

Environment and Climate Change

Strategic Plan

2021-2023



Table of Contents

- Message from the Minister 1
- Departmental Overview 1
 - Organizational Structure 1
 - Mandate 3
 - Staff and Budget 3
 - Primary Clients 3
 - Vision 4
- Strategic Issues 4
 - Issue 1 - Advancing Environmental Sustainability 4
 - Issue 2 – Promoting Labour Relations and Labour Standards 7



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I am pleased to present the Strategic Plan for the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023. This two-year plan was prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and sets how the Department will address government's strategic directions and my mandate as Minister. On April 8, 2021, a reorganization of government Departments was undertaken. The new Department of Environment and Climate Change comprises all of those functions formerly within the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities that relate to Water Resources Management, Pollution Prevention, Environmental Assessment, Climate Change, Policy and Strategic Planning, and Natural Areas. In my capacity as Minister Responsible for Labour, the Department now also includes Labour Relations and Labour Standards.

This plan builds upon the strategic directions, commitments, and investments of our government and identifies the Department's key goals and objectives to be accomplished throughout the 2021-2023 planning period. Specifically, our strategic issues of advancing environmental sustainability and labour relations and standards.

The Department continues to focus on our mandate to advance sustainable natural environmental and climate change programs through strong relationships with Indigenous governments and organizations, environmental, and labour organizations and other relevant stakeholders. The Department will promote our mandate in accordance with public health guidelines to ensure a safe environment for all.

As Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained herein.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Davis', written in a cursive style.

Hon. Bernard Davis
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Departmental Overview

The Department of Environment and Climate Change is a category 1 government entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** that is responsible for the protection and enhancement of the environment through the implementation of water resource and pollution prevention regulations and policies, as well as coordinating environmental impact assessments of proposed development projects, managing impacted sites and ecological reserves, and considering pathways for new protected areas. The Department further develops strategy and programs related to climate adaption and mitigation and net zero carbon emissions, while supporting a green transition and improved energy efficiency. Additionally, the Department works with employers, employees, and unions to foster a positive employment relations climate.

Organizational Structure

The Department of Environment and Climate Change is organized into two branches:

- **Environment and Labour Branch** is responsible for the divisions of Water Resources Management, Pollution Prevention, Environmental Assessment, Labour Relations, and Labour Standards.
- **Climate Change Branch** is responsible for the divisions of Climate Change and Policy, Planning and Natural Areas.

A number of key cross-departmental initiatives are led by the Department, including the Provincial Waste Management Strategy, Drinking Water Safety Initiative, and Climate Change Action Plan. In addition, the Department leads horizontal initiatives related to maintaining environmental health including the Interdepartmental Drinking Water Technical Working Group and the Impacted Sites Liability Assessment Program.

Reporting Entities

Under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, a number of government entities also prepare plans and annual reports. Entities which report to the Minister include:

- Multi-Materials Stewardship Board;
- WorkplaceNL;
- Labour Relations Board;
- Standing Fish Price-Setting Panel;
- Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council; and
- Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division.

For more information on the Department of Environment and Climate Change, please visit us online at www.gov.nl.ca/ecc.

Legislation

Environmental Protection Act;
Fishing Industry Collective Bargaining Act;
Interns and Residents Collective Bargaining Act;
Labour Relations Act;
Labour Standards Act;
Management of Greenhouse Gas Act;
Public Service Collective Bargaining Act;
Shops Closing Act;
Teachers' Collective Bargaining Act;
Water Resources Act;
Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act; and
Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act

Mandate

The mandate of the Department of Environment and Climate Change is to protect, enhance and conserve the province's natural environment including its water, air, and soil quality. In supporting the Minister Responsible for Labour, the Department takes a lead role in ensuring effective relationships between employers and employees through the administration and enforcement of applicable legislation.

Staff and Budget

The Department's gross expenditure budget for 2021-22 is \$44,498,500 with planned related revenue of approximately \$18,052,100 for a net expenditure of \$26,446,400.

The Department of Environment and Climate Change has 161 positions (108 permanent, 40 temporary, seven seasonal, and six contractual) located in eight offices throughout the province, with 134 current employees (27 current vacant positions). Approximately **60** per cent of employees are female and **40** per cent are male.

