements with economic progress is unknown or uncertain. While we can agree that virtually all of the environmental actions taken in concert or required by the Act have had economic implications, the means of understanding and evaluating their economic contribution remain nebulous. The linkage between the environmental Goals and their economic consequences was not well developed. Goals that explicitly and purposefully linked environmental and economic objectives were not presented and despite annual monitoring of progress, the integration component has not been sufficiently developed.

Despite these inadequacies we remain convinced that the fundamental linkage between environmental and economic progress is well founded. The preponderance of economic, social and environmental literature and analysis supports this contention. Leaders in business and industry are now in the forefront of this emergence and backing the theories of sustainability by investment and performance.

MIT Sloan /Boston Consulting Management Review: 2011 Sustainability & Innovation Global Executive Study and Research Project

Despite the economic downturn and lack of political progress on climate change:

***“Seventy percent of organizations say sustainability has a permanent place on the management agenda, and almost none say they plan to reduce their commitments... We see these trends occurring within and across all industries. Resource-intensive industries — energy and utilities, consumer products, commodities, chemicals and automobiles — are leading the way.”***

With this perspective as context, the Round Table undertook to assess the performance of EGSPA as a vehicle to encourage and enforce the accelerated integration of environmental and economic integration and progress. Therefore, one of the key questions facing the Round Table as it entered into the review was to determine to what degree the original 21 Goals were individually and collectively meeting this expectation. In that light we considered whether they should be refined, changed or dropped, and correspondingly whether or not new Goals should be considered. The Government’s Mandate Letter provided the relevant questions “How can existing EGSPA Goals advance current progress toward the objectives of both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability? How can the Goals remain current in evolving environmental and economic conditions?” It was also clear in communication with key Government staff, that this statement reflected Government’s general perspective that the primary focus of the review was on the applicability of the original EGSPA Goals rather than a search for new Goals.

The Round Table agreed that the group of 21 Goals already represented a substantial commitment and program of effort; that stepwise progress had been realized and a number of Goals fulfilled; that considerable continuing effort would be required to fulfill the complete set of objectives by 2020; and that in the current and short term context of economic constraints and social priorities, another broad suite of challenging Goals was beyond realistic consideration. It was also learned that a significantly larger number of initiatives and achievements had been made during this first five-year period that were not explicitly contained within the formal Goals but that were consistent with the Act’s broader objective.

At the same time, the Round Table was not precluded from considering changes to the suite of Goals and indeed made clear in all outreach that we would both accept and seriously consider changes that were meaningful and feasible. We received many suggestions and arguments regarding the Goals both in specific and general terms, some going so far as suggest that all Goals should be eliminated and that the Act should be held more as a statement of principles than a specific recipe for actions. On the other side of the equation, a number of submissions argued that the Act should now incorporate a much broader and more aggressive suite of targets tied to specific dates and outcomes and those targets previously met should be raised to further levels. Another point of view suggested that the Goals, while worthwhile from an environmental perspective, came at costs which in some instances were either unreasonable or uncertain when assessed against their benefits, or that those costs could not be reasonably carried by those (such as municipalities or industries) that were caused to bear them. In sum, those that argued for changes to the goals ranged from believing them inadequate (e.g. too

little, lenient or vague), to unjustified (e.g. unnecessary or too much), or of insufficient benefit (e.g. unknown, not quantified or unimportant) to merit their costs.

We easily agreed that the current package of Goals would not in and of themselves constitute the means to achieve the vision underlying the Act and that over time new and enhanced targets and commitments would be imperative. We also agreed that the successes achieved since the Act's enactment were in large measure due to the incorporation of specific Goals which drove Government's accountability for action. And we agreed that any specific group of Goals should not be held as inviolate or inflexible. However, we received widely divergent representations and as a group we hold various views regarding some of the Goals, while generally respecting their environmental intentions.

With regard to these differences of view we must acknowledge that even if we were disposed to recommend adjustments to specific Goals, there are some issues that were too contentious to gain agreement on (E.g. 12% of land mass legally protected, 70% reduction in mercury emissions, and 300 kg per person/year solid waste disposal rate, to name a few). We realized that considerable effort (expending resources of both time and money) would be necessary to 'go back to the drawing board' with regard to Goals to evaluate the costs and benefits of both existing (met and in progress Goals) or prospective Goals. Even if such analysis were undertaken, we came to agree that the 'science' of cost-benefit analysis was sufficiently imprecise that the mere adjustment of assumptions, values and data parameters could lead to significantly different outcomes and conclusions.

However, we also agree that, going forward, it is important to bring more consistent and analytic efforts to bear when considering and monitoring progress towards Goals that have both environmental and economic consequences. We also believe that there should continue to be provision for, and to not shy away from, 'midcourse corrections' when gauged prudent or necessary. As a matter of course, Government should periodically and rigorously analyze progress made especially in the context of changing priorities, new information and incremental costs and benefits. This view recognizes the ongoing need to continue to take assertive action towards environmental protection and sustainable prosperity while ensuring adequate flexibility in light of new information on environmental risks or crises, costs, dynamic markets and the provincial and global economic environment.

In light of these factors we considered the means and effect at this point of a substantial effort to gauge the efficacy of efforts well into implementation. We agree that in the future, additional practical efforts should be made to consider costs and benefits prior to and in the course of implementing Goals, but we also accept the logic that that it would be prudent to generally stay the course towards the original 2020 vision for Goals, not recommending changes to existing Goals that are either met or on track except if we determined that there were overriding considerations.

It was understood, both from the terms of the Mandate and the Round Table's own deliberation, that our priority was to focus on the broader issues bearing on the linkage and integration of environmental sustainability and economic prosperity and means of accelerating progress. Therefore, in considering the future role and improvements to the Act, the Round Table came to a few overarching conclusions that underlie subsequent recommendations. In short, these propose that *EGSPA's* success in coming years will correlate to the degree to which it:

- Evolves from its original primary framing around environmental Goals and targets to embrace its stated focus on the integration of environment and economy;

- Provides clarity, support and direction regarding the concept of a genuine integration of environment and economy, including a more useful articulation of objectives;
- Is relevant, aligned and contributes to the Government's core priorities which can simply be summarized as 'the economy, jobs, healthcare and education', and in this context plays a more useful and central role in helping Government achieve a prosperous, sustainable and healthy Nova Scotia by:
  - Raising awareness of the Act within Government,
  - Enhancing accountability by Departments to uphold the Act,
  - Providing mechanisms to include, encourage and incent a wider swath of Governmental and other sectors' initiatives which are in accord with *EGSPA*'s mandate and therefore encourages Departments to think about how the Act links to their strategies, programs and initiatives;
- Incorporates means and methodologies to evaluate existing and prospective targets, assess progress and obstacles, and in light of those determinations, if necessary to adjust them while holding true to *EGSPA*'s core purposes; and
- Raises awareness, understanding, and support for the Act and its core purpose to stimulate sustainable prosperity among Nova Scotia's citizens, communities and sectors.

The Round Table also concluded that the work of developing the precise adjustments to the Act could not be undertaken, much less completed, by our group within the mandate, time, context, expertise and resources available to us. In any case, our appropriate role is to suggest directions so that the appropriate Government policy staff can respond, assess and design revisions. Therefore our recommendations in most cases are somewhat general. Our intention has been to:

- Answer the questions posed to the Round Table in the context of the *EGSPA* Mandate Letter;
- To make general recommendations pertinent to the specific issues raised in the Mandate Letter regarding 'improving and strengthening the linkages between the environment and economy in the context of current Government priorities both the important adjustments' and on other matters that we believe would serve the purposes or benefit the performance of the Act;
- Make specific recommendations that are clear to us; and
- Raise any questions or issues that need to be further explored by Government towards improving the Act.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Minister's Mandate Letter indicated that *"The focus of the review is to identify how to best meet EGSPA's objective to fully integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. Recommendations from the review should draw from best practices and consider the current context of environmental progress, economic conditions, and Government priorities."*

While considering recommendations, it was therefore important to keep focused on the mandate of linking economy and environment. We endeavored to question each potential recommendation by asking whether the recommended amendment would improve economic prosperity and environmental sustainability and/or whether it would strengthen the Act's effectiveness in doing so. If we determined there was such a linkage, we have tried to clearly state this connection as part of the rationale for the recommendation.

In this light, the Round Table would like to make some overarching recommendations as well as some more specific suggestions on amending the Act.

***"We have to think in our business strategies how to turn these requirements into more than just a cost factor, but see them as a business opportunity...If you can be part of the solution, you can carve out a new type of market niche to help you differentiate yourself from a lot of your competitors".***

- Jason Myers, President, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Shifting Markets, Shifting Mindsets, Nov. 2010

## **OVERARCHING CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS**

As the Round Table solicited input (both through written submissions and in workshops or meetings), we believed it important to spend some time reflecting on the underpinning and fundamental principle upon which the Act is based: that it is useful, and possible, to fully integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. To this question the Round Table responds with a resounding 'yes'.

The Round Table believes that the principles of sustainable development are sound and imperative in the context of a wide range of environmental, social and economic forces at play globally, nationally, provincially and locally. We believe that the best future for Nova Scotia will be closely aligned, perhaps articulated under the overarching umbrella of 'sustainable prosperity' which we propose to define as a state of economic development, where individuals, families and communities enjoy a high standard of living and a high quality of life while respecting and preserving the natural environment. We think that environmental, economic and social dimensions of social progress are, and should be, closely and purposefully integrated. The prevailing pattern within modern economies has not done so. They typically view and measure prosperity in terms of economic growth which is most simply indicated by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Emphasis on this alone may drive short-term bottom line thinking.

