

Legislation Introduced to Protect Nova Scotians

New restrictions on private companies collecting and retaining social insurance numbers are part of legislation introduced September 23, aimed at protecting Nova Scotians and their personal information.

"Social insurance numbers are a sensitive piece of personal information that need to be protected," said Colton LeBlanc, acting Minister of Service Nova Scotia. "Recent events have proven that the Province needs to step in to provide Nova Scotians with the protection they need. The Protecting Nova Scotians Act does just that, providing more support for Nova Scotians when they need it the most."

As well as introducing the new Social Insurance Number Protection Act, the bill will also amend the Residential Tenancies Act to: enable victims of domestic violence to stay in their rental unit after their abuser has moved out and enter into a new lease on the same terms and conditions as the previous lease and encourage more people to rent out rooms by removing boarders from the act, making it consistent with other provinces.

Other key amendments:

- removing the word "imminent" from the Personal Health Information Act to allow healthcare providers to disclose information if there is a reasonable belief a person is a significant danger to themselves or others; Nova Scotia will continue to have the strictest standard in Canada for disclosing information in high-risk situations;
- strengthening rules and regulations for funeral services, including introducing stronger

laws to prevent wrongful cremations, through amendments to the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act and the Cemetery and Funeral Services Act;

- amending the Liquor Control Act to improve safety in licensed establishments, including requiring bouncers to have criminal record checks and security training to keep both bar staff and patrons safe;
- enhancing the Crown Lands Act to prevent the blocking of forest access roads and to allow structures to be removed without notice if they are a hazard to public health, safety or order or if they are impeding the lawful use of Crown lands;
- amending the Wildlife Act to clarify and strengthen the authority of conservation officers to do routine inspections and obtain information; it will also align penalties with other legislation and reduce the maximum voltage for lights that people can shine at wildlife habitat, recognizing that LED lights are brighter.

Quick Facts: the government will continue to be able to collect social insurance numbers for administrative and program purposes; businesses may collect social insurance numbers for legitimate purposes such as income tax reporting for employees. Penalties under the Wildlife Act will increase to \$500,000 from \$3,000 (\$1 million for corporations) to be consistent with the Endangered Species Act and the Forests Act and penalties under the Crown Lands Act will increase to \$50,000 from \$2,000.

Province Moving on Highway 102 Improvements

Improvements to one of the busiest sections of Nova Scotia's road network will make commuting easier, support more housing and give people more transportation options. As part of the Highway 102 improvement project, a request for proposals was issued October 31, for a consultant to identify future corridor requirements and produce preliminary design work for the area between exits 0 and 4 in Halifax Regional Municipality.

"This segment of the 102 is used by 60,000 people daily, and it's an important part of the province's goods movement network," said Public Works Minister Fred Tilley. "The Highway 102 improvement project has the potential to be one of the most significant transportation projects in Nova Scotia's history and could support economic growth and housing development for the next 20 years."

The design will include: Safety upgrades to the interchanges connecting the 102 with Highway

101 (exits 4A and 4B), Highway 107 (Exit 4C), Hammonds Plains Road (Exit 3), and Kearney Lake Road (Exit 2) and enhancements for 20 kilometres of the 102 between Highway 107 and Bayers Road (Exit 0), focused on safety, capacity to move more people and improved efficiency; these could include modernizing challenging interchanges and establishing high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

The Department of Public Works and Link Nova Scotia have already initiated early planning activities for the project, including traffic counts and performance data, environmental screening and constraint mapping, archaeological investigations and hydrological assessments.

The Province has also completed a high-precision survey of the entire corridor using LiDAR, a remote sensing method that uses pulsed laser light to measure distances and create high-resolution 3D models, to support future design and evaluation efforts.

Notes from our Federal Capital Working Together, Solving Problems!

You know that feeling when you're trying to solve a puzzle and the pieces finally start clicking into place? That's been my November.

I've spent the past few weeks crisscrossing Cumberland-Colchester—from Remembrance Day ceremonies in Economy to hockey tournaments in Truro, from student roundtables to infrastructure announcements—and I keep seeing the same thing over and over: when people actually work together, real problems get solved. Revolutionary concept, right? Let me give you some examples of what I mean.

When Service Demands Action

Four days before I stood in front of a room full of women veterans on Parliament Hill, General Jennie Carignan issued a formal apology on behalf of the Canadian Armed Forces for systemic discrimination. Four days. And there we were, gathered together to do the work that comes after apologies—because apologies without action ring hollow.

I told those women veterans something I absolutely believe: they've been fighting on two fronts. The dangers abroad, yes. But also the barriers at home—the discrimination, the harassment, the processing delays that shouldn't exist. And they're still standing.

We had representatives from the Women's Veterans Council with

Notes from our Provincial Capital Nova Oil & Natural Gas – A Solution for Our Energy and Economy

Imagine if we stopped harvesting blueberries in Nova Scotia and imported all of our blueberries from the United States at a premium. We wouldn't do that. It doesn't make sense and yet that's essentially what's happening with natural gas. Natural gas is used to heat homes, run generators, power factories and our communities.

Despite having estimated enough natural gas offshore to power Nova Scotia for thousands of years and to meet all of Canada's demand for over 30 years, none of that natural gas used here is produced here.

