



# Accountability Report

2018–2019

*Environment*



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## Accountability Statement

Nova Scotia Environment's Accountability Report for the year ended March 31, 2019 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the department's Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. Reporting these outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by department management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Nova Scotia Environment management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Nova Scotia Environment 2018-19 Business Plan.

Original signed by

Original signed by

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Honourable Gordon Wilson  
Minister of Environment

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Frances Martin  
Deputy Minister

## Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present our Accountability Report for 2018-19. This report provides a summary of results achieved in relation to the goals outlined in our Business Plan.

Nova Scotia Environment's mandate is to protect the environment, the health of Nova Scotians and our visitors, and the welfare of farm animals. In the past year, we took important steps to advance this work.

A significant achievement was the launch of our cap and trade program to help fight climate change. Through this program and numerous other initiatives, Nova Scotia will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 2 million tonnes by the end of 2022.

Another key achievement is our new *Coastal Protection Act*. In 2018, we consulted with Nova Scotians to develop this legislation, and we passed it in the spring of 2019. This legislation will help protect sensitive coastal ecosystems and set clear rules to ensure new coastal construction is built in safer places.

A third achievement I want to note is the appointment of a new prosecutor who is dedicated to environmental cases. This prosecutor's expertise in enforcement issues within our mandate helps the department ensure that people and companies are held accountable.

There are many more achievements outlined in the pages that follow. I offer my sincere thanks to department staff for their continued dedication to our mandate. I also thank our partners and stakeholders for helping us advance important initiatives.

Original signed by

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Honourable Gordon Wilson  
Minister of Environment

## Financial Results

### Financial Table and Variance Explanations

Item	2018-19 Estimate	2018-19 Actuals	2018-19 Variance
Program and Service Area	<i>(\$ thousands)</i>		
<b>Departmental Expenses:</b>			
Administration	870	841	(29)
Policy	5,341	5,848	507
Inspection, Compliance & Enforcement	21,185	21,114	(71)
Sustainability and Applied Science	8,375	8,433	58
Climate Change	1,745	1,777	32
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>37,516</b>	<b>38,013</b>	<b>497</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenue	3,455	3,967	512
Fees and Other Charges	2,699	2,338	(361)
Ordinary Recoveries	100	162	62
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>	<b>6,254</b>	<b>6,274</b>	<b>213</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	745	382	(363)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	355.3	323.7	(31.6)
<b><u>Variance Explanations:</u></b>			
<b>Departmental Expenses:</b>			
Additional appropriation of \$498K – funding to the Nature Conservancy of Canada toward the purchase of a conservation easement from HRM for the establishment of a Halifax urban wilderness park (\$500K).			
<b>TCA Purchase Requirements:</b>			
Software upgrade (SNAP 2) – change in project scope, carry over to next fiscal year.			
<b>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs):</b>			
Temporary vacant positions – regular staff turnover.			

## Measuring Our Performance

Nova Scotia Environment's 2018-19 Business Plan outlined activities, initiatives, and measures relating to our mandate and core responsibilities. The following is an overview of our progress in the past year.

### Goals to Achieve Mandate and Core Functions

The department identified four priority areas related to its mandate and core functions for fiscal 2018-19 that are important to Nova Scotians:

- A. Education, compliance, inspection, and enforcement
- B. Program and risk management
- C. Client-focused service delivery
- D. Regulatory excellence

#### A. Education, Compliance, Inspection, and Enforcement

Continue working towards a best-in-class inspectorate that is defined by:

- An informed, professional and competent workforce that is able to recognize and apply the right level of response to an action.
- Consistent and effective compliance with legislation and regulations.
- An integrated and responsive structure that creates flexibility needed to ensure resources are deployed based upon risk.

#### Planned Activities/Initiatives:

Work with the Public Prosecution Service to hire a dedicated environmental prosecutor who will specialize in cases involving legislation under our mandate.