The emergence of sustainable development as a central feature in social planning and enterprise is a positive and progressive trend that Nova Scotia has already taken early steps towards through EGSPA and other environmental and economic policies or initiatives. The next

step is to take the linkage of environment and economy to the point of genuine, full-fledged integration. Even beyond that, the further step will be to consider similar linkages and alignment with the social and cultural aspects of social policy and action.

We understand and propose that integration should be a step beyond 'balance' or 'trade-offs'. For many years the early view of the environment-economy relationship was measured in terms of trade-offs seeking to limit environmental impacts and costs while growing and optimizing the economy. The emerging consensus with regard to true sustainability proposes and increasingly demonstrates that environmental and economic (plus social-cultural) concerns are actually legs of a three-legged platform. They not only can work together, they must work together to achieve benefits that cannot be achieved either alone or merely by constraining one in relation to the other. The ultimate view of authentic sustainable prosperity values and takes advantage of the power of combination, seeking opportunities to strengthen all three of society's critical legs by leveraging the strengths and chemistry of environmental, economic and social dimensions together. Effective environmental policies that strengthen environmental stewardship allow for sound management of resources while promoting economic growth. Conversely, the economy cannot continue to expand over the long-term without attention paid to sound resource management and other environmental considerations.

Environmental and economic Goals can be achieved in tandem. For example, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC), the federally-supported organization supporting clean technology investments in Canada, has a strong focus on resource efficiency, among other areas. Companies may continue to use resources, but if done efficiently, they can reduce impact while addressing market opportunities. Resource management does not compromise development. There are many examples of this approach in action which have informed and inspired the Round Table in valuing *EGSPA*'s potential.

The Act already has played a useful, yet preliminary role, in linking the environment and economy. Effective environmental policy should be positive for the economy. Environmental policies should advance innovation, productivity and efficiency, which are the core components of the province's jobsHere strategy and key to competitiveness. The creation of *EGSPA* demonstrated innovation and leadership by Nova Scotia, especially considering the size and location of the province. While not perfect, we believe the timing is right to take *EGSPA* the next step forward as an increasingly potent vehicle that can, and should, be central to Government policy and priorities.

Some commentators have suggested that Nova Scotia is too small, both in size and in impact, to be on the leading edge of sustainable development – that the costs are too high to challenge the status quo by investing in changes regarding environmental and economic policies with substantial up-front costs. It is important to recognize that the "status quo" will not be the case going forward. Energy prices will rise, and potential scarcity of water and other resources will continue to present risks. On the other hand, sustainable approaches will generally contribute to cost avoidance. As well, businesses may increasingly see a competitive advantage from "green" practices due to international trade/import requirements and marketing benefits. Nova Scotia should be proactive in adapting to these changing realities. In the future, business as usual will not be an option. The Round Table endorses the view that economic growth based on environmental stewardship is the only viable path forward. The economy cannot continue to strengthen over the long term without attention paid to sound resource management and other environmental considerations. It has been suggested that sustainable competitiveness is sustainable prosperity. Therefore, Nova Scotia should take a strategic approach to maximizing

the benefits of environmental and economic opportunity with respect to the pace and priorities for transition.

We therefore conclude that *EGSPA* should clearly call for and support current and future investments and programming that help to harmonize both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability (i.e. promoting opportunities for renewable energy and energy efficiency as part of investments, and advancement of 'green jobs' as a component of the provincial economy).

We also suggest that opening a dialogue among the various provincial departments may be helpful in coming to terms with how they can integrate environmental and economic Goals into their own respective departments in a substantive way. Tentative steps have already been undertaken in this regard, and the Round Table encourages the continuation of these initiatives. These initiatives will also help ensure that solutions to challenges faced by one department do not create unintended consequences for another. For instance, given rising health care costs, it would be prudent to periodically scrutinize the linkages between pollution and ill health and the contribution *EGSPA's* principles and goals, or redefined goals, can best contribute to beneficial progress. For example, a significant body of research exists detailing the linkages between air quality and health conditions such as asthma and cardiovascular disease. Experts believe climate change will affect, and in some cases exacerbate, existing health care issues and create new ones that current institutions have little experience in coping with. It would therefore appear to be sensible for bureaucrats responsible for climate change adaptation strategies to be in communication with those responsible for health infrastructure and systems about opportunities to leverage their work towards better health outcomes.

Bottom line, the Round Table believes that the Minister should consider ways to strengthen the framework, definitions, objectives, and principles within the Act so that the linkage and value of environment and economy are even more clearly and forcefully presented and therefore so that they play a more central role in provincial policy.

### **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS BY SECTIONS OF THE ACT**

During the course of the *EGSPA* review the Round Table received a large number of specific recommendations regarding changes or refinements to almost all Sections the Act. We took each recommendation seriously, while recognizing that we needed to be judicious in prioritizing those recommendations that could best advance the overarching 'mission' of the Act to advance the integration of economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. We came to the general conclusion that this objective would be best served by focusing on refinements that would improve the Act's framework, including overarching principles and objectives, and its effectiveness to incent, monitor and report the widest range of initiatives within and beyond Government. This led to the corollary conclusion that proposing a significant number of additional or adjusted Goals would be less useful, since the biggest challenge is to broaden the process of economic and environmental integration rather than merely focus it on a narrow set of specific prescriptive targets.

This is not to say that targets not specifically addressed within our recommendations are not worthwhile. To the contrary, in the subsequent summary report on the consultation we will name quite a few additional specific suggestions received from the public. We encourage the Government to review those recommendations considering whether they are aligned with the intentions of the Act (or with any other relevant pieces of legislation such as the *Environment Act*) advance them and as appropriate and possible in policy and action. The more actions that

proliferate throughout Government in accord with the principles of EGSPA, the more quickly the premise of integration of holistic environmental, economic and social action will be embedded as the basis for genuine sustainable prosperity.

The specific recommendations regarding *EGSPA* and their rationale follows (noted according to the pertinent Section of the Act):

### **Section 1 Name**

**Recommendation 1: *The name of the Act should be amended to ‘An Act Respecting Sustainable Environmental and Economic Prosperity’ or ‘An Act Respecting Sustainability’ to reflect the Act’s focus on the integration of environmental and economic priorities.***

Presently, the name suggests that the Act considers two separate and distinct streams – environmental Goals and sustainable prosperity. In reality, these two are inseparable. Sustainable prosperity can only be built upon the foundation of a resilient and healthy environment which can furnish the resources necessary for humankind to flourish: clean air and water, fertile soil, abundant forests and fish, and a stable climate. Sustainable prosperity also requires a robust economy. We believe that the substance of the Act should be reflected in its name. This is especially important since the name sets the tone for what follows. With regard to naming options, we prefer ‘Sustainable Environmental and Economic Prosperity’ as the term ‘sustainability’ still seems to cause some confusion.

### **Section 2 Definitions**

#### **Section 2 (1)**

**Recommendation 2: *Definitions relating to interpretation of the Act will need to be adjusted to reflect suggested amendments and to provide further clarity to the Act.***

For example, some submissions asked that the Act define sustainability and sustainable prosperity and to clarify the linkages between environment and economy. While the Round Table is not at this point prepared to offer one specific definition for each of these terms, we will suggest context for definitions of sustainability and sustainable prosperity.

The ultimate goal of sustainability is to improve the quality of life within the means of nature in a way that is fair and equitable to present and future generations, as well as to other species. It seeks to bring socio-cultural, economic and ecological dimensions into a harmonious relationship. It requires that we do not consume resources faster than they can be renewed, nor produce wastes faster than they can be absorbed by the ecosphere. Sustainable prosperity builds on the attributes of sustainability and strives to create a strong and productive economy, a healthy environment and flourishing and resilient communities.

Examples of definitions that may capture these concepts are:

Sustainability:

According to the World Commission on Environment and Development:

*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*

Alternatively:

*Allowing life to thrive in all the important and meaningful ways including living within natural or functional limits, understanding the inter-dependencies and inter-connectedness of life in a particular environment, economy and society, and the appropriate and fair distribution of information, opportunity and resources within and between the parts of any given whole based upon both fair exchange and need.*

Sustainable Prosperity:

*A state of economic development, where individuals, families and communities enjoy a high standard of living and a high quality of life, while respecting and preserving the natural environment; and*

*A new balance of economic competition with economic cooperation that promotes the efficient use and sharing of natural resources, technologies, knowledge and capital at the local, national and global levels.*

## **Section 2 (2)**

***Recommendation 3: The Round Table proposes that the Act be amended to reflect a shared responsibility for outcomes between the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.***

Since sustainability is a shared responsibility among Government, industry and civil society, a method must be found to engage all Nova Scotians regardless of their individual roles. The Province can provide leadership by ensuring all Departments assume responsibility for contributing to the Goals of the Act and for reporting their respective contributions for inclusion in annual reports.

