

# The Shoreline Journal Tid-Bits

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## Streamlining Permits System to Cut Red Tape, Save Costs

The Province is improving half of its nearly 300 permits as part of its commitment to make government services faster, simpler and more efficient.

The project brought together representatives from across government departments to review all provincial permits. Improvements include: eliminating permits associated with low-risk activities; lengthening time frames for renewal; adding service standards, which all new permits will now be required to have and streamlining application processes and restructuring fees.

The improvements are expected to save Nova Scotia businesses about \$737,000 annually.

## African Heritage Month 2026

This year's African Heritage Month theme in Nova Scotia is Strength in Unity: Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power and Progress. It references the strength that comes from collective effort, the clarity that shared purpose provides, and the commitment needed to build lasting prosperity and progress.

The month-long celebration, which happens each February, highlights the achievements and resilience of African Nova Scotians, who have shaped the province's history for more than 400 years. It includes events and activities designed to educate, inspire and build connections across Nova Scotia.

## Risk, Resilience, and Reconciliation: Building a Safe and Secure North

As the rhetoric and stakes around who "controls" the Arctic continue to heat up, the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government (Mulroney Institute) on Feb. 3, 2026 presented a panel discussion: Risk, Resilience, and Reconciliation: Building a Safe and Secure North.

Panelists included: Sandy Silver, former premier of Yukon and the Mulroney Institute's inaugural Dahdahle Practitioner-in-Residence; Dr. Peter Kikkert, Mulroney Research Fellow and Associate Professor (Public Policy and Governance); Dr. Adam Lajeunesse, Mulroney Chair in Arctic and Marine Security and Program Coordinator (Public Policy and Governance), and director of the Canadian Maritime Security Network. Dr. Asa Mc Kercher, the Mulroney Institute's Steven K. Hudson Chair in Canada-US Relations serves as moderator.

The panel explored the evolving challenges and opportunities shaping Canada's North through the lenses of risk and reconciliation, highlighting approaches that include sovereignty and security strategies and outcomes, and underscoring the importance of supporting resilient Northern and Indigenous communities.

## Electoral Boundaries Commission issues final report

Nova Scotia's independent 2025 Electoral Boundaries Commission released its final report on January 30, in both French and English.

Commission members were appointed in April 2025 by an all-party select committee of the House of Assembly for the purpose of recommending electoral boundaries to provide effective representation of the Acadian region of Chéticamp and area. The select committee also provided the commission with terms of reference.

The last review of the province's electoral boundaries took place in 2018-19. Reviews normally take place at least every 10 years. This review, however, was conducted as a result of an order by the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, which ruled that the previous commission's decision not to create an exceptional electoral district for Chéticamp violated Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In its interim report, submitted in August 2025 after public consultation, the commission presented three alternatives: keeping the status quo, with 55 electoral districts, and two other proposed scenarios, each with 56 electoral districts.

For the final report, the commission's terms of reference mandated that only one set of boundaries be recommended. After deliberations following a second round of public consultation, the commission is unanimously recommending a House of Assembly of 56 seats. The current district of Inverness would be divided into two new electoral districts: Chéticamp-Margarees-Pleasant Bay and Inverness-We'koqma'q.

The commission's work is now complete. Its interim and final reports can be found online at <https://www.nselectoralboundariescommission2025.ca> until July 21, 2026. They will be archived on the legislative library's website at: <https://legcat.gov.ns.ca>

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## News from our Provincial Council - Tim Houston

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wants more. More staff. More capital. More profit. But the facts in the public record tell a very different story - one Nova Scotians deserve to hear.

**First, Nova Scotia Power claims there's "no justification" for lowering its return on equity.** That's simply not true. The Department of Energy's position is based on expert evidence from Dr. Sean Cleary and the simple fact that Nova Scotia Power has received large reductions in the risk it faces - from fuel costs to a new storm rider to financial assistance - yet still wants a nine per cent return. The Board is free to set a lower return on equity, and the record supports doing exactly that.

**Second, Nova Scotia Power says it had "no reason" to update depreciation schedules for nearly a decade.** Meanwhile, Federal and Provincial climate policies shifted dramatically. Coal regulations tightened. Transition timelines accelerated. New generating technologies became lower cost. Yet Nova Scotia Power kept using depreciation assumptions from 2010-2011. Their own 2020 Integrated Resource Plan referenced a 2040 coal phase-out - even though Federal regulations had already moved the country toward 2030. The facts suggest the utility's planning did not reflect either the policy reality or changing technology. It's worth noting that new technology is becoming cheaper, which Nova Scotia Power is tracking but not acting on.