▶ **Performance Measure:**

A dedicated environmental prosecutor is assigned to Nova Scotia Environment. Information about concluded prosecutions is posted online.

▶ **Actual Results:**

Government appointed a prosecutor to focus on the environment in July 2018. This prosecutor takes cases to court related to the *Environment Act*, food safety, public health, meat inspection, fisheries and aquaculture, farm animal welfare, natural resources, and the fur industry. Having an experienced Crown attorney who specializes in environmental and regulatory issues helps the department ensure that people and companies are held accountable when they put our environment, people, or the welfare of farm animals at risk.

Information about concluded prosecutions is now being posted at [novascotia.ca/nse/compliance-action/](http://novascotia.ca/nse/compliance-action/). The information includes the accused, the charge, and the sentence.

## B. Program and Risk Management

Programs manage risks to an acceptable level and deliver desired benefits through:

- Resources and efforts that are continuously aligned with program needs on a risk basis.
- Well-structured programs that meet intended outcomes while focusing on continuous improvement.

### Planned Activities/Initiatives:

Continue to support a business environment which is conducive to innovation and economic development, striking the right balance to ensure effective regulation protects the interests of Nova Scotians while enhancing our provincial prosperity.

▶ **Performance Measure:**

Develop a risk-based audit schedule to focus inspection resources on regulated entities that pose the greatest risks to the environment, human health, and farm animal welfare.

▶ **Actual Results:**

This year, the risk-based audit model was applied to Safe Body Art and work began to apply it to Contaminated Sites and the Food Safety Program. Incorporating these programs into the department's risk-based audit framework helps us continue focusing our inspection resources on facilities which pose the greatest risk.



## C. Client-Focused Service Delivery

Improve the quality of service delivery to department clients through:

- Regulations that are clear and easy to understand.
- Supporting and empowering staff with information and training to best position them for success in their roles and interactions with Nova Scotians.

### Planned Activities/Initiative 1:

Continued work to add regulatory programs into the System for Notification and Approval Processing (SNAP), the department's system for processing notifications, approvals, licenses and registrations. SNAP is a computer system that helps compliance staff track all approvals issued by the department. The system alerts inspectors on when to conduct inspections or audits and when certain terms and conditions are due to be completed.

#### ▶ Performance Measure:

More regulatory programs are added into SNAP.

#### ▶ Actual Results:

More regulatory programs were added into SNAP this year. Safe Body Art permits are now administered through the system, and work to add the Contaminated Sites and Food Safety programs is underway.

This work will improve accountability and oversight for these programs. It also helps improve the quality of service delivery to our clients by making sure inspectors spend time focusing on the greatest risks.

### Planned Activities/Initiative 2:

Implementation of a Safe Body Art Program to protect the health of Nova Scotians.

#### ▶ Performance Measure:

Safe Body Art Standards and guidance documents are online and accessible to the public.

▶ **Actual Results:**

The purpose of the *Safe Body Art Act* and its regulations is to prevent injury and the spread of infectious diseases by managing risks and ensuring safe practices and products are used for body art services. The [Safe Body Art Standards](#) explain requirements for operators to reduce and eliminate risk factors when providing body art services.

Throughout the year, the department worked with industry to raise awareness about how to be in compliance with the new regulations. The department began accepting applications for body art facility permits starting in mid-January. Once a permit is issued, it must be displayed in public view so that it serves as an indicator to customers that the owner is following the new regulations.

## D. Regulatory Excellence

Ensure necessary regulations are predictable, transparent, and protect our health, safety, and environment by:

- Modernizing regulations and reducing regulatory burden where appropriate to eliminate barriers to private sector growth and productivity.
- Modernizing legislation to create a foundation to support innovation, sustainable prosperity, and regulatory excellence.
- Measuring results to ensure outcomes are met.

### Planned Activities/Initiative 1:

Start work required for a coastal protection act to provide legal protection for our coasts.