Within Government, we also believe it is important that the Act is positioned so that its focus on the integration of environment and economy is reinforced. Although we are informed that there is precedent for an Act to be the overall shared responsibility of more than one Minister, there is some concern that that this could be unwieldy and could result in confusion regarding lines of authority, responsibility and communication. While, to a significant degree, the Departments of Environment and Economic and Rural Development and Tourism have collaborated well with regard to *EGSPA*, we still believe that the Act and its purposes would benefit if the spheres of both environment and economic development had a direct relationship and accountability named and structured within the context of the Act.

We therefore believe that even if Section 2 (d) continues to define Minister as the Minister of Environment (revised from Minister of Environment and Labour) that the Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism should also be named in the Act as sharing responsibility for progress and reporting under the Act to encourage ongoing collaboration and responsibility. Minimally, this could be accomplished by revisions to Section 6 (1) and possibly be extended to shared responsibility in additional Sections.

## **Section 3 Foundation and Principles of the Act**

### **Section 3 (1)**

**No specific recommendation.** Comment: The Act (as written in 2007), builds on the foundations of the Province's prior achievements in developing recycling programs, managing waste, and innovation in environmentally sustainable technologies. While these achievements are notable, they are now commonplace in numerous regions across Canada and around the world. The Government could consider adding an example pertaining to more recent advances, such as in the spheres of energy efficiency or renewable energy. In order to maintain a leadership role, it is necessary for the Province to reinvigorate our commitments to reflect current realities and to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

### **Section 3 (2)**

The Round Table believes the Act's articulation of Principles in the Section is one of its strengths. Although these could always be refined, we deem this Section to be substantially complete. The Round Table wishes to raise only two potential alterations to this Section. Following those recommendations, we will raise one additional topic for consideration without recommendation.

**Recommendation 4: *The province could include a principle stating its intention to use a systems approach to involve all Departments in meeting the commitments of the Act and to make explicit linkages between environment and economy.***

In general terms, the Round Table felt that the principles upon which the Act is based were appropriate. Some submissions suggested, and the Round Table agrees, that the Province adopt a 'systems' approach to sustainability. Systems thinking allows for more holistic and detailed understanding of today's complex issues. Current issues have many interrelated and interdisciplinary facets, and it is vitally important that we understand their systemic causes as well as the consequences of our own actions. Understanding the big picture is essential to determining how we can meet our local needs while contributing to national and international aspirations. A systems approach allows us to more seamlessly integrate activities across and within Departments and jurisdictions. For example, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is undertaking capacity-strengthening activities aimed at assisting municipalities throughout Canada to have a better comprehension of systems thinking with a particular focus on meeting the challenges of climate change. These activities are further coordinated at a global level through programs supported by the United Nations.

A systems approach would find its practical application in coordination between departments of Governments and in some cases in multi-stakeholder approaches to addressing challenges wherein provincial Government and its departments or agencies would be collaborating stakeholders. Such collaboration should reach beyond the narrow boundaries of Government and the private business sector. For example, the Round Table would like to see a deeper integration, in particular with our numerous universities and community colleges, which are hotbeds of innovation that can make tangible contributions to sustainable prosperity. Similarly the non-Governmental volunteer sector has a long history of collaboration with Government, as do citizens at large. It will also be important that the Government continue to work closely, respectfully and supportively with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia for whom the sphere of sustainable prosperity is an important priority.

**Recommendation 5: *The Mi'kmaq concept of Netukulimk should be considered as the basis for an additional principle within Section 3 (2).***

As previously mentioned, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia hold a long and abiding interest in, and commitment to, core principles consistent with *EGSPA*. In particular, the submission received from the Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative proposed that *EGSPA* include an additional principle: 'The Province shall aspire to integrate into its decision making the Mi'kmaq concept of Netukulimk; that is, achieving adequate standards of community and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our environment'. As this statement seems entirely in accord with the purposes and Goals of *EGSPA*, the Round Table suggests that, in the absence of mitigating reasons, a principle expressing this intent be incorporated into the Act both to enforce its vision and to acknowledge the wisdom held within Nova Scotia's original peoples.

**An Additional Topic**

We wish to refer to one change that was recommended in multiple submissions, regarding inclusion of the principle of 'environmental rights' potentially in the form of the provision of an 'Environmental Bill of Rights' to enhance public participatory rights and Government accountability. The discussion of environmental rights has been percolating in many global forums and is too substantive to receive only cursory attention in this document. In general such a statement or 'bill of rights' would articulate that every resident (and some would include other species) has a right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment and that the Government of Nova Scotia has an obligation to protect this right.

While some members of the Round Table have voiced support for this view, others disagree, suggesting that this type of action could lead to further legal uncertainties and potentially, protracted litigation. The Round Table has determined that this action is not properly within the purview of *EGSPA* but more properly would be addressed in the context of the Environment Act. We therefore decided not to take any of our limited time during the course of our review to discuss this matter in greater depth. Aware only that the Environment Act itself underwent a review in the latter part of 2011, we have not sought to explore any discussions that may have pertained to this matter. We do, however, suggest that the topic of environmental rights is worthy of periodic consideration and that the Government should consider its applicability in the context of evolving mores and legislation. Related to environmental rights there were also representations that there are procedural rights, including more barrier-free access to environmental information through the Environmental Registry, which we also deemed outside the scope of *EGSPA* but which the Round Table was substantially in support of.

**Section 4 Objectives and Goals**

**Section 4.1 Objectives**

Many submissions on this Section suggested there is a lack of clarity around the long-term objectives of the Act and how best to measure our progress toward them. If we think of our long-term objective as a journey toward sustainability, this would suggest progress along a continuum from business-as-usual through a transition phase and moving steadily in the direction of sustainability. If we consider business-as-usual as our starting point, the primary focus has been economic growth measured by GDP. As we move through the transition phase, we adopt green technologies, begin to integrate systems and create a more holistic suite of tools to measure our progress. As we advance along our continuum, we begin to place a

greater value on ecosystem goods and services, holism, social inclusion, stewardship and long-range planning measured by genuine progress indicators. The province is clearly progressing along this continuum, including the development of a broader range of indicators to measure our progress to supplement GDP.

**Recommendation 6: *This Section of the Act should be amended to provide clear focus on integrated environment and economy and to set long-term objectives that can be more clearly understood and measured.***

The Round Table has considered a number of options for this revised Section. While open to a variety of formulations, a few suggested versions follow below:

For example, it may be more in the spirit of the Act to have one integrated objective rather than two separate economic and environmental objectives, such as:

*To foster sustainable economic growth through ongoing activities aimed at creating a more efficient, productive, innovative and competitive Nova Scotia as indicated by both the GDP and broader suite of indicators of prosperity, progress and wellbeing.*

Alternatively, a multi-part set of objectives may be appropriate, such as:

*The long-term environmental and economic objective of the Province is to broadly integrate environmental sustainability and economic prosperity by 2020, thereby furthering sustainable prosperity in Nova Scotia, and to this end to:*

- (a) demonstrate international leadership in the integration of environment and economy through strategies that integrate economic and environmental Goals;*
- (b) demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship by meeting clear and progressive environmental Goals; and*
- (c) improve the Province's economic performance to a level that is equal to or above the Canadian average and demonstrate continuous improvement towards sustainable prosperity, employing evaluative indicators including both Gross Domestic Product and a broader suite of Indicators of Prosperity.*

An alternative formulation that could be relevant is:

*Genuine progress indicators will be developed that supplement GDP to measure continuous progress of the province as well as our performance relative to the Canadian average.*

It is also pointed out that in Section 4 and in other parts of the Act the overemphasis on environmental Goals can be moderated. There are some opportunities to adjust the language that refers to 'environmental' Goals or objectives to state 'environmental and economic objectives'. This would reinforce the focus on integration.

## **Section 4 (2) Goals**

The Round Table notes that a number (currently 13) of the original Goals contained within this Section have been achieved. A number of others are progressing in accord with their expected time tables or at least progressing. In general, the Round Table wishes to stress that these Goals should not be viewed as static targets - once completed, then out of mind. Rather, they should generally be understood to be platforms upon which further progress can be built. Indeed

in some cases, original Goals have been substantially surpassed or have spawned new, next stage initiatives.

As a case in point, a number of targets concentrate on aspects of provincial energy and emission strategies or performance. These have relevance and impact on broader policy concerns: energy security (including energy transition and diversity); greenhouse gas and climate change mitigation and adaptation; economic and social impacts of higher fuel costs; and various pollution reduction objectives. While achievements and progress have been significant on the specific Goals, the more comprehensive program of policies and initiatives undertaken since the establishment of *EGSPA* (and during two provincial administrations) is most notable. These have originated, or are being advanced, in various agencies including the Departments of Energy, Environment (including the Climate Change Directorate), Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, Conserve Nova Scotia (now superseded by non-Governmental Efficiency Nova Scotia) and the NS Utilities and Review Board. Success has also required substantial related efforts by Nova Scotia Power.

