

7.6 Environmental Management Policy

Policy Statement

Towards a Sustainable Environment, the Province of Nova Scotia's approach to managing the environment, is based on the following principles:

- environmental protection is essential to the integrity of ecosystems, human health and the socio-economic well being of society
- managing the environment is a shared responsibility involving all citizens in Nova Scotia; and
- an integrated approach that addresses environmental, social, and economic considerations is the most effective way to deal with environmental issues.

This policy will improve government's ability to integrate environmental considerations into policies, programs and practices in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

Policy Objectives

- environmental issues are considered in the development and implementation of government policies, strategies and programs
- environmental management activities of government are delivered in a co-ordinated and integrated manner; and
- government's environmental commitments and results achieved are consolidated and reported on a regular basis.

Definitions

ENVIRONMENT (NATURAL)

The combination of climatic, physical, chemical, and biotic conditions that may affect the growth and welfare of an organism or group of organisms, including humans.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Activities designed to enhance or sustain the natural environment and/or avoid or minimize damage to land, air or water.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Application

This policy applies to all government departments and agencies.

Policy Directives

- An Environmental Management Steering Committee comprised of senior representatives from ten¹ departments, and chaired by Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, will
 - facilitate coordinated reporting on environmental commitments identified in Appendix 7-D and results achieved; and
 - support cross-departmental co-operation on environmental initiatives as required.
- Departments will use the GreenWeb² to display and/or link to best management practices, highlight environmental achievements, provide information on current and emerging environmental issues of interest to Nova Scotians, and report on results achieved in relation to environmental commitments.
- Government will release an annual report on results achieved with respect to its environmental management commitments.
- Submissions to Executive Council pertaining to proposed policies/programs having potential environmental implications will include documentation of:
 - consultation carried out with other potentially affected departments/agencies; key issues identified by the departments consulted; and how such issues are being/have been addressed;
 - an integrated assessment process that documents consideration of environmental, social and economic impacts and benefits;
 - linkages with corporate policies or strategies containing environmental commitments.
- Treasury and Policy Board will provide an appropriate analysis of environmental implications of submissions to Executive Council and will consult with departments as required.
- Departments will support employees in their efforts to make environmentally responsible choices at work by establishing pollution prevention plans/ environmental management systems appropriate to the department's operations.

¹ Environment and Labour (lead department), Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Office of Economic Development, Energy, Natural Resources, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, Tourism, Culture and Heritage, Transportation and Public Works, Treasury and Policy Board.

² <http://www.gov.ns.ca.greenweb/>

- Government is committed to review and continuously improve its environmental performance. Departments will conduct their operations in an environmentally responsible manner by following principles for environmental management of government operations (See Appendix 7-E). These principles will be applied to all government operations including procurement of goods and services, facilities management and fleet management.

Policy Guidelines

- Where feasible departments will review existing policies, guidelines, standards and other guidance documents to determine their compliance with this policy and amend them where necessary;
- All departments are encouraged to recognize the environment as an asset and consider the environmental impacts of programs and policies as part of business planning, policy development and program review activities.
- Where possible the Government will participate in, and provide technical support to, resource management and environmental initiatives that encourage community driven or municipally led environmental management (e.g. Sustainable Communities Initiative, Community Development Policy Initiative, Bras d'Or Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative).
- When consulting with the public on environmental initiatives, the consultation principles outlined in Appendix 7-F will provide guidance to the process as appropriate.

Accountability

Deputy Heads of all departments and agencies are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour is responsible for

- coordinating preparation and release of government's annual environmental report;
- providing professional/technical advice and assistance to departments and agencies in implementing the policy, when requested and where resources permit;

Treasury and Policy Board is responsible for auditing submissions to Executive Council and taking appropriate action to promote compliance with policy directives related to such submissions.

Monitoring

The Environmental Management Steering Committee will review this policy on an annual basis and report to Treasury and Policy Board on any gaps or challenges.

References

Towards a Sustainable Environment (June, 2003)

Enquiries

Executive Director of Policy, Nova Scotia Environment and Labour

Appendices

Appendix 7-D

List of Environmental Commitments (extracted from *Towards a Sustainable Environment* and other current government strategies/documents)

Appendix 7-F

Principles for Management of Government Operations

Appendix 7-E

Consultation Principles

Approval date: November 21, 2005

Approved by: Executive Council

Manual release date: April 18, 2006

Most recent review:

Appendix 7-D

List of Environmental Commitments

(Extracted from *Towards a Sustainable Environment* and other current government strategies/documents.)