▶ **Performance Measure:**

Nova Scotians are consulted on legal protection for our coasts.

▶ **Actual Results:**

The Coastal Protection Act was passed in April 2019 to help protect sensitive coastal ecosystems and set clear rules to ensure new coastal construction is built in safer places.

Before the legislation was tabled, Nova Scotians were consulted through numerous meetings with stakeholders and an opportunity to submit comments online. We received feedback through 1,300 comments as well as meetings with municipalities, various professional and non-government organizations, the Collaborative Environmental Planning

Initiative of the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, and the Environmental Advisory Committee of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq.

A summary of feedback and more information about the legislation is available at [novascotia.ca/coast](http://novascotia.ca/coast).

### Planned Activities/Initiative 2:

Develop and implement a made-in-Nova Scotia Cap-and-Trade Program to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

▶ **Performance Measure:**

Cap-and-Trade Program is launched, including an online system to register participants, monitor greenhouse gas emission allowances, and administer auctions and reserve sales.

▶ **Actual Results:**

Nova Scotia launched its Cap-and-Trade Program on January 1, 2019, meeting the province's commitment to put a price on carbon pollution under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

The program is governed by Cap-and-Trade Program Regulations which were established in September 2018. It sets annual caps that limit how many tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions are allowed from certain activities in the province. Twenty-six companies are mandatory participants and have registered in the online system being used to administer the program.

The program covers about 80% of all greenhouse gases emitted in the province. It is expected to reduce emissions by at least 650,000 tonnes between 2019 and 2022. In the same period of time about 1,400,000 tonnes will also be reduced through other programs such as renewable energy and efficiency.

More information is available at [climatechange.novascotia.ca](http://climatechange.novascotia.ca).

### Planned Activities/Initiative 3:

Incorporate recommendations from the Roundtable on the Environment and Sustainable Prosperity into our approach to support sustainable prosperity in Nova Scotia.

▶ **Performance Measure:**

Government's approach and framework to support sustainable prosperity is renewed.

▶ **Actual Results:**

The Round Table provided invaluable feedback on the future of the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*. The department is considering their recommendations as we look at how to renew our sustainability legislation.

**Planned Activities/Initiative 4:**

Work with the Department of Lands and Forestry to move towards 13 percent protected land across the province while ensuring a balance so there are no negative recreational or economic effects.

▶ **Performance Measure:**

An increase in the percentage of the province's land that is legally protected.

▶ **Actual Results:**

The department continues to work with Lands and Forestry to move toward the 13 percent goal. Three new protected areas were designated in November 2018. They include:

- the 1,954-hectare Wentworth Valley Wilderness Area in Colchester and Cumberland counties,
- the 874-hectare Chase Lake Wilderness Area in Cumberland County, and
- the 202-hectare Steepbank Brook Nature Reserve near Oxford, Cumberland County

**Planned Activities/Initiative 5:**

Work with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden to Nova Scotia business.

▶ **Performance Measure:**

The department reduces unnecessary regulatory burden to Nova Scotian businesses.

▶ **Actual Results:**

While continuing to achieve its mandate, the department has contributed to government's target to reduce unnecessary regulatory burden to Nova Scotia business by \$25 million by the end of 2018. Details of the department's efforts are available at [novascotia.ca/regulatoryopportunity/Reducing-Burden-to-Business-Final-Progress-Report.pdf](http://novascotia.ca/regulatoryopportunity/Reducing-Burden-to-Business-Final-Progress-Report.pdf).

## Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The *Public Interest of Wrongdoing Act* (PIDWA) was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011. The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith. Section 18 of the Act states:

*Each deputy head shall prepare an annual report of disclosures, including any findings of wrongdoing, recommendations and actions taken and shall make this report available to the public.*

The following is a summary of wrongdoing disclosures received by Nova Scotia Environment:

Information Required under Section 18 of the PIDWA	Fiscal Year 2018-2019
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A

N/A - not applicable