In the estimation of the Round Table, it is important that the momentum is maintained towards advancing the overall objectives and building on the original targets within *EGSPA*. As potential further linkages between the environment and the economy, we recommend:

**Recommendation 7: *Each EGSPA Goal should be considered as a platform and in some cases an example for further progress - advancing and integrating environmental and economic prosperity objectives. Therefore, with regard to Goals that have already been achieved:***

- ***When a Goal refers to development of a strategy or policy (k, Water-Resource Management strategy; n, Wetlands policy; q, Sustainable Procurement policy; u, Natural Capital strategies), the Province should focus and continue to report on progress in implementation.***
- ***When a Goal refers to a level, percentage or rate (such as regarding emissions, electricity from renewable sources or waste), the Province should continue to meet the target and then, as an added consideration, assess going further where viable and practical.***
- ***When a Goal refers to a pilot or demonstration (t, Government facility in accord with a leading standard), the Province should indicate on an annual basis how and to what extent they have improved on that standard in other new facilities and applied elements of these best practice examples to other Government facilities.***
- ***With regard to all Goals, the Province should report annually on analysis regarding opportunities to extend progress beyond the original goal to either a higher level or to wider applicability.***
- ***If, on the other hand, the Province believes that a particular goal is either no longer relevant, achievable or worthwhile or should for any reason be adjusted (due to factors such as costs compared to benefits, relative priorities or their beneficial impact on the Act's overall objective), the annual report should include such analysis. If such a matter should be deemed to require adjustment prior to the annual report, then the Minister should present the analysis to the next scheduled Round Table***

***meeting so that the Round Table has opportunity to review and comment on this determination.***

**Recommendation 8: *Goals should be ‘clustered’ in so far as they can be seen as components of broader themes or strategies.***

Submissions to the Round Table also suggested that the Goals contained in Section 4 (1) would benefit from being clustered according to thematic areas. Clustering existing Goals around the outcomes to be achieved could better describe the key areas of focus and demonstrate how they connect to each other and contribute to the long-term objectives of the Act. This would also allow and encourage broader reporting on work happening around these outcomes that may not be reflected in the 21 specific Goals.

As currently presented, the Goals appear in what seems to be random order. This makes it more difficult to see the Goals in relationship to each other. In a number of cases, individual Goals are more properly understood to be parts of greater strategic initiatives. For instance, there are a number of Goals that focus on aspects of the province’s policy and management approach to energy. Other groups of Goals can similarly be seen to be part of a group of connected targets within a broader strategy.

Note that these ideas about appropriate clusters are preliminary. We propose this in principle only. The Round Table has not completed an evaluation to determine what the specific clusters should be, as this requires in-depth knowledge of inter-dependencies and connections to economic growth. They have not been vetted across Departments, so there would need to be consultation within Government to actually firm up the cluster titles and groupings of Goals within those clusters.

The clusters could build on the principles articulated in Section 3 (2), so that they would have a strengthened role in the Act. For example, a cluster on Energy could link to and reinforce EGSPA principles (e), (f) and (g) regarding innovative solutions, long-term planning, and managing Goals for sustainable prosperity. Clusters could be grouped based how they link to each other and also to the integration of the economy and environment

If clusters are identified, each one should be introduced with a brief statement of objective. This would have the particular intent to describe the overall focus of the group of activities so that additional initiatives not explicitly called for within a Goal would be encouraged, and ultimately monitored and reported upon. This would build further momentum.

For example, the clusters could include:

- 1) Energy: Sustainable production, use, and conservation of energy
- 2) Healthy Air: Better air quality for health and reduced health care costs
- 3) Protecting of Natural Assets: Protection of our forests, lands, water, biodiversity, etc.
- 4) Sustainable Leadership: Leadership by Government, private sector and public in sustainable practices.

With respect to the potential new areas that have been identified for Goals, these could be clustered under a theme area such as: Business competitiveness through sustainability.

**Recommendation 9: *Formalize the incorporation of the Province's 'Indicators of Prosperity' as the metric by which progress towards sustainable prosperity will be evaluated. Over time enhance this suite of indicators by adding a small number of complementary indicators that will improve the reporting regarding 'natural capital'.***

This group of indicators was presented to the Round Table in June 2011 by the Nova Scotia Department of Finance. They represent a group of broad indicators of social and economic well-being and were presented as part of the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* Progress Reports in 2010 and 2011 (technical reports). They are intended to be used as a general indicator set suitable to measure prosperity over time and include indicators that go beyond (but include) the primary indicator of GDP which the Round Table and many others agree is insufficient and in a number of ways an inappropriate measure of genuine prosperity. These indicators are value-free, comparable across Canadian jurisdictions, consistent (measured the same way each time) and completable (feasible to implement).

In previous years the Round Table has had a number of discussions regarding the measurement of prosperity, which have generally concluded that broad measures of social progress needs reflect more than merely the generation of domestic economic product, especially in so far as that product can in part be increased at the expense of other important aspects of social wellbeing – such as diminished environmental and social capital. The Round Table has had presentations and discussions regarding Nova Scotia's foremost tool with regard to holistic measurement of progress, the Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI) studies completed by GPI Atlantic. While those studies and tools offer a significant insight into how broader measures of progress and prosperity can be measured, we recognize that the GPI Atlantic suite of indicators is substantially more complex and labour intensive than is currently practical for implementation as an annual means of evaluation. Therefore, we believe that the provincially-generated Indicators of Prosperity offer a practical and useful way of accomplishing much of the same purpose. We also suggest that the development, application and study of indicators may be an area where the province could collaborate with universities, particularly providing graduate students valuable experience working on the development of well-being indicators, thus helping to prepare them for the workplace with real experience and state-of-the-art skills.

The one area where we believe the Indicators could be improved is with regard to the measurement of the extent and health of natural capital. Currently two of the province's indicators, The Value of Natural Resources and The Value of Renewable Resources, are included, which do supply some useful information pertaining to natural capital. At the same time since they measure economic value only, they could supply data that counter indicates what is happening with regard to the quantity and health of natural capital; for instance, if the value of natural or energy resources is growing because of significant price increases (such as oil and gas, minerals or forest products etc.) that could overshadow a decrease in these other factors. The amount and/or quality of natural resources such as forests, fish stocks or water resources could be diminishing even as the monetary value of the remaining capital is increasing. In order to counterbalance this prospect, we recommend that the Government research the feasibility of incorporating a small suite of indicators that will simply account for changes to natural capital in absolute terms.

It is important to note that indicators (individually or as a group) cannot be used mechanically. Some have suggested that a simple total 'score' should be formulated that could serve as a metric such as GDP does today. We resist that notion in so far as such mechanisms will require the application of weighted values, which of course are subject to personal or evolving social points of view. An aggregated metric 'number' would implicitly reflect the value judgments which

underlie it. We think it far better to use the suite of indicators as the basis for robust discussion and reflection. Of course values are still at play, but in this case in the exchange of ideas and ultimately to decisions and choices that reflect them. It is also worth noting that aggregated provincial indicators may distort the relative reality and differences between various regions and between Halifax, other municipalities, small towns and rural Nova Scotia.

This point can be well illustrated by reference to the set of indicators presented by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) called the 'Better Life Index'. The website <http://oecdbetterlifeindex.org/> allows individuals to simply adjust the weight of individual index based on personal values with dramatic changes in outcomes and rankings.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NEW GOALS**

As indicated above, the Round Table has determined that the 21 Goals currently contained within the Act provide a sound basis for continued action. We received a large number of recommendations proposing new Goals. In general we determined to be cautious in proposing new Goals. Nonetheless, upon reflection we wish to propose a modest number of topic areas where new Goals should be considered for inclusion in the Act. We believe that these prospective Goal topics are both aligned and would drive further achievement towards the Act's core objectives.

It is important to note that the amount of time, expertise, and analysis that the Round Table has been able to employ in considering new Goals has been insufficient to undertake a comprehensive analysis of any single prospective Goal. We believe, however, that the information presented in support of these Goals is sufficient to warrant serious evaluation of their efficacy. Such analysis should be undertaken by or on behalf of the Government as it prepares the next iteration of *EGSPA*.

This evaluation should consider the consistency and alignment of the Goal with *EGSPA*'s principles and mandate, the relative benefits of achieving the outcome of the goal, the costs to implement the Goal, and its priority.

***"Delaying action is a false economy. For every \$1 of investment that is avoided in the power sector before 2020, an additional \$4.30 would need to be spent after 2020 to compensate for the increased emissions."***

***- World Energy Outlook 2011, (International Energy Agency)***

### **Recommendation 10: Consider a Goal that sets a target to increase Nova Scotia's energy productivity by 2020**

In a posting on the Canada West Foundation website Michael Cleland, former CEO of the Canadian Gas Association and Assistant Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Canada, states, "in a Canadian perspective, of the total primary energy entering the Canadian economy, well over half becomes waste (over 16% from the power system, 38% from other aspects of energy production and transportation and end use)." Like all other kinds of waste, energy waste means lost economic opportunity. Conversely, waste reduction, in energy use as in other things, represents economic opportunity. Efficiency Nova Scotia (ENSC) is helping Nova Scotians

reduce this energy waste by building on the opportunities offered by energy efficiency and conservation, saving energy costs, and strengthening the Nova Scotia economy. In effect, the objective is not simply reducing the amount of energy used but increasing and indeed maximizing the economic value that is derived from the energy that is used. Key stakeholders recognize this reality.

While the day-to-day price of energy is affected by many geo-political and economic factors, there is no doubt that over the long term the price of non-renewable sources of energy will continue to rise. These potentially rapid increases in the cost of the fuels we use to run our economy will continue to bleed capital away from the province at a time when we need to be investing. Improving Nova Scotia's energy productivity should be considered as a Goal within *EGSPA*. ENSC has suggested and the Round Table agrees that research and careful analysis be done to get a better understanding of the gaps in Nova Scotia's energy productivity and set specific economic targets to complement the environmental targets currently in the Act. For example, if the analysis supports the case, a revised *EGSPA* could set such a specific energy productivity target.

