

NOVA SCOTIA BUDGET BULLETIN

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2006-07



Families

Focus on Child Care

Nova Scotia remains committed to providing quality child care. The province will provide a credit to parents to offset provincial taxes on the full value of the federal Universal Child Care Benefit. Nova Scotia families have a new 10-year child-care plan that will add more day-care spaces, increase funding for low-income families, and provide greater support for those working in the child-care sector. The province is committing \$130 million to this 10-year plan to provide more flexibility for parents and better training for child-care workers particularly in rural areas. The province will provide ongoing additional funding of \$4.7 million a year to child care in Nova Scotia once the federal funds are spent.

Protecting Homes, Neighbours

The province will invest \$850,000 to help families test their wells and septic systems. The Environmental Home Assessment Program will help homeowners determine whether there are problems with wells and septic systems. The program will provide participants with home water and wastewater assessment results, a \$50 rebate on septic pumping (if not pumped within the last three years), a water quality sampling kit, water-

saving devices, samples of environmentally friendly cleaners (manufactured in Nova Scotia), an oil tank check up, and an oil tank gauge protector. The program is expected to benefit 400 homeowners not on public water and wastewater systems during this fiscal year and expand to 1,000 homeowners in the next. An additional \$1.7 million will be invested in 2007-2008.

Protecting Consumers

Consumer protection officers will increase the number of inspections of businesses holding consumers' funds in trust accounts, including pre-paid funeral and cemetery services, collection agencies, and payday lender activities. Additional consumer protection officers—at a cost of \$95,000—will be hired to increase inspections and investigations to better protect Nova Scotians in the marketplace.

Making Smart Energy Choices

The province will continue its \$10 million investment in the Smart Energy Choices program in 2006-2007. This program helps educate families about the benefits of energy efficiency, which is the best protection against rising energy costs.

Improving Provincial Parks

The provincial park system offers a range of options and a wealth of outdoor experiences for families, residents, and visitors. The province will invest \$750,000 to improve infrastructure in provincial parks. The investment in annual park maintenance and restoration projects is being increased by \$500,000 annually.

Studying the Impact of Gaming

Problem gambling has a devastating effect on families. To better assess and understand the social and economic impacts of gaming in Nova Scotia, the province will invest \$250,000 on an independent study. The study fulfils a commitment of the provincial Gaming Strategy.



The Honourable Michael G. Baker Q.C.
Minister of Finance