

# Self-sufficiency and Sustainable Development in NB

Formal submission to the NB Self- sufficiency Task Force  
by Bathurst Sustainable Development

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## **1) Introduction and Background**

On behalf of Bathurst Sustainable Development, a not for profit non- governmental sustainable development organization located Bathurst NB, we submit to the NB Self-sufficiency Task Force this brief and our recommendations on the future sustainability and self- sufficiency of our Province and Northern NB region.

Our comments and recommendations are presented to you following our both recent discussions as well as several years of consultation, dialogue, various surveys and input from Northern NB citizens living throughout the Northern region (both current and past residents), with several NB Environmental organizations who are members of the New Brunswick and Canadian Environmental Network, Health, Poverty, Social Justice and Labor organizations, local businesses, industries, seniors, youth, faith leaders and discussions with several Northeastern NB Municipalities.

We commend the NB Government and the Premier for their recognition of the future challenges facing our Province and for their willingness to work hard to find solutions. Fresh ideas, exploring positive options, sustainable progress, better involvement of citizens in the decision making process and improvements in democracy are always welcome!

For a backgrounder, Bathurst Sustainable Development is one of 5 Sustainable Development citizen led working groups in the Province and we are the working group who continued on with addressing issues of Sustainable Development in our region following our participation in a formal Sustainable Development Initiative that was conducted by the former Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries from 1995- 1998 in NB. If you visit our web site at: [www.bathurstsustainabledevelopment.com](http://www.bathurstsustainabledevelopment.com) you will see a link in the ledger to the archives of the former Sustainable Development working group and its accomplishments in our region.

Bathurst Sustainable Development is a member of the Canadian Environmental Network (CEN), New Brunswick Environmental Network (NBEN), Mining Watch Canada, Climate Action Network, Green Communities Canada, the Towards Sustainable Mining Initiative: Community of Interest Panel of the Mining Association of Canada, a member of the Mount Carleton Natural Protected Area, Nepisiquit Salmon Association and Watershed Association and Bathurst Healthy Communities Network. We operate an Environmental Resource Center at the Bathurst City Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings. The focus of our work is environmental education and awareness on issues pertaining to protection of water supplies, habitat and species protection, climate change, sustainable communities and all issues pertaining to sustainable development. We work tirelessly to assist in helping all levels of government, business, Municipalities and citizens to work cooperatively together toward our common goals.

## **2. Sustainable Development and Self- sufficiency**

Self- sufficiency for sustainable communities includes being able to provide for a sustainable level of population within the capacity of the areas natural resources while providing it with the essential life sustaining goods, services, energy, food, housing, safety, security, water, clean air, health and employment that is needed without having to depend on high levels of imported goods or exploitation of our natural capital and while ensuring that social justice and human rights are protected. This also means that sustainable, respectful and careful protection and use of our natural resources and eco systems should be able to be sufficient to sustain our population into the future without causing irreversible damage and degradation to the environment and the planet.

We must ensure that our decisions for the self- sufficiency of our Province include equality in the process and discussions of the challenges we face and final decisions of future initiatives, that we focus on reducing poverty, ensuring we work towards clean energy supplies and a healthy environment, working on adaptation to climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, meeting Kyoto targets both pre and post 2012, reducing toxins, ensuring a competitive workforce advantage, equal opportunities for quality of life, regional balance of equitable public services and economic prosperity for the Northern NB region and the Province.

## **3. NB at the Crossroads**

The recommendations of the task force suggested in the three reports released recommends many ideas and suggests to NB citizens that their destiny is about to change or be altered significantly in its direction as well as proposes “sweeping reform” by their government.

It also proposes the idea of major changes to the structure of local governments, historical community designations, changes to public services, discusses potential amalgamation, suggests significant changes to environmental policies and targets, presents ideas that may result in impacts on eco systems, climate change, air quality, human health and natural resources and possibly ideas that may lead to either an increase or a decrease in poverty for vulnerable populations in our Province depending on the selection of choices and their success.

The work of the task force to date is commendable, however, the Provincial government is duty bound to ensure that sufficient, accessible and inclusive consultation is conducted on changes of such magnitude. The current consultation of written submissions, insufficient scheduled limited presentation time and closed door focus group meetings which were not part of the public information process is being received as inadequate by many groups and citizens and the public is questioning what their level of confidence will be if decisions of major change are made in haste without more inclusive consultation and a broadening of the topics being focused on.