The Round Table has heard some concerns expressed from some sectors that they would be forced to bear the brunt of any efforts to apply a broad brush target to energy productivity. Large energy-using sectors that have already undertaken substantial energy efficiency measures may feel that the costs cannot be justified or borne altogether, or that achieving further significant efficiency improvements is not feasible. Further, they may conclude that further aggressive energy efficiency measures may be at the cost of global competitiveness that could jeopardize their long-term viability in Nova Scotia. We respect these concerns and although generally we suspect that additional energy productivity gains are possible, in virtually every sector that such concerns will be an obstacle. It occurs to us that one way of addressing such concerns would be to qualify energy productivity targets by linking them at least in some key sectors to sectoral comparisons across competitive jurisdictions. If, for instance, an overall % target were balanced by a sector-based reference such as the top quartile of comparable facilities, it would incent industries to advance to a leading position within their industries without requiring an absolute achievement that could have competitive negative consequences. We propose that being in the top tier of energy productivity performance in virtually any sector will reveal economic benefit - through efficiencies, reputational and market advantages.

To advance achievement of this goal, Government could consider (after analysis as called for previously) a range of potential steps including:

- Adoption of new National Building Code energy efficiency standards for all new industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings by 2014.
- Requirement that Provincial Government lease of any space in buildings newly constructed or undergoing major renovations meet certified energy efficiency criteria beginning in 2015.
- Requirement for all homes to have an energy efficiency rating at time of sale by 2015 (noting that such a requirement would need to be accompanied by a means of assuring that home owners of modest means are not required to shoulder an unfair burden).
- An increase in the required energy efficiency rating (building code standard) for new homes to EnerGuide 83 by 2016.
- A requirement for all new residential homes to be net zero energy users by 2025.

The Round Table recommends that while a new goal regarding energy productivity should be considered, it does not believe that the subsidiary targets named above should be included in

the Act as Goals within Section 4 (2), at least at this time. All of these steps towards energy productivity require additional analysis and consideration and the precise package of measures may evolve over time. If any or all of these steps are deemed useful, in some cases they could be more simply mandated by Regulation within the Act, or established as committed provincial policies or goals outside of legislation. We do caution, however, that history indicates that Goals or strategies left to casual implementation are less likely to be reached, particularly in time-certain fashion.

**Recommendation 11: *Develop and Implement a Sustainable Transportation Strategy***

A significant number of submissions called for Nova Scotia to develop and implement a comprehensive Sustainable Transportation Strategy. These submissions pointed to the significant environmental impacts associated with transportation emissions and particularly the substantial proportion of provincial greenhouse gas emissions from both citizen and commercial transportation due to combustion of fossil fuels. In addition, the rising cost of fuels was of concern especially insofar as it is making daily commuting and more distant commercial and personal transportation increasingly unaffordable.

Within the broad umbrella of sustainable transportation, specific suggestions contained with submissions to the Round Table included means and incentives to accelerate the conversion to sustainably produced electricity and other transportation fuels, the conversion to electric and advanced hybrid vehicles, incentives and restrictions on single vehicle use, time of day charging of vehicle batteries, the revival of Nova Scotia's railways, implementation of potential light rail or other enhanced mass transit options, active transportation systems, and alternatives to continued expansion and maintenance of highway infrastructure.

The Round Table is not in a position to assess the viability or relationship of these and many other options, but we do endorse the general priority to focus on sustainable transportation options and systems, presuming that analysis concludes that these or other options achieve the best alignment between environmental, economic and social objectives. With that in mind, we recommend the development of such a strategy. We are already aware that the matter of sustainable transportation has been receiving considerable attention with the provincial Government that has convened multiple stakeholder workshops on the topic. We are informed that the outcome has been substantive effort to develop a strategy. Inclusion of this goal within EGSPA can only reinforce, and perhaps accelerate, this process.

**Recommendation 12: *To advance and support current and future investments and programming that help to harmonize both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability, the Province should develop and implement a Green Economy and Jobs Labour Market Strategy explicitly linked and integrated as far as possible with the Province's economic growth strategy (currently named jobsHere).***

It is important that the Province's vision for continued economic growth features sustainable prosperity as a core concept – articulating the benefits and necessity of developing an economy that integrates and protects its environmental, economic and social assets. Such a strategy would foster ongoing activities aimed at creating a more efficient, productive, innovative and competitive Nova Scotia as key enablers of genuine prosperity. We are convinced that these principles line up with and reinforce the direction of the current provincial economic growth strategy, jobsHere. The Round Table recognizes that growing and strengthening the economy is a key priority. The Province's economic growth strategy is focused on improving the long-term fundamentals (productivity, competitiveness, workforce skills), and cannot be reflected merely in

short-term GDP measures. We therefore also applaud the Province's initiative in developing and implementing 'Indicators of Prosperity' (Nova Scotia Department of Finance) as a means of presenting a more holistic suite of indicators to gauge our overall progress (more on this is outlined in another section of this document).

jobsHere implicitly recognizes that environmental performance typically equates with competitiveness, especially in so far as environmental practices lead to cost avoidance and "doing more with less." This is in line with the Province's objectives to increase competitiveness and create jobs. While companies may consider it a disadvantage to have to adhere to environmental practices, in fact it can help their competitive position. This is particularly the case today with regard to energy efficiency. Energy efficiency leads to decreased consumption, which in most production processes is a significant factor in product cost. Beyond individual business that profit, broader social arguments can be made in terms of a healthier environment and job creation. Many current and planned renewable energy projects in the province involve millions of dollars of investment and create good jobs in all regions of the province.

**"RBC believes this is a great time for clients to invest in energy efficiency, and waste reduction. The business case is pretty straightforward, and the payback can be quite quick."**

- Nov.2011, Andrea Bolger, Head of Business Services, Royal Bank of Canada

jobsHere has focused on establishing baselines and measuring progress, rather than a target-driven approach. Global and national economic conditions and other factors beyond the Province's control represent a challenge when establishing targets. Nonetheless, EGSPA can add a dimension to this effort by framing the overall objective, create a goal(s) that will drive the development and implementation of key strategies, and provide a focused vehicle to monitor and report progress in the context of sustainable prosperity. In this way, EGSPA, through the Round Table (but not exclusively the Round Table), can provide a broader framework to link relevant job and economic creation activities that are within the pillars of the Province's economic development strategy. These include a number of new or prospective and inter-linked provincial strategies including a Clean Tech Strategy, Work Force Strategy, Green Economy and Labour Market Strategy, and productivity, innovation and international commerce (trade) initiatives.

Recent input offered from those involved in the sector provided the Round Table with a brief summary of some of the opportunities associated with these sectors:

*Clean Technology Sector* - One area of opportunity is the emerging clean technology sector. "Cleantech" is based on the principles of minimizing environmental impact through responsible use of resources, while enhancing productivity. The Province should pursue further development of this sector, including opportunities that are specific to Nova Scotia such as ocean renewable energy (wave, tidal and hydrokinetic). The sector includes forms of renewable energy that also provide economic benefit.

*Bio-economy* - Another potential area of opportunity involves strategies for the "bio-economy." The bio-economy is based on innovative, high-value uses within traditional industries. It encompasses several areas, such as bio-products in the agricultural, life sciences and forestry sectors (e.g., stronger wood products in construction, innovative fibres), bio-mass, bio-fuels, and others. Procurement strategies can be supportive in terms of creating requirements for such

products and building markets. The bio-economy is currently being considered at the national level, and Nova Scotia could follow a complementary approach by looking at opportunities unique to the province. The Round Table adds a caution regarding contentious aspects of this opportunity area bearing on distinctions between specialties such as biodynamics and those focused on genetically modified organisms.

*Financing* - Key to success will be ensuring availability of “tools that enable” greater efficiency and productivity. Financing can be a significant barrier. Individuals need to make the case within companies for internal capital. It is understood that managers have to demonstrate payback within 18 months, which is a relatively short timeframe. There are existing approaches, such as building costs into electricity bills and analyzing the net present value (NPV) of the investment. It would be beneficial to consider how to structure financing to help companies defray costs and overcome this barrier.

*International Commerce/Trade* – The jobsHere strategy identifies international commerce as a priority, as growth for many Nova Scotia companies will be achieved through expansion into new markets. Companies can strengthen their ability to meet export requirements, often by measuring and reducing their carbon footprint. “Green” practices can also offer advantages from a marketing perspective. This is in addition to benefits derived from reduced energy and resource input costs. The Act may be able to reinforce efforts already underway to support such activities.

In these and a variety of other economic spheres we believe that *EGSPA* could effectively serve as a lens and in some cases a filter through which major economic development decisions would be assessed. This would provide a means of reinforcing the principles at the core of *EGSPA* and ensuring that they are taken seriously in economic development policy and actions.

