

BILL NO. 57

(as introduced)



*1st Session, 64th General Assembly
Nova Scotia
70 Elizabeth II, 2021*

Government Bill

Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

The Honourable Tim Halman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

[First Reading](#): October 27, 2021

Second Reading: October 28, 2021

[Third Reading](#): November 4, 2021 (WITH COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS) (LINK TO BILL AS PASSED)

Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

Be it enacted by the Governor and Assembly as follows:

1 This Act may be cited as the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act.

2 In this Act,

- (a) "circular economy" means an economy in which resources and products are kept in use for as long as possible, with the maximum value being extracted while they are in use and from which, at the end of their service life, other materials and products of value are recovered or regenerated;
- (b) "core active transportation network" means a central and connected network of active transportation facilities for walking, biking or rolling to and from key community destinations;
- (c) "equity" means the recognition of people's differences and the attempt to counteract unequal opportunities by considering fairness and justice;
- (d) "Etuaptmumk" means, as defined by the Mi'kmaq, two-eyed seeing;
- (e) "extended producer responsibility" means an environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of its life cycle;
- (f) "Fund" means the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund established under Section 18;
- (g) "green business" means an enterprise that prioritizes sustainability principles and socially responsible behaviour in its business model and takes into consideration its impact on the well-being of both the natural world and society;
- (h) "Minister" means the Minister of Environment and Climate Change;
- (i) "Netukulimk" means, as defined by the Mi'kmaq, the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community by achieving adequate standards of community nutrition and economic well-being without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity or productivity of the environment;
- (j) "Round Table" means the Round Table established pursuant to the Environment Act;
- (k) "sustainable development" has the same meaning as in the Environment Act;
- (l) "sustainable prosperity" means prosperity where economic growth, environmental stewardship and social responsibility are integrated and recognized as being interconnected.

3 The Minister is responsible for the general supervision and management of this Act and the regulations.

4 This Act is based on the following principles:

- (a) the achievement of sustainable prosperity in the Province must include
 - (i) Netukulimk,
 - (ii) sustainable development,
 - (iii) a circular economy, and
 - (iv) equity;
- (b) the achievement of sustainable prosperity is a shared responsibility among all levels of government, the private sector and all Nova Scotians;
- (c) climate change is recognized as a global emergency requiring urgent action; and
- (d) such others as may be prescribed by the regulations.

5 (1) The long-term objective of the Government is to achieve sustainable prosperity.

(2) To achieve its objective of sustainable prosperity, the Government shall

- (a) establish, adopt, support and enable goals that foster an integrated approach to environmental sustainability and economic well-being;

- (b) raise awareness of the importance of sustainable prosperity and the climate change emergency and the elements that contribute to them;
- (c) encourage the growth of the clean economy and work to support all Nova Scotians in benefiting from its growth;
- (d) support the well-being and quality of life of all Nova Scotians;
- (e) create conditions necessary for making progress toward sustainable prosperity, including regulation, programs and initiatives that encourage actions and innovation by local government, business, non-government organizations and Nova Scotians; and
- (f) work toward continuous improvement in measures of social, environmental and economic indicators of prosperity.

6 The Government's targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions are

- (a) by 2030, to be at least 53% below the levels that were emitted in 2005; and
- (b) by 2050, to be net zero, by balancing greenhouse gas emissions with greenhouse gas removals and other offsetting measures.

7 The Government's goals with respect to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions are

- (a) to complete and release a Province-wide climate change risk assessment by December 31, 2022, an update by December 31, 2025, and an update every five years thereafter;
- (b) to support, strengthen and set targets for energy efficiency programming while prioritizing equitable access and benefits for low income and marginalized Nova Scotians;
- (c) to work with municipalities and First Nations in the Province to take immediate and long-term action on their climate change priorities;
- (d) to build climate change adaptive capacity and resilience by requiring climate adaptation planning across every Government department;
- (e) to adopt the 2020 National Energy Code for Buildings within 18 months of it being published by the Government of Canada;
- (f) to require any new build or major retrofit in government buildings, including schools and hospitals, that enters the planning stage after 2022, to be net-zero energy performance and climate resilient;
- (g) to encourage landlords who currently lease office space to Government to transition existing office space to meet net-zero energy performance;
- (h) to prioritize leased office accommodations in buildings that are climate resilient and meet net-zero energy performance starting in 2030;
- (i) to decrease greenhouse gas emissions across Government-owned buildings by 75% by the year 2035;
- (j) to develop and implement a zero-emission vehicle mandate that ensures, at a minimum, that 30% of new vehicle sales of all light duty and personal vehicles in the Province will be zero-emission vehicles by 2030;
- (k) to develop and implement supporting initiatives for the goal in clause (j);
- (l) to have 80% of electricity in the Province supplied by renewable energy by 2030; and
- (m) to phase out coal-fired electricity generation in the Province by the year 2030.

8 (1) The Government shall create a strategic plan, prior to December 31, 2022, to be known as the "Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth" that addresses

- (a) achieving the greenhouse gas emission targets set out in Section 6;
- (b) adapting to the impacts of climate change and building a climate resilient Province;
- (c) accelerating the integration of sustainable and innovative technologies and approaches; and
- (d) clean inclusive growth.

(2) The Government shall release annual progress reports on the plan outlined under subsection (1) and review and renew the plan within five years of its release.

9 The Government's goals with respect to active transportation are

- (a) to establish a Provincial Active Transportation strategy to increase active transportation options by 2023; and
- (b) to complete core active transportation networks that are accessible for all ages and all abilities in 65% of the Province's communities by 2030.