There are many well informed and brilliant citizens in NB who have much to offer to this process if they have the opportunity. Keeping in mind that our citizens are the greatest resource that we have we must do everything we can to ensure they are satisfied in their ability to participate in the work of the Task Force and support its final recommendations.

Many citizens have challenges with fully participating in the current process. Working families often cannot make the financial investment to travel to Fredericton to speak with the task force or have the child care support to leave their children for the day. Other citizens, with low reading and writing skills, may not have the ability to write a formal brief expressing their views but if they are able to listen to a presentation on the topic they certainly can firmly express verbally their position on many of the issues. We are therefore suggesting the following recommendations. In addition, we also present to you in a separate document the Press Release Position issued on behalf of several NB organizations which lists their position and recommendations as well.

It is not clear from the Task Force documents if the needs of the environment and public support for its enhanced protection are suggested to be an inconvenient barrier to progress and prosperity which must be "strategically managed" or if environmental excellence is the suggested goal. We do know that no effort was made to contact or hold specific consultations, or extend invitations to the environmental organizations, conservation and Environmental Provincial networks in the Province during the by "invitation only, closed door tours" around the province conducted by the Task Force. Therefore, we believe that the environment has been seriously under represented in the consultations and considerations of the Task Force and its recommendations to date.

### Recommendations

- That a second round of public face to face consultations be scheduled, as well as open houses and information sessions and conducted in each region of the Province.
- That the deadline for written submissions be extended until June 30.
- That included in the final report and final recommendations of the Task Force, the public is provided with detailed information on exactly what is being proposed for each recommendation, timelines and actions, objective information provided to the public on what the anticipate positive and negative short, medium and long term implications and changes will be on the lives and businesses of citizens and their communities in the Province.
- That formal Public Hearings be held across the Province on the final recommendations proposed by the Self- Sufficiency Task Force.

- That all environmental, health, social justice, poverty and economic organizations in the Province be notified, included and formally consulted on the proposed recommendations, and invited to participate at any future regional planning meetings pertaining to changes in the regulatory processes, sustainable development, industrial approvals and recommendations that impact the environment.
- That the Province ensure that future focus group meetings and consultations in each region include extended invitations for representation from Aboriginal communities, Youth, the New Brunswick Environmental Network groups, Literacy groups, Women's Issues, Faith Leaders, Economic organizations and Seniors.
- We recommend that the Web posted submissions should include those submitted by everyone including business, industry and Municipalities.

#### **4. Climate Change, the Carbon Market and Kyoto Compliance**

As the next report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (ICPP), due to be released in just a couple of weeks will state, global historic continental and country wide roles are about to dramatically shift on this planet and security of regions future water supplies, food supplies and many resource based industries will be effected.

The current strengths, weaknesses and economic abilities in each country are going to change. This means that economic markets, tendencies and reliability will also change. Commodities that currently are exported heavily by certain countries will no longer be reliable both as a source of supply for NB and perhaps Canada as well nor as a source of economic stability for the exporting country that has relied on producing that commodity for global markets and economic sustainability of their communities.

Areas of the world that historically were strong suppliers of specific crops of world food supplies will loose much of their capacity to do so.

Water supplies, drought, flooding, infestation of pests, relocation of populations, extreme weather, available labor force and infrastructure damage from storms and sea level rise will result in a population shift among the continents over the next 80 years and in fact relocation of population and entire communities has already begun in some of the sub-Saharan, Arctic regions and tropical areas that are at or below sea level. Areas of Mexico are already spending over \$20 million per year on sand replenishment at resorts since the ocean and waves are now lapping on the deck of the resort and the warm tropical sand along the coast that draws so many tourists and the Earth's beaches are literally being submerged and washed away by sea level rise. Parle Beach in NB also spends hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to import sand to replenish the beach sand at Parle Beach

lost from storm surge and sea level rise. The sand is harvested off the coast of Bouctouche. The economic costs of the impacts of climate change on our infrastructure, agriculture, communities and economies far out weigh the cost of taking significant measure now to reduce global and local GHG emissions. We must significantly reduce our GHG emissions over the next 13 years and avert a rise in global temperature of more than 2 degrees Celsius.

In the coming few years, environmental refugees will outpace the number of refugees ever displaced by all of the world wars combined in our modern history. These citizens, up to as many as 1 billion, it is estimated, will need new places to live, work, raise their families, energy supplies, schools, health care, food and other services. Every country of the world will be called upon to open its doors and provide refuge and a new life for the millions that will be in need and on the move across the planet.