**"Canadian firms need to increase their commitment and share of revenues devoted to clean energy technologies, and enhance collaboration with universities doing leading edge research on it."**

- "Clean Growth 2.0 - How Canada can be a leader in Energy and Environmental Innovation," Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE). Nov. 2010

**Recommendation 13: *EGSPA* should acknowledge the need to facilitate access to competitive electricity rates for businesses and citizens for long-term prosperity in accord with *EGSPA*'s Goals regarding clean, alternative and renewable energy diversity.**

This Goal could potentially include considerations related to the optimal mix of renewable energy sources to support achievement of these rates while simultaneously paying attention to significant energy security issues. The approach recognizes that in the long term, the most energy efficient and environmentally benign approach may change, which requires ongoing attention and study. For example, some have suggested that the preferred approach to distributed energy should evolve to an electricity-centred system wherein common services such as home and facility heating and transportation energy will be primarily derived from regional as well as on-site electrical power generation and distribution. The next step should likely be substantive study of the relationships between energy production, security and cost alternatives.

Such an evolutionary approach could:

- Encourage energy efficiency projects and initiatives that help to decrease operational costs and enhance business competitiveness;
- Incent and expand access to affordable, clean, locally-sourced or home-generated energy in all regions of the province;
- Serve as part of an economic development strategy including capacity strengthening;
- Be consistent with an evolution away from fossil fuel-based electrical generation; and
- Be in accord with more robust energy security strategies.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CURRENT GOALS**

Although we are not recommending any specific changes to current Goals, we do believe that a number of these goals can be built on and enhanced. Comments that follow are not intended to be a report on progress under the Act. As stated elsewhere that is not the mandate of this review. We would like, however, to offer some comments on current Goals insofar as submissions from the public have highlighted issues and challenges worth noting that are relevant to extending the advancement of sustainable prosperity in accord with the Act.

<b>4(2)</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Issues and Comments</b>
(a)	Legally protect 12% of land mass	In progress	There is wide divergence among stakeholder submissions, ranging from calls to aggressively meet an increased Goal of 17% or even 20% to abandoning the Goal altogether. The Round Table has not come to consensus on this matter but agrees generally that the Goal should be met. At the same time, it is important to monitor and evaluate the costs and timing of so doing, in light of changing and dynamic financial and environmental considerations. Some views were expressed that lands considered for legal protection or considered for protection beyond 12% should be reviewed to determine if they offer a strategic use other than protection that should be considered.
(b)	Adopt emissions standards for new motor vehicles	Met	No comment
(c)	Reduce Nitrogen oxide emissions by 20%	Met	No comment
(d)	Reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 50%	Met	No specific comment but a general comment regarding Goals b, c and d: it is difficult to gauge the degree to which continuous improvement opportunities can and should be looked for in the absence of more clarity about baseline conditions, the relative significance

4(2)	Goal	Status	Issues and Comments
			(in terms of health and other benefits) of these reduction levels, current or emerging best practices, and the anticipated associated costs of further improvements.
(e)	Reduce GHG emissions by 10%	In progress	This Goal is on time and target to date. There were some submissions that this target is insufficient in light of current global climate change (IPCC) science predictions. It is recognized that Canada has been lagging with regard to climate change response in policy and action and that, even with this Goal, Nova Scotia is a relative leader. That said, we encourage Nova Scotia to look for every feasible opportunity to accelerate reduction of GHG emissions in consideration of the severity and dangerous implications of climate change.
(f)	Reduce mercury emissions by 70%	In progress	Some concerns have been voiced by stakeholders and within the Round Table that the cost of this transition is large and that while there is no denying the health and environmental benefits of mercury reductions of this magnitude, there is insufficient analysis of the costs in light of benefits of various levels of reduction. Therefore in light of other environmental improvement options, there are some concerns that the current time table is not optimal. Others strongly support rapid achievement of this Goal.
(g)	18.5% energy from renewable sources	In progress	There is some concern regarding the effects on electricity rates in the short term, although in general the Round Table believes that the transition to a low carbon fuel mix will lead to economic and competitive efficiencies while achieving important environmental commitments. The Round Table also endorses the view that merely adding renewable energy into the energy system is an insufficient response to the overall dimensions of our energy challenge. Every opportunity should be seized to take advantage of demand management as a key means of reducing the Province's energy demand and waste. We note that the Province has established more aggressive renewable energy targets in the context of the Renewable Electricity Plan that should be considered for synchronization within <i>EGSPA</i> . Substantive stakeholder

4(2)	Goal	Status	Issues and Comments
			recommendations regarding challenges and strategies to achieve greater energy security should also be assessed although this has been beyond the current time and ability of the Round Table to do so.
(h)	Meet standard for airborne fine particulate matter	Met	No comment
(i)	Meet standard for ground level ozone	Met	No comment
(j)	Meet standard for public drinking water supplies	In progress	The Round Table has concerns that this Goal is as yet unmet four years after its original target and simultaneously that the costs of conversion are creating a difficult burden for municipalities. We believe that the Province should address this dilemma by considering means of cushioning some municipalities from costs beyond their ability and by exploring alternative approaches to meeting these standards such as the potential of ecologically engineered infrastructure (such as taking advantage of the environmental services of wetlands, forests and protected areas).
(k)	Water-Resource Management strategy	Met	Per general comments above that emphasis shifts to implementation and implementation monitoring
(l)	Primary treatment for wastewater	In progress	No comment
(m)	Regulatory tools for contaminated lands	Regulations released in March 2012 for implementation in 2013	This Goal has been 'met' by release of new Regulations for contaminated site management just as the Round Table was completing this Report. The Round Table had received submissions and had been concerned that this Goal had not been met in so far as it did not require an outlay of capital despite significant prospective benefits. Note also that despite the release of new Regulations, they will not come into effect until July 2013.
(n)	Wetlands policy	Met	Per general comments above that emphasis shifts to implementation and implementation monitoring
(o)	Solid waste disposal rate of 300kg/person	In progress	Strong and consistent messaging has been received from municipalities and regional waste reduction/management professionals

4(2)	Goal	Status	Issues and Comments
			<p>that this Goal, while worthwhile, will be difficult for municipalities to bear under current finance and cost models. The Round Table agrees that the costs of the initiatives and programs that will be required are going to place a substantial burden on municipal and regional budgets and thus on property tax payers. We recommend that the Minister engages with the Resource Recovery Fund Board, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, and key product and packaging sectors to expand current stewardship regimes consistently and in accord with principles of extended producer responsibility to generate the resources necessary to meet these targets. We also believe that enhanced public awareness and especially social marketing techniques will be key elements towards fulfilling this objective.</p>
(p)	Follow guidelines for septage treatment	In progress	No comment
(q)	Sustainable procurement policy	Met	<p>Consideration may be given to cross-referencing the Sustainable Procurement Policy, developed in 2009 and now in the implementation phase, with the <i>Public Procurement Act</i> that was passed in 2011. The <i>Public Procurement Act</i> has clear references to sustainable procurement and encourages all public sector entities in the province covered by the Act (e.g., municipalities, academic institutions, school boards, health authorities, and others) to consider sustainable criteria in their procurement decisions.</p>
(r)	Display EnerGuide rating at new residential dwellings	Revised	<p>The mandatory label for new homes requirement was in essence revised and deemed addressed by the introduction of energy efficiency requirements for all new homes and small apartment buildings as of December 2009. This had been agreed to by NSE in lieu of the <i>EGSPA</i> requirements, as it would address all Part 9 buildings, not just single family dwellings.</p> <p>The Round Table believes that, while the approach taken has merits, in that it extends the focus more broadly, the original Goal should also be reinstated.</p>

4(2)	Goal	Status	Issues and Comments
			<p>The Round Table is aware that the label scheme pertaining to houses is in some flux. Natural Resources Canada (NR Can), which administers and promotes the EnerGuide rating system is in the process of developing a new more robust label scheme, which could be put into place that could be available for not only new homes but all existing homes and which may be supported by market transformation grant programs delivered provincially. If anticipated this program would apply on the sale of the home it would apply equally to both new and existing homes.</p> <p>It has also been suggested that the intent of this Goal could be fulfilled through changes to the provincial <i>Building Code Act</i>. If this were introduced as a requirement under the <i>Building Code Act</i> the municipalities would be exposed to additional liabilities not considered in the original intent of the Act.</p> <p>In light of all these factors, the Round Table recommends that the Government consider the best alternatives to address the intent of this Goal, including further engagement with NR Can regarding the timing, details and implications of their initiative.</p>
(s)	Achieve EnerGuide rating of 80 for new residential dwellings	Met	<p>This Goal is being superseded by rapidly evolving standards. Efficiency Nova Scotia has represented, and the Round Table agrees, that more progress should be encouraged. While we do not suggest that the literal Goal within the Act should be revised, we encourage the Province to use other means (potentially the application of Regulations) to drive enhanced achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in the required energy efficiency rating (building code standard) for new homes to EnerGuide 83 by 2016.</li> <li>• A requirement for all new residential homes to be 'net zero' energy users by 2025.</li> </ul>
(t)	Demonstration facility	Met	<p>While this Goal has been met, the Round Table believes that this should serve as a platform for continued progress. While the Goal itself does not need to be changed, we believe that the Province should be looking to</p>