Region	Staff
Avalon Peninsula	133
Central East	13
Central West	13
Labrador	2

Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Department of Environment and Climate Change include:

- large industries such as pulp and paper, utility, mining, oil refining companies as well as industry associations;
- businesses involved in such areas as pesticide application, waste management, heating oil and refrigeration services, among others;
- the engineering and waste management consultant community;

- the academic community and student populations;
- unions;
- professional organizations;
- other levels of government;
- non-governmental, volunteer and not-for-profit organizations; and
- the general public;

Vision

The vision of the Department of Environment and Climate Change is a clean, sustainable and protected environment supported through effective stewardship as well as a province where employees and employers are supported to achieve a healthy, safe, and productive workplace.

Strategic Issues

Issue 1 - Advancing Environmental Sustainability

Ensuring that the province's air, water, and soil are protected from negative environmental impacts is a key pillar of the Department's mandate. Through various legislative and regulatory frameworks, the Department focuses on water resource management, pollution prevention, environmental assessments and protected areas.

To advance environmental sustainability in the province over the next three years, the Department will continue to work collaboratively with local communities, other levels of government, industry, business, academia, and citizens. These relationships create a network of stakeholders who implement cohesive strategic approaches to preserve, protect, and improve the quality of land, air, and water to provide a bright future for current and future generations.

Strategic Plan 2021-23

Additionally, the Department plays an integral role in creating and implementing policies to lessen the human impacts that relate to climate change. Using scientific, evidence-based approaches, the Department works across government to integrate climate change considerations into government policies, procedures, and work activities. Throughout the planning period, the Department will work toward the provincial goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and to meet net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through implementation of the five year Climate Change Action Plan. The Plan is designed to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, stimulate clean innovation and growth, and help build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

GOAL:

By March 31, 2023, the Department of Environment and Climate Change will have advanced environmental sustainability.

Indicators:

- Implement improved environmental processes to ensure clean air, soil, and water.
- Implement actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote electrification, and transition to a low-carbon economy and enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2022, the Department of Environment and Climate Change will have continued to build on its efforts towards enhancing environmental sustainability.

Indicators:

- Consulted on the development of a drinking water quality action plan.
- Continued support of the Regional Water and Waste Water Pilot Program.
- Continued assessment and development of mitigation activities for impacted sites.
- Continued flood risk mapping to better anticipate and respond to possible flooding events and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Continued flood forecasting services to the Town of Badger, Humber Valley communities, and Lower Churchill River communities.
- Operated a hurricane alert system to forecast hurricanes path and associated precipitation.
- Continued review of the provincial Environmental Assessment process and legislation to reflect changes to federal **Impact Assessment Act**.
- Continued development of a Natural Areas System Plan and engage in further consultation.
- Collaborated with all levels of government to work with industry, community, and Indigenous stakeholders on Climate Change Action Plan initiatives.
- Identified new initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- Advanced climate adaptation and mitigation measures through collaborative efforts with stakeholders.
- Supported sustainable business opportunities and green transition projects.
- Promoted development of resources while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- Supported the work of the provincial Net Zero Advisory Council.
- Explored additional electrification opportunities, growth in the low carbon economy, and expanded home energy savings and energy efficiency supports.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2023, the Department of Environment and Climate Change will have implemented efforts to improve environmental sustainability.

Issue 2 – Promoting Labour Relations and Labour Standards

The Minister of Department of Environment and Climate Change also serves as the Minister Responsible for Labour. To support this mandate, the Department works with employers, employees and unions to foster a positive employment relations climate. The engagement of employees and employers is imperative to the safe and effective administration of labour relations and labour standards.

Over the course of the next two years, the Department will meet with stakeholders at a Labour Summit to discuss issues of concern.

Further, action will be taken to ensure that increases to minimum wage are in-line with consumer price index and take into consideration advice from the Independent Review Panel and renew discussions with other Atlantic Provinces to consider establishing a harmonized minimum wage.

GOAL:

By March 31, 2023, the Department of Environment and Climate Change will have worked to advance discussions with labour organization on issues of importance and taken action to ensure increases to minimum wage are in line with consumer price index.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2022, the Department will commence initiatives to increase the minimum wage and coordinate discussions with labour organizations on matters of importance.

Indicators:

- Appointed a Minimum Wage Review committee.
- Engaged Atlantic Provinces on possibility of establishing a harmonized minimum wage.
- Held a Labour Summit bringing together labour organizations to discuss and share Ideas to foster improved labour relations.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2023, the Department will have further advanced initiatives to increase the minimum wage and coordinate discussions with labour organizations on matters of importance.