These climate change impacts will present catastrophic loss for some regions sustainability and the need to increase the leadership, capacity and activities in global stabilization efforts for other regions fortunate enough to experience less severe impacts.

In NB, our vision, planning, preparation and final self-sufficiency decisions must be made factoring in all of the scientific warnings, information, forecasts and modeling that the ICPP panel is telling us. To ignore this or dismiss these warnings would lead to our being in the wrong level of preparedness and level of adaptation at the wrong time. The impacts of climate change on economies, population, energy, health, and water and food supplies must be factored into the direction we choose for our self-sufficiency plans.

Our responsibility is to develop future energy supplies, industrial operations and transportation services in such a way that the result is a reduction in total absolute GHG emission and that we sustain these reductions at a level of at least 35% below 1990 levels and preferable 80% below 1990 levels while at the same time allowing for some future growth and development to take place at a sustainable low impact rate.

NB Emissions- 32 tonnes per person annually.

9.9% increase in GHG emissions in NB per capita compared to the average 2.1% increase in Canada.

If Canada does not meet its Kyoto targets by 2012, the Compliance and Enforcement Branch of the Protocol has the authorization of the signatory countries to enforce upon Canada a variety of compliance mechanisms. Meeting Kyoto is not optional for Canada, it is a matter of International Law and our non compliance is enforceable under International Law. This could mean financial penalties, tariffs on fossil fuel energy supplies, trade barriers, and sanctions for non- compliance.

These costs to Canada could end up being in the multi- billions of dollars annually and every year after 2012 until Canada reaches compliance. This multi- billion dollar penalty could be passed on to the Provinces by the Federal government, deducted from Provincial

transfers, or could be imposed on Canadians through a mandatory financial collection regime by imposing a pollution tax similar to the structure of the current HST tax on all goods and services bought, sold, produced, imported, exported and manufactured in Canada.

Financial planners for future investments and debt loads by the Province are cautioned to include calculations of what the debt load or loss of economic cash flow would be to the Provincial budget in the coming years if Kyoto compliance is not attained and penalties are imposed.

Kyoto penalties and the impending higher costs for goods and services can be avoided if our strategy is directed to broad spread energy conservation and efficiencies and clean emissions energy production for our future needs. Additionally, approximately 35% of the energy used by commercial, institutional, Municipal and residential buildings could be reduced if effective incentives and awareness campaigns directed to consumers and individual citizens were conducted and effective engagement occurs.

The suggested ban on incandescent light bulbs in favour of compact fluorescent bulbs could also be expanded to a requirement that all outdoor lighting be either solar or LED technologies or that lighting in Cities be reduced by Municipalities through comprehensive lighting inventories, targeted reductions in numbers of lights or change over to renewable energy sources.

Because these measures not only save Municipalities, homeowners and business owners money through their energy costs but also will save them money on their carbon fees, the incentives are there now to help our communities be engaged in efficiency and conservation measures.

The fees will not be permanent; they will be reduced in a pro rated manner once global emissions have been lowered to a safe level over a number of years and as the transition to low carbon is completed.

### Recommendations

- That the proposed Regional Sustainable Development processes, if implemented, should ensure that representatives of the NBEN member groups, and the Aboriginal, Youth, Health, Vulnerable Populations and Seniors located in the regions be represented and active in the development of the regional plans and members of any committees that may be formed;
- That the Province provide the necessary financial support, both capital and operational, to the Municipalities from Bathurst to Belledune so they may implement public transit bus service in the City of Bathurst and daily transit link commuter services with the surrounding Municipalities from Beresford to

Belledune to allow citizens a means of reducing GHG emissions produced from their transportation and to facilitate transporting the work force;

