

November 4, 2019

The Honourable Gerry Byrne
Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources

Dear Minister Byrne:

I look forward to continuing to work with you in your role as Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources. As you move forward in your work, I am confident that you will support sustainable economic development in the fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, forestry, lands, wildlife and natural heritage sectors. Your department is essential in spurring job creation and new economic opportunities in all regions and communities of our province.

We received a mandate from the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to continue on the course we have set out, in collaboration and cooperation with all members of our House of Assembly. We are committed to working together to make Newfoundland and Labrador a better place to live, to work, and to raise a family. We are building on the work advanced as part of our plan for sustainability and growth, The Way Forward. Moving into the next four years, we remain focused on growing the economy while ensuring fiscal sustainability in a balanced and thoughtful manner. We envision a better economy, healthier people, better living and a bright future. To deliver on this plan, below are some of the activities I am asking you to lead:

Fisheries and Aquaculture

- Continuing our commitment to support aquaculture and double salmon and shellfish production in partnership with the aquaculture sector as set out in The Way Forward on Aquaculture;
- Expanding public trust and confidence, and ensuring continued excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador's aquaculture industry, by developing robust legislation and regulations that supports the industry;
- Allocating funding from the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) to assist fishing enterprises in the wild and farmed fisheries to adopt innovative and modern practices;
- Using the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund to advance marketing initiatives, target new markets, and leverage benefits emerging from free trade agreements with Europe and Asia;
- Engaging the Fisheries Advisory Council for input and guidance on growing the fishery, including the transition toward greater groundfish activities and managing change in the availability of shellfish;
- Exploring new ways to help young harvesters enter the fishery;

- Working with the Government of Canada and industry to identify and access markets for our seal fishery;
- Working with industry to assess and reduce the carbon footprint within the fishing industry; and,
- Fully assessing logistical issues in exporting and importing fishery and agriculture related products to support access to markets and increased self-sufficiency in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Agriculture and Food Self-Sufficiency

- Doubling food self-sufficiency from 10 per cent to 20 per cent through collaboration with farmers and producers on implementing The Way Forward on Agriculture, which involves supporting new and existing farmers, making more land available for farming, and carrying out research to support innovation, improve production, and increase diversity of the sector, including advancement of commercial egg production in Labrador; and
- Working with industry to increase the availability of cold storage in Newfoundland and Labrador to enable local farmers to overcome barriers that constrain vegetable production, extend their market season and ultimately expand operations.

Forestry

- Continuing to implement the Forestry Sector Work Plan, in collaboration with industry, to assist in diversifying the forest industry, create new business activities, and increase job opportunities in the sector, including exploring opportunities for the forest sector in Labrador;
- Examining the feasibility of creating a Wood Products Innovation Centre dedicated to applied research, technology transfer, and innovation to assist industry in developing new products, including non-timber forest products and value-added wood products, in collaboration with College of the North Atlantic, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, Newfoundland and Labrador Forestry Industry Association, and Memorial University's Grenfell Campus; and,
- Supporting silviculture and research into reforestation and forest improvement, and work to protect forests from uncontrolled forest fires under the Fire Suppression Program and monitoring and evaluation of forest insect and disease conditions under the Insect Control Program.

Crown Lands and Natural Areas

- Continuing with the improved business standards made in Crown lands and expanding efforts to increase access to Crown lands; and
- Working in collaboration with your colleagues, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources, to continue work on a Natural Areas System Plan.

Wildlife

- Conserving our wildlife resources through science-based management and collaborations.

Tremendous progress has been made in Newfoundland and Labrador because of the work we have undertaken with our industry, cultural and community partners. These partnerships have enabled us to strengthen our resource industries and knowledge-based sectors, modernize health and social supports, and focus on improving educational outcomes for our youngest residents. However, our work does not stop there; we still have much work ahead of us to create a better economy, improve the health outcomes of residents, strengthen living conditions, and ultimately give Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a brighter future.

In addition to the items outlined above, our Cabinet is also collectively responsible for delivering on all of the commitments and targets set out in The Way Forward. Achieving these actions is critical to attaining inclusive growth, improving employment levels and creating the conditions necessary for job creation, reducing poverty, improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in our province, and realizing financial sustainability. It is essential that we work together to consider the health impacts of all our decisions as part of our Health in All Policies commitment.

I expect you to continue to be collaborative, open, accountable and transparent as you implement your duties. We will continue to use evidence, research, gender-based analysis plus, and engage with the public, stakeholders and our Indigenous partners, to inform our decisions. We are focused on service excellence and will continue to respond to the needs of the people of this great province.

In fulfilling your responsibility as Minister, I expect you to continue to show collaboration in a positive and constructive manner with your Cabinet colleagues and our peers in the House of Assembly.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are counting on us to make progress. We will continue to report publicly on our activities on our Way Forward website. Together, we will improve health, social and economic outcomes, and deliver high quality services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our future is bright and together we can make our beautiful, rich and diverse province an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely,



DWIGHT BALL
Premier