10 The Government's goals with respect to the protection of land are

- (a) to conserve at least 20% of the total land and water mass of the Province by 2030 as protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, in a manner consistent with national reporting criteria;
- (b) to support the goal in clause (a) with a collaborative protected areas strategy to be released by December 31, 2023;
- (c) to implement by 2023 an ecological forestry approach for Crown lands, consistent with the recommendations in "An Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia" prepared by William Lahey in 2018, through the triad model of forest management that prioritizes the sustainability of ecosystems and biodiversity in the Province; and
- (d) to identify by 2023 the percentage allocation of Crown land dedicated to each pillar of the triad model of forest management referred to in clause (c).

11 The Government's goals with respect to water and air are

- (a) to develop provincial water quality objectives to guide activities that affect water quality by 2026;
- (b) to address and mitigate barriers Nova Scotians face to testing and treatment of rural wells by 2026;
- (c) to manage the Province's air zones consistent with the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards; and
- (d) to review and update the Province's air emission targets and ambient air quality standards by 2025 and conduct reviews and updates every five years or sooner if the Minister so directs.

12 The Government's goal with respect to environmental assessments is to modernize the environmental assessment process by 2024 taking into consideration

- (a) cumulative impacts;
- (b) diversity, equity and inclusion;
- (c) independent review;
- (d) Netukulimk; and

(e) climate change.

13 The Government's goal with respect to sustainable procurement is to demonstrate leadership in sustainable procurement by increasing innovation, sustainability, diversity and inclusion in government procurement and considering community benefits attached to procurements.

14 The Government's goals with respect to aquaculture and food are

(a) to support low-impact sustainable aquaculture through a licensing process that weighs environmental considerations and includes provincial regulation for potential environmental impacts, animal welfare and fish health; and

(b) to develop a Provincial food strategy for enhanced awareness of, improved access to and increased production of local food to achieve 20% consumption of local food by 2030.

15 The Government's goal to encourage the growth of the circular economy includes, but is not limited to,

(a) expanding extended producer responsibility and reducing the use of single-use plastics;

(b) reducing solid waste disposal rates to no more than 300 kilograms per person per year by 2030; and

(c) developing a plan, including specific actions and interim targets, by 2023 to meet the solid waste goal in clause (b).

16 The Government's goals to support business, training and education are

(a) to actively encourage innovative, sustainable and green businesses to establish or relocate to the Province and create an environment for innovative, sustainable and green business start-ups;

(b) to work with small businesses across the Province to get their input on ways to reduce emissions, including through rebates, targeted investments and other supports;

(c) to work collaboratively with businesses, the Nova Scotia Community College and the labour sector to modernize apprenticeship programs to ensure the Province has the tradespeople needed to meet the demands of the clean economy;

(d) to support youth to engage in the clean economy through sustainability-based youth employment leadership programs in the Province; and

(e) to promote and support climate change education and sustainability through the knowledge and teachings of Netukulimk and environmental stewardship with ongoing curricula renewal, the development of inclusive and accessible resources and professional learning that incorporates diversity and honours Etuaptmunk.

17 The Government's goal with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion is to initiate in 2022 ongoing work with racialized and marginalized communities to create a sustained funding opportunity for climate change action and support for community-based solutions and policy engagement.

18 (1) The Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund is established.

(2) The money in the Fund must be managed and used in accordance with the regulations to create competitive opportunities that encourage communities in their climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

19 The Premier shall meet with the Round Table annually to discuss progress on sustainable prosperity and may include at the meeting any member of the Executive Council the Premier deems appropriate.

20 The Premier shall ensure that sustainable prosperity is included in the mandate of every Government department.

21 (1) The Minister, in consultation with such members of the Executive Council as the Minister deems appropriate, shall report annually to the House of Assembly on the progress made toward the long-term objective of sustainable prosperity, including progress toward achievement of sustainable prosperity goals and initiatives established pursuant to this Act.

(2) In preparing the annual report referred to in subsection (1), the Minister may seek advice from the Round Table.

(3) The Minister shall table the annual report referred to in subsection (1) in the House of Assembly on or before July 31st of the year in which it was completed or, where the House is not then sitting, file it with the Clerk of the House.

22 The Minister shall request the Round Table to carry out a public review of this Act and the regulations

(a) no later than five years after this Act comes into force; and

(b) at any other time the Minister considers appropriate.

23 (1) The Governor in Council may make regulations

(a) setting additional goals to achieve sustainable prosperity consistent with the principles and focus areas established pursuant to this Act;

(b) establishing further principles to achieve sustainable prosperity;

(c) respecting initiatives to achieve sustainable prosperity consistent with the principles established pursuant to this Act;

(d) respecting the acquisition of money for the Fund;

(e) respecting the management and use of money in the Fund;

(f) governing reporting and record-keeping requirements for any purpose related to this Act;

(g) respecting the information and content required for the climate change risk assessment referred to in clause 7(a);

(h) defining any word or expression used but not defined in this Act;

(i) further defining any word or expression defined in this Act;

(j) respecting any matter that the Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to carry out effectively the intent and purpose of this Act.

(2) The exercise by the Governor in Council of the authority contained in subsections (1) is a regulation within the meaning of the Regulations Act.

24 Chapter 7 of the Acts of 2007, the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, is repealed.

25 Chapter 26 of the Acts of 2019, the Sustainable Development Goals Act, is repealed.

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