- That each Municipality in NB should work with their local NBEN working groups and stakeholders to develop and adopt Integrated Green Plans based on 200 year plans for sustainability, reduction of GHG emissions, protection of biodiversity, land use planning, water supplies and adaptation to Climate Change;
- That the Province ensure that international standards of certification for sustainable development practices in all the resource sectors be ISO1900 or greater;
- That the Province take a leading role in increasing the amount of renewable energy supply in the Province with a special focus on micro solar, residential solar thermal, solar hot water, wind, tidal power, co- generation and geo thermal.
- That the Province ensures that any investment in bio fuels does not result in a net loss of productive agriculture operations and or farms for food supplies in our Province.
- That the Federal and Provincial governments agree to share the cost of supporting and increase energy efficiency retrofit grants and grants for residential solar thermal, solar hot water and small micro renewable energy home systems;
- That the Province provides start up capital loans for 2 silicon and solar cell manufacturing facilities capable of supplying the North American market and that these facilities are located in North-eastern NB;
- That the Province provide start up capital for the manufacturing of portable desalination units for domestic and export sale to be used as a means of desalination of sea water for use as non potable community water supplies (fires, landscaping, waste and washing services etc...) as well as for agricultural irrigation. China, for example, is already beginning to use this technology to supplement their shortage of drinking water supplies. Since agriculture, fires and heavy industry consume close to 50% of the earths fresh water supplies, a transition away from using potable water supplies, dwindling surface water and community reservoirs for these non essential needs is the emerging trend across the world and supplying the technology units will be a strong manufacturing opportunity.
- That the Province establish a research consortium for carbon sequestration, capture and storage led by the Research and Productivity Council to partner with other research institutions and private sector interests;

- That the Province encourage the federal government to move forward with a policy framework and set targets for absolute GHG emissions reductions that will enable Canada to meet its Kyoto Targets by 2012;
- That the Province establishes its own Climate Change Plan, modeling that of the Province of Quebec, and set targets for absolute GHG emissions reductions that will enable NB to meet its portion of Kyoto targets by 2012;
- That the Province encourage the federal government to implement immediately a Cap and Trade Emissions trading system in Canada and a trading market both for international, domestic and inter- provincial carbon credit trading;
- That the Province establish aggressive targets for mandatory vehicle emissions;
- That following the example in the Climate Change Plan developed by the Province of Quebec, the Province acknowledge the potential to achieve significant reductions in GHG emissions, lower costs of living for citizens and improvements in quality of life by assisting small Municipalities to establish public transit bus services and transit link bus services for working commuters from the smaller Municipalities to the larger Cities where so many of NB residents work

## **5. Energy Self- sufficiency, the Environment and Smart Regulation**

We are please to see some reference to the environment in the Task Force recommendations. However, reaching for environmental excellence is not strongly emphasised in the recommendations of the Task Force. It is hoped, that the Task Force will advise NB to adopt the highest standard of environmental policy and regulations possible and that all Trade and Energy Agreements proposed with the United States, Mexico, other regions of Canada, and global partners should ensure that regulations are not “negotiated” down to a less rigorous level during the negotiations.

Currently, in Canada, there is a proposal in the consultation documents being conducted on a Canada Wide Strategy for Waste Water Management which, if implemented as currently written, will see a reduction in waste waster release regulations in NB and in many other areas of the country. They also propose to require that all Municipal releases must now undergo toxicity testing for chemicals and toxins.

This additional requirement is a very good thing, but our governments have yet to provide us with their science and studies on what cumulative long term and seasonal impacts there might be on local shellfishing, summer beach activities, tourism and low tide air quality if the standards for suspended solids and human waste organics and biological compounds are decreased all across NB.

For these reasons, we recommend that air, water, energy, GHG emissions, and all other regulations in NB not be negotiated “down” but “up” to as high a standard as can be reached so that NB is seen as a clean and safe province that is a leader in tackling climate change and protecting the environment.

It is not clear from the Task Force documents if the needs of the environment and public support for its enhanced protection are suggested to be an inconvenient barrier to progress and prosperity which must be "strategically managed" or if environmental excellence is the suggested goal. We do know that, as of the date of this submission, no effort was made to contact or hold specific consultations, or extend invitations to the environmental organizations, conservation and Environmental Provincial networks in the Province during the by “invitation only, closed door tours” around the province conducted by the Task Force. Therefore, we believe that the environment has been seriously under represented in the consultations and considerations of the Task Force and its recommendations to date.

The entire planet is in transition to a low carbon world. This does not mean however, that there will no longer be use of or future demand for some fossil fuel energy. The full transition to low carbon renewable energy will still take several years and during and beyond that, while global supplies last, fossil fuel will continue to be in demand.

What may impact demand for fossil fuel based energy supplies however is the Carbon Market as well as depletion of the Earth's final raw sources of bitumen and the final price that the global community places on each tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>. Following the establishment of the price of a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>, it will in all likelihood, be followed by the pricing of methane and nitrous oxide.

