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NOVA SCOTIA NDP

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July 20, 2021

NSNDP Response - Retail Council of Canada

- 1. Will your party pledge to work with the Retail Council of Canada to develop and implement a COVID-19 retail recovery economic strategy? For years, other industries have received government incentives for investing in people, technology and eCommerce.**

The NDP recognizes the important role that the retail sector plays in Nova Scotia's economy and is open to exploring solutions with all stakeholders. Additionally, an NDP government would bring together a broad Economic Recovery Taskforce to make recommendations about how we can grow the economy as we recover from COVID-19 in the next several years. This taskforce would include representatives of various sectors of the Nova Scotia economy to ensure that we are all able to build back better.

- 2. Is your party prepared to adhere to the current model of determining annual minimum wage adjustments through a formula that is linked to the Consumer Price Index?**

The NDP is committed to implementing a \$15 minimum wage and working toward a living wage. Currently, 1 in 3 Nova Scotians make \$15 per hour or less. Higher wages would not only make it easier for people to make ends meet, but also result in higher revenues for local retail businesses. People who cannot afford basic food and shelter also cannot afford to shop at local businesses. When people with lower incomes earn more money, it allows them to spend more on purchases they may have avoided or deferred, most of which will be made at businesses here in Nova Scotia.



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The NDP also has plans to provide direct cost savings to businesses in other ways. We are committed to developing a system of portable benefits that could reduce costs to businesses related to employee benefits, as well as making sure that businesses have access to affordable and reliable internet services. Our plan also includes targeted tax relief, such as a tax incentive for seasonal businesses who want to extend their seasons.

The pandemic has highlighted how much we rely on essential minimum wage workers – such as those working in retail or custodial positions – who have not had the option to work from home and have continued going into work to ensure people's needs are met. Recent experiences in Alberta, Ontario, and across the United States show that even significant increases in the minimum wage do not create inflation or job losses.

The NDP recognizes nevertheless that minimum wage predictability is important to small businesses across the province. Once a \$15 minimum wage is reached, an NDP government will work towards establishing a roadmap so that future increases can be anticipated.

3. Will your party pledge to not raise corporate taxes (small and large businesses) or the HST during your mandate?

The NDP agrees that now is not the time to consider an increase to the HST. Working families are finding it hard enough to make ends meet without having to pay more out of pocket for daily purchases. Additionally, the NDP would remove HST altogether from funeral expenses.

On corporate taxes, the NDP would reverse the cut to the corporate taxes announced by the Liberals in 2020, but we have no current plans to increase rates beyond the previous 2019-20 level, or to raise taxes for small businesses. The NDP believes that targeted investments in families, small businesses, and rural areas of Nova Scotia would be a more effective allocation of government resources than the Liberals' blanket cuts. In particular, an NDP government would introduce a tax incentive for seasonal businesses who want to extend their seasons, implement competitive film and television production incentives, and ensure that



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taxation and service levels are consistent and proportionate across the province.

4. Will your party commit to conduct a review of the numerous fees charged on businesses?

The NDP is prepared to work with local retailers to ensure that all fees are fair and reasonable, particularly for small and rural businesses.

5. Will you take steps to ensure foreign eCommerce sellers begin to pay their fair share of taxes and eco-fees?

The NDP strongly believes that all businesses operating in Nova Scotia should pay their fair share of taxes and fees, including e-commerce sellers located elsewhere. Local businesses should not be placed at a disadvantage in competing against giant multinationals and largely unregulated online marketplaces. Clear and consistently enforced rules and regulations are in everyone's best interest.

6. Would your government take action to harmonize policies related to solid waste regulations across Atlantic Canada?

As you correctly noted, the government of Nova Scotia has a duty to be a leader in environmental stewardship. An NDP government would work closely with our federal, provincial, and municipal partners to ensure that all environmental regulations meet clear, consistent, and high standards.

On a broader level, protecting our environment and combating climate change are key commitments of the NDP. Our Green Jobs Plan would involve significant investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and local innovation to transform Nova Scotia's economy and create thousands of jobs. An associated Green Jobs Taskforce would bring together representatives of business, labour, municipalities, and other community groups to ensure that all voices are heard and all policies are implemented in a consistent manner provincewide.



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The NDP is also open to working together with municipalities and the private sector to establish an Extended Producer Responsibility regime in Nova Scotia.

7. Would your government take steps towards the liberalization of alcohol sales in Nova Scotia by regulating the sale of beer, wine and ready to drink beverage products in retail stores?

The NDP is open to discussions with all stakeholders to ensure that Nova Scotia's system of liquor regulation appropriately balances the interests of individuals, local communities, small businesses, and public health.