4(2)	Goal	Status	Issues and Comments
			<p>develop new demonstration facilities in alignment with emerging and improved standards, including design and development of a significant net zero facility. In addition we believe it important that the Province develop a strategy and policies to transition all Government-owned or -leased facilities (in so far as practical and economically prudent) to high performance standards. In addition, although the Goal does not require that the standard applied should be <i>Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Environmental Design</i> (LEED), it should clarify that other 3<sup>rd</sup> party evaluation standards should be considered. This is particularly important in the context of Nova Scotia in that this province has an important and robust wood products industry. While not disallowed under the LEED standard, wood is disadvantaged in the context of the standard's overall point system. Recognizing the benefits of wood products, including the ability to employ locally sourced materials, the Province should seek to incent high performance buildings that take advantage of this significant renewable local resource.</p>
(u)	Strategy for natural capital in forestry, mining, parks, and biodiversity	Met	<p>Met through the Natural Resources Strategy. Even so, the Round Table recommends that this priority continues through the active implementation of the Strategy, which includes time frames that allow transition within the forest industry; by renewed commitment within relevant Departments to the preservation and enhancement of natural capital (and its deployment consistently in accord with the principles of sustainable prosperity for the overall wellbeing of Nova Scotia) and development of an enhanced suite of Indicators of Prosperity as called for elsewhere in this document.</p>

### **Sections 5 & 8 Regarding the Governor in Council**

The Round Table feels that these Sections are very pertinent to the Act and we encourage the Minister to develop new sectoral or Governmental agreements or understandings both within Nova Scotia and with other jurisdictions as appropriate so long as the agreements show clearly how they will benefit sustainable prosperity as defined within the revised Act. Further sectoral or Governmental agreements will demonstrate to Nova Scotians that the present Government is

determined to fulfill its required mandate under the *EGSPA* Goals and principles in a public, collaborative, and transparent way. Examples of sectoral agreements that the Minister should consider include partnerships with academia (NS universities and colleges), Nova Scotia Power Inc., and Inter-Governmental (e.g. in association with Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, Energy, Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal). The evolving relationship with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia should identify partnerships in accord with objectives of those communities to realize first stable then sustainable prosperity. The submissions from the Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative, the Maritime Aboriginal Peoples' Council and the Native Council of Nova Scotia all identified a number of areas where both partnership and more explicit relationship to *EGSPA* are deemed appropriate – regarding home and commercial energy efficiency programs including assertive yet reasonable application of the National Building Code and EnerGuide Programs and legally protected lands.

**Recommendation 14: A new sub-Section S.5 (n) should be considered that provides for the possibility that the Minister “from time to time undertake full cost accounting for the Goals and/or initiatives in this Act”.**

Full cost accounting can be beneficial to ensuring that environmental gains do not come at detriment to the economy or vice versa. This method of cost accounting incorporates full life cycle costs and should include different temporal scales in the final analysis (e.g. short term, long term). If the Government finds it difficult financially or otherwise in terms of available resources to conduct holistic lifecycle assessments including full cost or triple bottom line accounting, it should consider other means such as entering into sectoral agreements with the academic institutions in our Province, where there are many qualified graduate students and faculty that could accomplish this important work, given that the Province has the highest per capita rate of universities in the country.

### **Section 6 Review of EGSPA**

The Round Table is pleased to continue maintaining a direct relationship with the Minister in order to review this Act on both an annual and five-year basis. The Round Table is comprised of representatives from many different sectors and age groups, who have been able to provide valuable input and a range of perspectives. As indicated earlier, the Round Table suggests that the review of *EGSPA* should be broadened to overtly include both the Ministers of Environment and of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. It is deemed important that both Departments share responsibility and accountability for performance under the Act. We are pleased to note that since the establishment of the Round Table, both Departments have taken an active interest and engagement with the Round Table with both Deputy Ministers and key staff typically attending all Round Table meetings. At the same time we are aware that at the time of the Annual Report, the Department of Environment takes primary responsibility and the Annual Report, including response to the Round Table's comments, are issued by the Minister of Environment only. We believe that formalizing shared responsibility for the Act, at least in the context of reporting, will drive more complete involvement and mutual participation by both key departments and in turn lead to a stronger voice throughout Government.

**Recommendation 15: Extend the period for the periodic comprehensive review of the Act from 6 to 9 months duration.**

The current review is the first of two planned five year reviews. While the process of the review went smoothly and public comments were well received, the Round Table strongly feels that a 6-month review deadline is not sufficient given the vast amount of planning and preparations,

analysis and discussions that were required to thoroughly review this important legislation. The Round Table feels that 9 months would be a more realistic timeframe in which it could augment the public consultation process and provide for more thorough discussion between the Round Table members, who as volunteers usually have full-time professional careers that also require time and attention.

**Recommendation 16: *The Annual EGSPA report should explicitly require input from across Government Departments that have contributed to EGSPA's objectives through relevant initiatives.***

The annual and periodic reports on *EGSPA* should reflect how government as a whole is embodying the principles of the Act and therefore all Departments should be asked to report on any initiatives that are aligned with and support the purposes of the Act. The Round Table thinks that the annual review of *EGSPA* Goals is a worthwhile exercise and that an appropriate revision within the Act should explicitly call on other Departments to report on policies and initiatives (e.g. annually or more frequently) that foster sustainable prosperity. This will demonstrate a more holistic view of the current Government's initiatives towards sustainable prosperity for our Province and should be reported in the annual review developed by the Round Table. This will also incent other Departments to consider *EGSPA* as a lens through which they consider potential actions and initiatives.

It is important to appreciate that *EGSPA* set the vision for a sustainable and prosperous Nova Scotia that will pursue economic growth in a sustainable way. It put that commitment into a legal framework that helps protect this priority from political cycles. Since 2007, it is therefore not surprising that many significant achievements have occurred in the province, such as Lower Churchill, investments in tidal, the \$24-million Clean Technology Fund and others. While these were not specifically referenced in the Act, it is believed they have happened in large part because *EGSPA* set the vision and spelled out the intention of the province. It has been a catalyst for sustainable development.

The Round Table requested and received a research summary (November 08, 2011) from staff of the Department of Environment on Nova Scotia Government projects and programs where economic and environmental outcomes are linked. This research revealed an impressive catalogue of dozens of such initiatives from a wide range of departments. We noted that most of these initiatives were not referenced within the *EGSPA* Annual Report, which focused specifically on those initiatives associated with the 21 Goals contained within the Act. This circumstance does not encourage *EGSPA*-related actions. We believe that their exclusion in essence constitutes a perverse incentive with regard to provincial Government enthusiasm for *EGSPA*, in that Government receives criticism when specific *EGSPA* Goals are not meeting time or performance expectations even as a host of positive initiatives are not receiving much recognition. We believe that this will be rectified if the Act is adjusted in accord with this recommendation.

The framework for departmental actions should explicitly encourage inter-departmental initiatives and collaboration which in the spirit of *EGSPA*'s mandate to integrate economic and environmental prosperity would be both appropriate and desirable. We also suggest that it is worth considering how the *EGSPA* Annual Report could include reporting on key successes or progress from private and non-Governmental sectors.

**Recommendation 17: *During the next five years the mandate and focus of EGSPA should be expanded to consider linkages to the third ‘leg’ of authentic sustainable prosperity – the socio-cultural dimensions.***

The core principles of sustainability speak of three integrated ‘legs’ or dimensions: environment, economy and society (or socio-cultural considerations). Full-fledged sustainable development needs to consider these three synchronized elements, which together form the core attributes of a healthy, robust and prosperous society. To date *EGSPA* has been framed in the context of environment and economy which, given the complexity of Nova Scotia’s challenges and the state of understanding, was and to this date is appropriate.

Looking forward, the Round Table believes that the needs and imperatives of the province’s economic challenges cannot be addressed and obstacles surmounted if significant aspects of the societal equation are separated. It is well known that major challenges (both in terms of needs and economic/budgetary impacts) include health care, education and rural vitality, among others. We are also aware of the impacts that our environmental health has on human health, that infrastructure systems (including those with major environmental consequences such as transportation and water and waste water management) have on both environment and health, and these systems and the costs pertaining to them figure into the equation of rural community viability. And the social leg (including health care, education, rural and community vitality, and other social programs or dimensions) relies on the health and prosperity of our natural capital and the livelihoods dependent on it (such as farming, fishing, mining and forestry) to support it. We know of course how acutely our Governments have understood this complex and interwoven puzzle, and how much effort is already expended in looking for solutions in each area that benefit and reduce the impacts of others. Even so, the Round Table believes that this multi-discipline and integrative approach to policy and programs would benefit from being more clearly articulated in overarching provincial policy. We therefore conclude that *EGSPA*, already conceived and existing as an integrative Act, is well positioned to be extended in mandate and view to accelerate collective multi-departmental and stakeholder attention to complex systemic challenges.

Although the Round Table has not had time and lacks expertise to conclude this analysis, we believe that it is worth undertaking. We do not know if it would be determined that *EGSPA* or a future more broadly-based Act is best positioned to fulfill this intention, we do recommend in the interim that opportunities are actively sought to extend *EGSPA*’s principles as a framework that the Government could employ towards developing go-forward strategies around the host of complex, some would say ‘wicked’, problems facing Nova Scotia. In any event, the Round Table would look favorably on any enhancement to the Act that would stipulate that the work of all Government Departments should at every opportunity reflect the principles of the Act.