Price per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> is being suggested to be priced between \$15 to \$30 per tonne. This is not a stable price, it can vary the same as global financial markets rise and fall. There will be a low range and a high range depending on the total carbon rating of the production of the product or energy supply. All future corporate and provincial and Federal budget forecasts will have to factor in the cost of doing business based on fossil fuel energy supplies, consumed or produced from the activity, the payment of carbon, methane and nitrous oxide pollution fees or calculating carbon credits generated when a province, country, business or industry is below their capped regulated level of emissions released.

It is commendable to note, that Shell Canada has made a corporate voluntary pledge to reduce their GHG emissions from all global operations to 35% below 1990 levels. They have identified a series of technologies and cost saving efficiency measures that will allow them to reach their goals. Their efforts will quickly become the model to follow for all energy suppliers and generators of GHG emissions since in future year's corporate reputations, triple bottom line costs, profits to shareholders will be either negatively or positively influenced based on an expected higher performance of environmental protection, technological advancements, efficiencies and compliance GHG emissions regulations.

The intellectual knowledge of these low carbon technological and efficiency advances can then be shared and distributed to existing and emerging energy producing and consuming industries, businesses and countries.

Considering the mood and opinion of the majority of Canadians and NB citizens that the environment and concerns around Climate Change is their # 1 priority, we make the following recommendations to the Task Force and the Province.

### Recommendations

- That the Province make a firm commitment to the citizens of NB that the proposed recommendation by the Task Force to attempt to streamline regulations, if they proceed with that action, with neighbouring jurisdictions, as well as any future planned negotiations with the United States, Western Canadian Provinces and Mexico to facilitate the movement of goods and service, will ensure that there will be no net loss or reduction of Federal or Provincial environmental regulations/ protection, social support services and human rights, labour agreements or jurisdictional lands and passage rights that are currently in place to protect the quality of life, health, lands and the environment of the citizens of NB.
- That the Province proceed with the ban on incandescent light bulbs in favour of compact fluorescent bulbs and expand this to a requirement that all outdoor lighting be either solar or LED technologies and that lighting in Cities be reduced by Municipalities through comprehensive lighting inventories, targeted reductions in numbers of lights or change over to renewable energy sources.
- That the Province of NB will ensure that the proposed recommendation by the Task Force, if implemented, in its efforts to reduce the regulator costs of approvals in NB, will make mandatory that a full EIA will always be conducted for each industrial facility or major infrastructure that makes an application to construct and operate and that requires licensing under the Clean Air Act, based on the volume of water consumption, whose operation triggers a CEPA screening, triggers the Clean Environment Act or if the proposed site is in an area with high environmental impact, ecological concern and or prior impact.
- That the Province of NB will ensure and commit to the citizens of NB that the recommendation of the Task Force, if implemented, to negotiate additional Trade agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions and countries exclude the export of Canadian or NB raw water resources.
- That the Province of NB ensure and commit to the citizens of NB that, if it follows the recommendation of the Task Force to streamline regulations, NB will

not agree to a negotiated lowering or reduction of Federal or Provincial Canadian emissions, quality of product or trading standards in order to assist compliance with Chapter 6 of NAFTA.

- That the Province of NB ensure and commit to the citizens of NB that NB will protect its future energy supply resources, Provincial and future regulated standards relating to purity and emissions ratings of fuel substances, options for generation and distribution to the citizens of NB by ensuring that the Province enact protective and restrictive measures as was done by Mexico in the NAFTA Agreement, in any North Atlantic Energy and or Atlantic Trade Agreements proposed to be negotiated with the purpose of streamlining regional and North Atlantic cross border agreements and regulations.
- That the Province commits that they will assist in expediting the respectful settling of, to the satisfaction of the property owners impacted in Belledune, the issue pertaining to their contaminated lands.

## **6. Growing Green Communities and Fostering a Green Agenda**

Green, clean, efficient and environmentally conscience communities are the future and are the model of liveable, sustainable cities and regions across the world. These will be the cities and regions that will experience an influx of population growth, stronger resiliency and stability, more satisfied citizens and economic prosperity.

The most frequent complaints and demands for services we hear from residents in Northern NB pertaining to services is the lack of public transit affordable bus services and the shameful lack of a comprehensive recycling program equal to that of the southern Cities. Families really do not want to raise their children in regions without recycling and youth want to be environmentally correct by participating in recycling.