**Third, Nova Scotia Power's filing ignores the biggest structural change in our grid: The rise of independent renewable power.** Wind developers - not Nova Scotia Power - are financing and maintaining much of the new generation coming online. That means less capital burden on the monopoly. But you wouldn't know it from their rate application, which asks for more in every category of capital spending, increasing to more than \$700 million over a decade.

And while all this is happening, **Nova Scotia Power is asking for more than 500 new, full-time positions in a single year** - despite being a monopoly with no competitors; with no marketing needs; with wind

power suppliers generating more of its energy; with Nova Scotia's Independent Energy System Operator taking over system operations, planning and procurement; and with significant IT functions outsourced or handled by its parent company.

The Board's decision in this rate case matters.

But our real opportunity does not lie in depending on a Board to protect us. The real opportunity is to create options and competition.

Today, we are relying on a single, highcost provider at a time when global competitiveness depends on diversified, affordable energy. Other jurisdictions are attracting industry with flexible, distributed, multifuel systems. Nova Scotia is not.

This is why we need to continue to push our energy opportunities.

We have worldclass wind.

We have tides.

We have natural gas resources under renewed study.

We have Nova Scotian families and firms installing their own energy - heat pumps, solar, batteries and beyond.

We have offshore potential.

Nova Scotia powered Canada once before. We can lead again - if we stop treating yesterday's monopoly as the only option for tomorrow's economy.

The question that belongs to all of us: whether we continue relying on a single utility whose business model depends on rising electricity rates, or whether we build a modern, diversified energy system that puts Nova Scotians first.

The facts are clear.

The opportunity is real.

And the future will belong to the jurisdictions that act - not the ones that wait.

**Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia can be reached at: [premier@novascotia.ca](mailto:premier@novascotia.ca) or 902-424-6600**

## News from our Provincial Capital - Dave Ritcey

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### Attracting Healthcare Workers

Our plan to make Nova Scotia a magnet for healthcare workers is working: Faster licensing; More competitive wages and Strong recruitment incentives. Together, these steps are making Nova Scotia a destination of choice for healthcare workers. That means more Nova Scotians can get the care they need.

### New Home Care Platform

Nova Scotia is launching a new home care platform to connect all publicly funded home care agencies with Nova Scotia Health's Continuing Care program. The platform, expected to go live in mid-2027, will improve scheduling, coordination, and information sharing for home care staff, clients, and families. This new provincial technology platform will better connect the home care sector to support front-line staff and provide quality care, faster for Nova Scotians.

### Funding for Mental Health & Addictions Research

New research funding is available to both emerging and established researchers as they explore the social factors that shape mental health and addictions. These projects will help strengthen community impact and support sustainable, culturally relevant approaches to wellness in Nova Scotia. The Office of Addictions and Mental Health is proud to partner with Research Nova Scotia on these grants.

Investing in research that leads to more responsive care is an important step toward building a universal mental health and addictions system that works for everyone: <https://news.novascotia.ca/.../applications-open...>

### Building a Stronger Economy

Our government has been focused on getting projects like Nova Oil & Natural Gas and Wind West off the ground, while also supporting traditional industries like mining, farming, forestry, and fishing. By backing these key sectors, we're creating jobs and building a stronger economy for all Nova Scotians.

## Updates to School Lunch Program

After serving more than 3.6 million lunches this year, the Nova Scotia School Lunch Program is making targeted changes to improve meal quality, reduce waste and better match how lunches are prepared and delivered. New lunches coming to all schools started on January 16, include pork and vegetarian egg roll bowls, chicken fingers and a gluten-friendly cornbread that can replace other bread options.

To help ensure consistent quality, menus are being tailored to whether lunches are prepared on-site or delivered to schools. For schools with lunch delivery, meals that transport well, like barbequed chicken drumsticks and glazed meatloaf, will be added. Some existing meals have also been adjusted to have sides that transport better, like whole apples and oranges. New menu items in schools where lunches are made on-site include grilled cheese with tomato soup, and pork quesadillas.

The Province is partnering with Canadian company Friendlier to pilot reusable containers in 34 schools that serve about 26,000 lunches a week. The program started at the end of February. The company, with partners in more than 200 locations across Canada, will supply clean containers for lunches and collect used containers for professional cleaning. Containers can be reused up to 100 times and are recycled by Friendlier at the end of their lifecycle.

**Dave Ritcey is MLA, Truro-Millbrook-Bible Hill-Salmon River. He can be reached by telephone at 902-897-0884 or by e-mail at [mlaritcey@bellaliant.com](mailto:mlaritcey@bellaliant.com)**

# Tom TAGGART

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Hours - 8:30am - 3:30pm

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Todd MacKinnon, Pharmacist Owner