



2004 2005

Nova Scotia: Protecting Priorities

Budget Background

Environment and Labour

Message from the Minister

It's my pleasure to provide you with an overview of our budget and business plan for Environment and Labour for the new fiscal year.

As you are all aware, this government remains committed to delivering a balanced budget to Nova Scotians. It's a challenge to keep up with rising costs while still maintaining the high quality level of service our clients have come to expect. Therefore, like many other departments, we found it necessary this year to apply a cost of living increase to many of our fees for things like permits, licenses, and approvals.

I'm proud to report that Environment and Labour has established a budget for 2004-05 that respects and protects our core business plan priorities for the environment, the economy, and for communities and families.

This year sees the department continuing to meet commitments on a variety of essential activities, such as the Drinking Water Strategy, air quality management, and wilderness and natural areas protection. It sees us continuing to implement the new auto insurance reforms and the regulation of auto insurance rates through the new Nova Scotia Insurance Review Board. And it sees us exploring partnerships and continuing our commitment to public consultation, as we work to meet our objectives.

Our business plan is both aggressive and realistic. It sets the direction for Environment and Labour to build upon its past accomplishments and to continue to deliver the best possible services for our clients.

It's my pleasure to lead the department as we implement the important objectives that we have set for ourselves in 2004-2005.

Kerry Morash
Minister of Environment and Labour

Key Budget Numbers

Budget Overall:

2003-2004 Estimate	\$27,558,000
2004-2005 Estimate	\$26,152,000
Decrease	(\$1,406,000)
Percentage decrease	5.10%

Core Business Budgets: (in thousands)

	2003-2004	2004-2005
Administration	\$1,588	\$1,569
Alcohol, Gaming, and Amusements	\$4,404	\$4,209
Boards and Commissions	\$444	\$427
Environmental Management and Compliance	\$7,608	\$7,287
Environmental and Natural Areas Management	\$4,312	\$3,857
Financial Institutions	\$707	\$670
Information and Business Services	\$2,921	\$2,924
Occupational Health and Safety	\$559	\$364
Public Safety	\$2,938	\$2,782
Labour Services	\$1,138	\$1,110
Labour Standards	\$1,042	\$1,021
Pension Regulation	(\$103) credit	(\$68) credit
Workers' Advisers Program**	**Fully funded by the WCB	**Fully funded by the WCB

Key Budget Highlights:

CPI Revenue increases (\$338,000)

- Includes CPI increases on about 200 fees

Environment and Labour introduced three new fees in 2004-2005:

- Watercourse Alteration Administrative Fee - to partially recover costs for processing these approvals (\$68,000 increase)
- Industrial Air Emission Fee - to cover costs associated with managing air quality in Nova Scotia. This will be applied to about 42 identified companies (\$402,000 increase)
- Contaminated Sites Administrative Fee - to a company submission on remedial action plans for the closure of spill or contaminated sites (\$54,000 increase)

Our Business Plan

Mission:

The mission of Environment and Labour is to protect and promote:

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

Key Business Plan Highlights:

- Implement initiatives identified in the provincial green plan "Towards a Sustainable Environment"
- Provide training for municipal fire inspectors
- Support the Province's implementation of Criminal Code amendments (Bill C-45) relative to occupational health and safety offences
- Establish the minimum wage advisory committee
- Participate in the creation of a Workplace Safety and Insurance System performance and appeals management process
- Continue initiatives that contribute to red tape reduction
- Implement and monitor the automobile insurance reforms
- Participate in the national initiatives on model pension law and a model insurance act

A complete version of our business plan is available at: www.gov.ns.ca/enla/pubs