The Southern NB cities, Moncton, Fredericton, St. John and now Dieppe focus on ensuring that basic services such as public transit, recycling, green spaces, reducing energy, acceptance of the challenges we face from climate change and increasing the ability of participation for all citizens regardless of age, language or wealth are prioritized. The Southern Cities of NB prioritize projects and services that improve the environmental bottom line, cost of living for their inhabitants and ensure fair and equitable access to basic transportation services.

The direction these Cities are heading, including the new City of Dieppe with their proposed Green Plan, will continue to attract citizens from the rural and other regions of the province like magnets.

## Democracy and Consultation

There is a less rigorous and inclusive process of public consultation in North-eastern NB, than in Southern NB.

Consultation processes are far more inclusive in Southern NB than in Northern NB.

Northern NB citizens recognize this, new people in our area notice it very quickly, and our populations have been burdened with it for many years and want improvements and to be made by our leaders and to be more involved in the local decisions.

The working poor (The poverty limit in Canada is defined by governments as persons with total household incomes of \$30,000 or under) see themselves as being very low on the priority list when it comes to putting in place services and things that will improve their lives and help them be able to access work and services.

Northern citizens see the difference in quality of life and acceptance in the Southern Cities. They also see opportunities for balancing the cost of living which is impossible now for many people both youth, seniors and working families who live in the Northern region to do without public transit bus services. Most youth and families working in the \$30,000 per year and under range in the North are operating in a deficit position at the end of each year. This is unsustainable and they have no means of balancing their budgets due to soaring insurance, energy, fuel, goods and service costs unless they can reduce their transportation costs and they can't do that without public transit bus services operating. Many more have total after tax incomes of only \$15,000 to \$18,000.

The Southern Cities invest heavily in the public services their citizens need in order to improve quality of life, participate more fully in activities and provide opportunities to their children. They have a vast number of weekend activities that are free for all children and their parents and ensure that bus services operate so that all children can have equal opportunity to participate regardless of where they live and the income level of their families.

If 50% of the population in the Municipalities from Bathurst to Belledune could reduce their transportation costs by \$2000 per year, this would inject \$10 million dollars into the local economy and improve the economic balance of living in Northern NB for low and middle wage earners.

There is a freedom and motivation to be more independent that comes with access to affordable transportation. Many citizens in the Northern Cities and Municipalities feel trapped without bus services. We ask the Provincial government to assist the Northern Municipalities to help set our people free, reduce their oppression and increase their productivity and quality of life by providing the capacity to our region to support public transit. It will be impossible for our region to increase its population and attract new residents in the coming years without this service in place.

In the coming years citizen will embrace Cities with high conservation values, inclusive democracy processes and high quality of life ideals for citizens of all income levels and abandon Cities and regions that make no progress or efforts on Climate Change and environmental improvements and areas where democracy is controlled by “status quo regimes” with ideals that are the minority rather than the majority.

### Recommendation

- We recommend that the Task Force and Province recommend to the Province, that when Provincial consultation are conducted, the Province pay special attention to ensuring that opportunities for face to face public consultation are schedule here in the North and not only in Southern, NB and that broad public notification and inclusion be well publicized.
- We recommend that the Task Force and Province recommend to the Province, that all NB Municipalities develop and enact Green Plans, developed in partnership with their local environmental organizations and other stakeholders, to improve air quality, environmental health, sustainable water supplies, and protection of biological diversity, improvements in land use planning, increase in recycling and improved quality of life for its citizens.
- We recommend that the Province establish a “NB Green Cities Award” and present it annually to the City or organization working in the City in NB who completes an excellent green project or who is moving towards completing their Municipal Green Plans.
- We recommend that the Task Force recommend that the Province make available to Northern NB sufficient capital and operating funds to support a full recycling and composting program and the construction of or designation of a sorting facility to sustain this service.
- We also recommend that a third party, independent, non governmental facilitator, with extensive experience in creative options to managing challenging recycling programs, working in partnership with local and regional environmental organizations and broad public input, be established to work with the communities and solid waste commissions to identify and resolve regional and local disputes and barriers to the implementation of a comprehensive recycling service in Northern NB.

## **7. Infrastructure, Barriers to Employment and Sustainable Transportation**

All Southern NB Cities have public transit bus services in place.

None of the Northern NB Cities have public transit bus services.

The lack of affordable transportation is a fundamental and influencing difference.

