

Department of Environment and Climate Change

Environment and Climate Change's role is to protect the environment, human health and farm animal health through regulatory excellence, conservation, partnership and promotion.

Core functions of the department:

- Develop programs and deliver services to enhance the protection of the environment, human health, and animal health
- Develop legislation, regulations and policies based on sound scientific knowledge and expertise
- Educate, inspect and enforce to ensure compliance with legislation and regulations
- Proactively respond to environmental, farm animal welfare, and human health risks
- Process notifications, applications, and approvals for regulated activities

Responsibilities

INSPECTION, COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

The Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) Division is responsible for the delivery of compliance programming to protect the environment, human health and farm animal welfare. Compliance staff in Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change includes: Environment Inspectors, Public Health Officers, Primary Product Inspectors and Farm Animal Welfare Inspectors.

Regional Integration, Compliance and Operations Branch

The ICE Division is supported by the Regional Integration, Compliance and Operations (RICO) Branch, which advances compliance and protection efforts by ensuring the effective and consistent implementation of all operation and compliance services and activities. This branch coordinates corporate deliverables for all regions and provides direction for the integration of departmental and government priorities in divisional program planning and operations.

SUSTAINABILITY AND APPLIED SCIENCE DIVISION

Driven by scientific and technical evidence, the Sustainability and Applied Science (SAS) Division provides strategic leadership and maintenance of our mandated programs, as well as subject matter expertise and advice. SAS works proactively to ensure that programs function well and meet their intended outcomes through promotion,

education and training resources, and working with other divisions to develop and improve policy and regulatory management tools.

Air Quality and Resource Management Branch

The Air Quality and Resource Management Branch focuses its activities on helping to protect Nova Scotians from the harmful effects of air, land and water pollutants. Staff also work closely with key stakeholders to advance the circular economy.

The Air Quality Unit works to ensure the protection of our air from harmful levels of pollutants. This includes monitoring and reporting to support the Air Quality Health Index and air zone management. The Air Quality Unit is also responsible for developing and maintaining a regulatory framework that supports the effective management of industrial emissions.

The Resource Management Unit is primarily responsible for regulatory and policy development or support relating to solid waste, contaminated sites, hazardous materials, pesticides, chemical processes, petroleum management and alternative fuels. This includes ensuring that contaminated sites are identified and remediated; preventing releases of petroleum and other fuels; working to protect Nova Scotians from the harmful effects of hazardous materials through their proper handling and disposal; and certifying that businesses and applicators involved in the pesticide sector receive necessary certification.

Environmental Health and Food Safety Branch

The Environmental Health and Food Safety Branch develops and leads the Province's strategic approach to managing risks to public health associated with environmental health hazards, food establishments, and the provincial meat inspection and food supply system. It takes a lead departmental role in the province's response to food-related and environmental health emergencies, including outbreak of communicable and food-borne disease. The branch considers a broad range of environmental health and food safety issues through a public health lens, inclusive of health promotion and protection and compliance promotion programs. It is also responsible to lead a strategic approach to ensure the humane treatment of farm animals, including those in the food supply system. Branch staff serve as principal advisors for areas of environmental health, food safety and farm animal welfare.

Protected Areas and Ecosystems Branch

The Protected Areas and Ecosystems Branch is responsible for planning and managing Nova Scotia's wilderness areas and nature reserves, coordinating Canadian Heritage Rivers in Nova Scotia and supporting private land conservation. The branch builds partnerships related to protected and conserved areas in Nova Scotia and provides programs to ensure the protection of biological diversity (while supporting opportunities for wilderness recreation, tourism, and research) and delivering social and economic benefits to Nova Scotians.

Water Branch

The Water Branch is comprised of the Water Resources Management Unit and the Water and Industrial Facilities Unit.

The Water and Industrial Facilities Unit is responsible for the requirements and protocols that ensure the safety of drinking water. This includes source water protection, education and technical support to supply owners. This unit also focuses on the development of various regulatory management tools such as regulations, standards, guidelines and policies that support the effective management of the many industry-related programs and activities, including wastewater, that fall under the *Environment Act* and associated regulations.