**Recommendation 18: *The Round Table would benefit from a review of its authorization and composition.***

Although the Round Table is actually created under the Nova Scotia Environment Act, Sec. 9 (A), we believe it appropriate to raise questions in the context of this review which is so central to the Round Table’s mandate and activities. Indeed, although the Round Table was created to advise the Minister on matters of environmental sustainability and constituted with reference to an appropriate background in environmental sustainability, the preponderant focus of Round Table activity, including the annual and this periodic review of *EGSPA*, is focused on sustainable prosperity. We therefore believe that the composition of the Round Table needs be reviewed to better represent a wider ranging set of skills and stakeholder interests that frame

sustainable prosperity, and/or that the Round Table's originating mandate (currently within the *Environment Act*) be extended in accord with our actual duties. We also wish to raise the question as to whether the Round Table should be constituted under the *Environment Act* or the more broadly based *EGSPA*.

Relative to this topic, the Round Table received submissions that called for the creation of a new role of Environmental or Sustainability Commissioner. Although we could agree with the intention of these recommendations to provide more focus and authority regarding environmental and sustainable progress, we ultimately concluded that such an office would not be feasible or accepted during this period of substantial economic constraints. Therefore other means, most likely through strengthening the mandate and perhaps the modest resources available to the Round Table, would provide some measure of progress in terms of these well intentioned representations.

The Round Table feels that it is important to continue to have a workable number (e.g. 15-20) of important sectors of Nova Scotia be represented by members on the Round Table. We feel that at least every 3 years, the Minister should consider reviewing the composition of the members of the Round Table to ensure that these sectors are properly defined and represented, including important and diverse constituencies such as the Mi'kmaq, Acadians, and youth representation (e.g. under the age of 40). The Minister should review the Round Table in light of Board governance models and determine if members should have a limited term in order to provide opportunities for new voices and more open representation at the table. There is also some lack of clarity as to whether members of the Round Table are appointed as individuals, albeit considered in part in light of their relationship to various sectors, or as knowledgeable citizens at large, or if it is their organizations that are offered seats to be held by individuals they nominate if approved by the Minister. The *Environment Act* seems to suggest the former, but specific Round Table documents suggest otherwise. Models offered by similar groups such as the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy and other existing or previous provincial round tables across Canada may be useful.

### **Section 7 Governor in Council may participate in Programs and Measures**

**Recommendation 19: *The programs and measures included in Sec. 7 (1) should be revised to include reference to stewardship programs and measures.***

The Round Table feels that it is time for the Governor in Council to develop and implement stewardship programs and measures that will specifically help carry out the purpose of this Act. We recognize that the *Environment Act* does provide the Minister with broad authority that could include initiatives within the sphere of stewardship. Even so, we believe that *EGSPA* provides a forum to reiterate these authorities in the specific context of integrated environmental and economic objectives. These stewardship initiatives could bear on economic instruments that would contribute to goals that carry substantive costs for the Province or municipalities, such as regarding solid-waste disposal (partially addressed in Sec. 4 (3) (d)), or include education and awareness programs including those incorporating social marketing principles.

Solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions management are examples of where community-based social marketing principles can be applied via departmental programs that target behavioral norms in order to encourage movement towards more sustainable norms. It is well documented (e.g. Dr. McKenzie-Mohr) that community-based social marketing is a successful approach for changing selected behaviors, such as solid waste disposal at the citizen or municipality levels.

## **Section 9 and 4.3 May Make Regulations**

### **Recommendation 20: *EGSPA should consider the usefulness and applicability of Regulations and other Instruments under the Act.***

As the Minister and departmental staff surely recognize, regulations pursuant to an Act are typically an important tool for achieving the Goals and mandate of the said Act. For example, the *Environment Act* is highly dependent on its Regulations to ensure compliance with its mandate, and uses tools such as approvals and enforcement of violations to set normalcies around environmental pollution prevention in this Province. The Round Table feels it is relevant for the Minister to consider Regulations pursuant to *EGSPA* in order to help achieve the goals set forth within it and for other sustainable prosperity initiatives in the Province. Creating regulations pursuant to the *EGSPA* could provide a means to construct, implement and enforce actions pursuant to the Objectives and Goals contained within the Act. To date, the only Goals that have legislative force under the Act are written into Sec. 4. This approach makes it more difficult to add, delete or revise goals. There is potential, especially as current goals are achieved and next steps are considered, to use the force of Regulation as a means to proscribe and incent actions consistent with the recommended goal clusters, principles, objectives and current goals, without requiring legislative action. Beyond regulation, Government should continue to be open to and encourage a variety of relevant instruments beyond legislation.

Such an approach would encourage the provincial Government to use *EGSPA* as a more flexible and dynamic tool and to adapt it more easily to evolving provincial strategies and policies both within and beyond any Government's elected mandate and in accord with newly framed priorities and strategies. This would be one way for governments to keep fresh and, if necessary, make *EGSPA* their own in the context of political changes. By its nature *EGSPA* has a long-term focus. Approaches should be considered that will allow it to be adapted and embraced by any Nova Scotia Government, all of whom we presume would intend to be seen as leaders in shaping tomorrow's sustainable Nova Scotia.

An example regulation that could be currently applicable to *EGSPA* would be to require full cost accounting or at least some degree of holistic economic and social assessment for new goals set forth. The Round Table also believes that having regulations that enforce specific guideline documents related to achieving current and future goals could be an important tool that provides the department with greater flexibility. Again, guidelines are used thoroughly in the *Environment Act* (e.g. On-Site Sewage Disposal Regulations). Guidelines would be applicable to *EGSPA* in several of the goals currently in progress (e.g. solid waste, water treatment, emissions).

Another intriguing opportunity to creatively employ the use of regulation or other Ministerial tools was raised by a submission from a group of students at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College studying Environmental Horticulture. Their submission made a compelling case for appreciating the role of the urban forest as a 'green infrastructure' tool for municipalities and communities that in a number of ways could contribute to economic and environmental aspects of sustainable prosperity. They pointed to both economic and environmental attributes: preservation of natural capital, projecting the 'look of prosperity' for both tourism and business, job opportunities, provision of environmental services or remedies, and improved quality of life, water and air.

A second example is related to a topic raised in a few submissions – food supply and security. Nova Scotia's agricultural base has been a traditional pillar of our provincial heritage and economy, providing stable employment and to some degree local foods. Despite a myriad of

well-known challenges, one positive area of opportunity which resonates with the principles of sustainable prosperity is the increased demand for organic and local food production, including: the growth in farmers markets; newer crop categories (such as haskap and aronia berries, vineyards, and natural bio-products); local supply to mainstream grocers; innovative farm energy management practices; and participation in the 'slow food' movement that promotes the preservation of traditional and regional cuisine and encourages farming of plants, seeds and livestock characteristic of the local ecosystem. These promising opportunities would benefit from additional support and incentives in a number of ways including potential financial assistance. There are multiple benefits in the growth of a stable and growing local and organic foods sector ranging from rural community development to enhanced healthy lifestyles and innovative agricultural products. Nova Scotia Agriculture is of course active in this arena. Similar considerations could be applied to opportunities related to fisheries and sea foods and products.

While the Round Table itself was not able to adequately assess new goals regarding these and any number of other worthwhile but specific environmental and economic purposes, we do suggest that matters such as these are amenable to consideration in other ways. For instance, it may be appropriate to advance initiatives under regulations or by application of other tools available to the Minister or Governor in Council when they can be vetted and considered in their most appropriate format. In the case of agriculture, *EGSPA* could provide a specific context through which a number of Nova Scotia Departments including Agriculture, Environment and Economic and Rural Development could collaborate effectively.

**Sections 10 and 11** – The Round Table has no comments or recommendations regarding these Sections that appear to be regular legal components of virtually any official Government Act.

## CONCLUSION

The Round Table appreciates the considerable effort that citizen and stakeholder groups throughout the province expended in reviewing and making representations regarding *EGSPA*. For our part, we regret that we do not have the resources or time to respond to each submission and each of the valuable points that were raised therein. This report cannot do so. We do commit to an ongoing process of distilling these recommendations and considering how they can contribute to the Round Table's ongoing work and provide input to our continuing deliberations towards sustainable prosperity. We have, of course, shared all submissions with the Department of Environment and, insofar as relevant, with the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism or other agencies. Indeed, the staff of the Department of Environment has been particularly and indispensably helpful as Secretariat to the Round Table and our *EGSPA* Steering Committee, supporting us in many ways including detailed and precise summary documents of key points presented in written and oral submissions, management of logistics and both design and facilitation of workshops around the province, and exhaustive note-taking and minutes of numerous *EGSPA* review meetings.

The Round Table could not flesh out every point of interest, and we expect we also missed responding to some issues that bear on the next iteration of *EGSPA*. We therefore stand ready to continue in an iterative process that provides any further advice or engages in discussion with those responsible for drafting *EGSPA 2* towards the completion of the most useful and purposeful legislative instrument on behalf of Nova Scotia's remarkable vision of authentic sustainable prosperity. We hope that the Round Table's report and suggested revisions to *EGSPA* will serve as a 'call to action'. Although *EGSPA* is legislation, its purposes cannot be

realized through the actions of Government alone. The integration of environment and economy must engage the talents and resources of all sectors and regions of the province. To stimulate the next wave of collaboration, one suggestion has been the organization of one or more multi-stakeholder events or forums. Regardless of the means employed, the future of sustainable environmental and economic prosperity will rely on a dynamic creative process drawing on the best Nova Scotians and partners beyond our borders can offer.