You cannot accept work or go to college in this region unless you live within walking distance of the facility, can afford to own and operate a personal vehicle or can hook up with a car pool. You cannot bike to work or college in the coldest winter months in our region. There are no bus stops, no public transit, no designated bike lanes along inner City roads.

The cost of living has outpaced the ability of low and middle income wage earners and students to continue to own and operate a car.

We need to upgrade basic public transportation services in this region. This does not mean just giving attention and support to road improvements. Transportation is about more than just rail, cars, roads, trucks, air travel and roads. It is also about affordable, inner City and inner regional daily transportation services to get to and from the work place.

Public transit is considered infrastructure and renewable energy and qualifies for investment from both Federal and Provincial governments. Many government employees surveyed at Federal and Provincial offices in Bathurst who commute to the City daily for work from areas such as Beresford have responded very strongly that they want access to bus service for traveling to and from work.

One needs only to review the vast amount of documented reports from credible studies conducted by the Canadian Urban Transit Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and many University studies on the link between affordable transportation, quality of life, human health and rural poverty and speak with thousands of current and former residents to confirm the need for this service in the North.

The citizens in our region and our region in general are at an unfair disadvantage when compared to the Southern NB Cities due to the lack of daily bus services. This means the Northern Hub City of Bathurst is less competitive in attracting new citizens, sustaining its labour force to supply employees for new and existing businesses, increases the cost of living for Northern citizens and students and fosters a higher level of poverty and oppression in working families and vulnerable populations.

Daily bus service is an infrastructure that is missing in the City of Bathurst and surrounding communities where much of the City work force lives and its absence should not be dismissed as unimportant to the future prosperity and sustainability of the North-eastern hub city and region.

It is needed in order for citizens living in the North of the Province to have the same equal opportunities as citizens living in Southern Cities to balance the cost of living by reducing their transportation costs, improving equal opportunity to access employment, reducing student college costs and to improve social equality in the region.

The low and middle income working families in our region are suffering and slipping further into poverty. Many can no longer sustain themselves and retain a quality of life in the North and so they are on the move and relocating themselves.

The continuing increases in electricity and fuel costs is making living in the Northern City and surrounding communities financially unsustainable. Many people could be helped if bus service was available. If 50% of the 22,200 residents could reduce their transportation costs by \$2,000 per year they would have a total of \$10 million dollars to use towards better nutrition, cost of offsetting rising energy costs, greater independent living, would be able to participate more fully in community activities and events, could begin to save for retirement and would increase their productivity.

We are sure that the Task Force and Province would never recommend that the Southern Cities shut down their transit services or ever suggest that they are not a critically important vital service because the Province knows what an important role the service plays in the success of these Cities and the quality of life of its students and citizens.

St. John Transit, for example, carries over 12,000 riders per day to work and appointments. Did they reach that level in their first year of operations? No, it took several years, time, support and funding.

The citizens of the City of Bathurst and surrounding communities deserve the same equal opportunity and should not have to move to one of the Southern cities in order to lower their cost of living, be able to access employment, participate in reducing GHG emissions and improve their quality of life. While the purchase of homes may be higher than in the North, than in the Southern cities, we have tracked the apartment rental prices for three years and found that they are not only quite comparable but also often state that the apartment is "on the bus route". So the incentive for Northern citizens and youth to relocate to one of the Southern cities where they can find more affordable living and equality is a trend that we could reduce if transit services were implemented. We have conducted three studies on this topic and can provide you with mountains of detailed supporting documents, plans and citizen's support for this service.

Our theatre is experiencing low sales and facing possible closure. For citizens who no longer drive or cannot afford to sustain owning a car, going to a movie at the Bathurst cinema would cost \$30- \$50 depending on which area of the City you live in. If the Apollo Cinema in Bathurst closes, this will lead to more layoffs and more people moving away due to the lack of a theatre. Even if the transit service did not operate in the evenings, the cinema has afternoon matinees on Saturday and holidays that families would enjoy attending.

Taxi fares paid for by the province for low income and vulnerable citizens in need to go to medical appointments, the hospital and access supporting social services and training range between \$5- \$80 one way or \$10 to \$160 return depending on what part of the City of Bathurst you live in or if you live in the Village of Belledune. The average fare for a

return from Beresford to the Hospital in Bathurst can be as high as \$45. This cost is passed directly to the Province. The Province could save money and reduce their transportation support costs possibly enough to cover the requested increase in Municipal transfers to help the 6 Municipalities pay a Municipal subsidy to the transit commission if transit service were an available transportation option for social services to recommend to its clients.