To add insult to injury, the gas that Canada is buying from the U.S. is often Alberta gas that is sold to the U.S. and then sold back to us at a profit.

Buying our natural gas from the United States not only drives up our energy costs, it means that jobs and tax revenue benefit far away communities instead of ours.

And when politicians advocate to keep our resources in the ground, it's music to the ears of the American businesses.

It doesn't have to be this way.

Notes from our Provincial Capital We'll assist with NS Power problems

It has become clear many residents of Colchester North are having issues with Nova Scotia Power.

These are a wide range of issues, mostly all attributed to billing. First, I would say that if that is happening to you, call Andrea at my office as she has lots of experience dealing with NS Power. I do not want to suggest that she can fix everything, but she is experienced and very good at advocating and supporting residents.

As I have mentioned in other articles, I chair the standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development. Our next meeting will be Tuesday Nov 25 and the subject was to be the Nova Scotia Loyal Program. However, based on the number of messages to the Premier's office as well as to our MLA Constituency office, we have decided to ask Nova Scotia Power CAO Peter Gregg, as well as top executives, to appear at this meeting.

This will afford the opportunity for committee members to question them on behalf our residents. Witness to committees are typically arranged longer in advance, so to be fair it may be difficult to get them on short notice.

However, if they are unable to attend the Tuesday meeting, every effort will be made to have them appear at an emergency meeting ASAP. I will make sure that the date is made public on my Face-

Notes from our Provincial Capital Legislation Commits Province to Strengthen Fire Services

The Province will address long-standing issues in fire services in Nova Scotia, including governance, consistency in fire response, firefighter health and well-being, access to safe training and certification.

The Fire Safety and Services Act, introduced October 1, commits the government to create a legislative framework to respond to the wide range of matters identified in this year's value-for-money audit of the Nova Scotia Firefighters School and in a new report from the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia. Consultation and public feedback on those reports will also help build the framework.

Honouring Canadian Armed Forces Act

Our PC government tabled and passed the Honouring Canadian Armed Forces Members Act with all party support. This act ensures that serving and retired CAF members can wear their uniform with pride in all provincial spaces—because those who defend our freedoms deserve nothing less than our full respect and gratitude.

Amendments Clarify Code of Conduct for Elected Officials
The Province is making changes to the code of conduct for elected officials to address feedback from municipalities about the complaints

us—Constable Sarah Lefurgey, Sergeant Jessica Miller, and Lt.-Col. Eleanor Taylor. Sarah's become a fierce advocate for mental health and psychologically safe workplaces. Eleanor, who once resigned in disgust at ongoing misconduct in the Forces, is now advising teams on thriving through adversity. And Jessica founded the Veteran Farm Project (right here in Nova Scotia!), creating spaces where women veterans can heal through nature and horticulture and community.



Alana Hirtle

That's not just service—that's revolution.

Here's what I know: this work isn't done when we host nice receptions or give eloquent speeches. It's done when women veterans get tailored benefits, healthcare that understands their unique needs, and sustainable employment pathways. It's done when we build programs that don't just say "thank you for your service" but actually provide the services they need.

Which is exactly why I put forward a motion in the House of Commons to provide tangible veteran support. And why I'm working di-

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You may remember the offshore industry thriving under Premier John Hamm in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It brought in over \$4 billion in direct royalties to the Province that was used to pay doctors and nurses and invest in roads - all things we desperately need today. With Nova Oil & Natural Gas, we can do it again.

Many of the same local companies that will gear up to work on Wind West will also work on our offshore natural gas projects.

This past summer, our government opened bids for offshore natural gas, which close at the end of April.

The Prime Minister wants Canada to be an energy superpower. I like that. And Nova Scotia can not only contribute - between wind energy, tidal energy and natural gas, we can be our own energy superpower within an energy superpower.

That's why I recently took on the mantle of Minister of Energy; to

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book account, along with information on how to view the meeting live if you choose.

I am in the process of developing a website. I am not much of a social media person, but have come to realize that it is increasingly more difficult to get important information out to residents. Although there will undoubtedly some political information on the site, it is my desire to have this as a valuable information site focused on Government programs.

It is my hope that this will encourage more interaction with my office. The staff in my office are very good! They are experienced at navigating Government bureaucracy and work on residents' concerns every day. It is my hope that this new website will be a way to provide better service to our residents. Keep in mind, they can be contacted daily from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at 902-641-2335 or Tom.taggartmla@gmail.com

As we look forward to the busy festive season, take time to enjoy some of our beautiful fall days.

Tom Taggart, MLA Colchester North, (0) - 902-641-2335, tom.taggartmla@gmail.com



Tom Taggart

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and investigation process. Amendments to the regulations clarify that: complaints may be made by a council member related to the conduct of another elected official in the same municipality; council members may not submit a complaint on behalf of another person or entity and multiple complaints may not be submitted by a council member on the same subject.

When multiple complaints have been received about the same subject, the investigator must consolidate the complaints into a single investigation, where appropriate. The changes do not apply to complaints and investigations already in progress. Now in effect, the changes will address the immediate needs of municipalities while discussions to strengthen and refine the administration of the code of conduct continue. The Province has committed to conducting a full review of the framework in 2027.

Reducing Costs for Trades Professionals
The Province has eliminated the five-year certification renewal re-

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Dave Ritcey

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