The Water Resources Management Unit is responsible for water resources management and protection, including protection of wetlands, watercourses and coastal areas. Through monitoring, education and regulation, they support decisions that protect water and water-connected ecosystems, and they develop standards and regulations for activities that may affect water quality and quantity for ecological and human uses.

CLIMATE CHANGE DIVISION

The Climate Change Division coordinates provincial action on greenhouse gas emission reductions and adaptation to climate change. The division focuses on the development and implementation of programs, policies and regulations related to carbon pricing and greenhouse gas emission reductions that support Nova Scotia in achieving its climate change emission reduction targets. As well, the team is responsible for managing and distributing proceeds from Nova Scotia's Green Fund which is used to support climate change initiatives. The division also supports provincial departments, industries, and communities to prepare for the impacts of climate change and develop multi-stakeholder responses to high-priority climate

risks. The division monitors climate risks, produces research and data products and offers data support services for adaptation decision-making. The team also offers climate adaptation training and leads public-education, engagement and knowledge mobilization efforts on adaptation. The division coordinates the development and implementation of the Provinces' Climate Plan and reports annually on key climate change mitigation and adaptation outcomes. The Division also leads public consultations and engagement with youth and marginalized communities to better understand priorities and to support current and future climate action. The team also monitors and responds to climate change mitigation and adaptation trends and coordinates intergovernmental climate change initiatives.

POLICY DIVISION

The Policy Division provides consistent, centralized services across the department. Comprised of six separate groups, the Policy Division's key role can be summarized as coordinator, collaborator, and enabler to ensure the department's key priorities and commitments continue to be met.

Policy and Planning Branch

The Policy and Planning Branch provides policy support to all divisions and programs by assisting teams in analyzing issues and problems, establishing performance indicators, considering consultation methods, selecting policy tools, and assessing the potential impacts of new or revised regulatory tools. This branch also: leads planning across the department (including development of corporate plans and reporting); maintains departmental policies and procedures; and oversees the ministerial appointments process.

Quality Branch

Comprised of a Quality and Business Applications Team, this branch supports quality programming across the department through efforts to promote program level quality, process efficiency and targeted reviews. The branch is also responsible for overseeing the appeals process for administrator decisions made under the *Environment Act* and supports business applications systems integral to the implementation of the department's mandate.

Environmental Assessment Branch

The Environmental Assessment (EA) Branch leads the evaluation of the potential environmental effects of major developments to determine if and how the development can proceed, informing the Minister's decision on the environmental acceptability of proposed undertakings.

Information & Support Services Branch

The Information and Support Services Branch coordinates and implements: the records and information management program; the Environmental Registry service (and other information requests); facilities and lease management; and other administrative services. The branch also provides advice on all aspects of information and business services, and is the department's liaison with the corporate Information Access and Privacy Services Unit.

Safety & Training Unit

The Safety and Training Unit provides subject matter expertise in matters of health & safety, leads the department's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) program. This unit also: supports emergency preparedness (fire and medical response); coordinates the business continuity plan, and liaises with external agencies in OHS matters; and delivers department-wide training.

Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals

- Environmental Assessment Review Panel
- Resource Recovery Fund Board
- Round Table on the Environment and Sustainable Prosperity

Acts Administered

- *Anti-idling Act*
- *Environment Act*
- *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*
- *Health Protection Act (Part II)*
- *Importation of Hydraulic Fracturing Wastewater Prohibition Act*
- *Non-essential Pesticides Control Act*
- *Plastic Bags Reduction Act*
- *Safe Body Art Act*
- *Snow Sport Helmet Act*
- *Special Places Protection Act* (The act is jointly administered with Departments of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and Natural Resources and Renewables)
- *Tanning Beds Act*
- *Voluntary Carbon Emissions Offset Fund Act*
- *Water Resources Protection Act*
- *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has authority for inspection, compliance and enforcement under the following legislation:

- *Meat Inspection Act*
- *Animal Protection Act*
- *Fur Industry Act*
- *Health Protection Act (Part I)*
- *Tobacco Access Act*
- *Smoke-free Places*
- *Off-Highway Vehicles Act*

Administrative update: **May 22, 2022**