AIR QUALITY

Commitments include reductions in polluting air emissions and work to meet regional and national standards, airshed management plans, initiatives to provide information to Nova Scotians, and international partnerships to address air quality issues. (For more detailed commitments see Page 13 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Commitments include contributing to international climate change initiatives, working with industry groups to meet their climate change targets, and developing a climate change impacts and adaptations action plan for Nova Scotia. (For more detailed commitments see Page 20 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment* and *Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy*.)

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

Commitments include improving the sustainability of communities by providing support to community partners, working with First Nations to address environmental issues, promoting nature recreation and active living, and participating in the Sustainable Communities Initiative. (For more detailed commitments see *Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy* and Pages 9 and 10 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

GREENING GOVERNMENT/LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Commitments include the development of a government-wide environmental management policy as well as a pollution prevention plan and environmentally responsible procurement standards, and work to decrease the energy consumption of government by purchasing green power and improving the efficiency of government buildings. (For more detailed commitments see Page 22 and 23 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Commitments to the management of hazardous substances include promotion of early detection and response to site contamination, producer and consumer stewardship to encourage life-cycle management, as well as penalties for polluters, cross-jurisdictional cooperation and regulatory streamlining. (For more detailed commitments see Page 16 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

INDUSTRY STEWARDSHIP

Commitments include supporting agricultural industry associations and partners in order to improve operational environmental sustainability, promoting innovation and trade within the environmental industries sector and sustainable practices within the tourism industry, encouraging sustainable forestry, and pursuing product stewardship agreements through Nova Scotia's solid waste-resource management programs. (For more detailed commitments see Pages 10, 17, 19 and 20 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Introduce amendments designed to strengthen the *Environment Act* and expand the range of environmental management and compliance tools available.

NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Commitments to sustainably manage Nova Scotia's natural resources include the promotion of stewardship approaches, and the public release of a report detailing the condition of the province's forests. (For more detailed commitments see page 19 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

PROTECTED AREAS

Commitments to improve Nova Scotia's network of protected areas include designating new Wilderness Areas and Nature Reserves and exploring opportunities to designate Canadian Heritage Rivers, encouraging land protection and stewardship through expanded partnerships, and support for conservation of privately owned land. (For more detailed commitments see pages 19 and 20 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Apply the principles of sustainable development in delivery of our economic growth strategy (See page 17 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

WATER QUANTITY/QUALITY

Commitments include consulting, working with and supporting various partners to improve water quality and quantity in Nova Scotia, using a government-wide approach to drinking water management, continuing to promote safe water for communities through the Drinking Water Strategy. (For more detailed commitments see *A Drinking Water Strategy for Nova Scotia* and page 14 of *Towards a Sustainable Environment*.)

Appendix 7-E

Principles for Management of Government Operations

- **Integrated Management** entails incorporating environmental considerations into all aspects of government management and operations.
- **Pollution Prevention** anticipates and prevents adverse environmental effects that may be caused by government policies, programs, activities, operations and decisions.
- **Conservative and Efficient** use of resources throughout all aspects of planning and operations supports the protection of essential resources and bio-diversity.
- **Continuous Improvement** of policies, programs, and environmental performance allows government to take advantage of technological developments and new opportunities.
- **Minimization and Management of Wastes** arising from government activities includes endeavoring to eliminate or reduce the amount of waste generated, striving to fully utilize reuse and recycling opportunities, and disposing of remaining waste in an environmentally sound manner.
- **Protection of Environment and Health** results from conducting government operations in a manner that supports the long-term integrity of our environment and natural resources and safeguards human health.

Appendix 7-F

Principles for Public Consultation

- **Commitment** requires a willingness to listen and be adaptable to changing public needs and be influenced by the viewpoint of stakeholders.
- **Inclusiveness** allows for the involvement of everyone who is potentially impacted and requires respect for the diverse values and interests of all participants.
- **Transparency** recognizes that stakeholders require accurate, balanced and complete information to effectively add value to the policy development and implementation process.
- **Feedback** entails informing people on how the results of the consultation process have been used to inform decisions.
- **Evaluation** helps to identify successes and shortcomings of the process.