The North-eastern Municipalities cannot support this service alone and the service cannot sustain itself for the first several years without Municipal subsidies added to its annual rider fares and advertising revenues.

### Recommendation

- We recommend that the Task Force recommend in its final report, that the Province provide the City of Bathurst and the 5 Municipalities along route 134, with the necessary capital funds to purchase 4 medium sized transit buses and that the Province increase annual Provincial transfers to the Municipalities of Bathurst, Beresford, Petit-Rocher, Nigadoo, Pointe- Verte and Belledune in the amount of \$49,000 per municipality per year plus annual increases for inflation to be used specifically to provide the North-eastern Municipalities with specific additional funds to supply a Municipal subsidy to the Regional Transit Commission that will form to operate the service on behalf of the 6 Municipalities.
- We support the recommendation of the task force to recommend to the province an increase in the minimum wage and that the Province ensures pay equity for women.
- We support the proposal of decentralizing additional Provincial and Federal government departments and agencies and relocating them to the Bathurst hub City. These types of jobs often bring entire families to a region, demands for local goods and services, are low impact on the environment and could be beneficial to supporting public transit as daily users.
- We support the recommendation for an increase in the minimum wage.
- We agree that the struggle for all of the small Municipalities to continue to support services and infrastructure on their own is becoming increasingly difficult and is leading to fragmentation and in some cases division. Fears of assimilation, loss of identity and language predominance designation are some of the challenges we identify. It will not be easy to "sell" this idea particularly in Northern NB.
- Identifying, designating and obtaining regulated and permitted access to additional sources of water supplies for the larger incorporated merged City or

region will be a difficult and sensitive process for citizens to go through but is also critical for a sustainable future.

- If expanding the incorporated boundaries of the major existing cities in the province is the goal, increasing density of population centrally in the Cities will make providing supporting services easier and less costly. Socially, and with the addition of an influx of global immigrants, the merger would eventually lead to settling in similar to larger Cities where neighbourhoods with predominate and unique cultural and ethnic identities and population groups cluster to build neighbourhoods that reflect their homeland, beliefs, holidays and traditions but remain part of the Urban Community and broadening international Canadian mosaic.
- We recommend that the Task Force recommend the decentralization of some government departments and relocation of these departments to Bathurst, making sure that the location of the office complexes are along the proposed public transit routes.

#### Immigration and Transportation

- Through our consultation on transit in the region, we hear repeatedly from the few immigrants who have come to live and work here, that they cannot stay and are attempting to relocate to one of the Southern Cities or other Canadian cities where public bus service is available. As we know, many new immigrants cannot work in their professional occupation the first few years upon arrival and so are forced to take lower paying jobs and also often come from communities and cities where the family has never owned a family vehicle and has always used public transit. If our goal in NB is to increase immigration, then the Northern communities need to have the basic public serves in place to support immigrants to live in our region.
- We recommend that in order to foster an increase in immigration and to attract citizens from other areas of the Province or Canada to move to Northern NB to help build our population in the City of Bathurst and surrounding communities that the Province assists the region to establish public transit bus services.

#### Sustainable Transportation and Roads

- The suggestion that additional roads or multi-lane highways to help citizens from Northern NB be able to commute daily to one of the Southern Cities to work unsustainable. It would take too much time away from rest and family, would drive transportation costs and emission levels much higher and would end in encouraging Northern citizens to move to Southern NB. We do support improving maintenance and repairs to existing roads.

- We recommend that all Municipalities add to their transportation plans and capital budgets the following priorities for transportation funding and strategic planning and focus in their communities:

**Priority of Sustainable Transportation Support and Planning in NB Municipalities**

<b>Highest Priority</b>	1) Walking
	2) Public Transit
	3) Biking
	4) Moving Goods and Services
	5) High Occupancy Vehicles
<b>Lowest Priority</b>	6) Single Occupancy Vehicles

**8. Our Children are our Future- The need for a Provincial Childcare Program**

The high cost of childcare and access to flexible childcare hours plus services in rural areas is a major barrier to accessing employment in NB.

- We recommend that the Province support the establishment of higher levels of program funding, start up capital and support for both current and new childcare services in the Province.
- After school programs are needed in each community from 2- 6pm as well as evening and weekend childcare services.

**9. Financial Needs for Municipalities**

Municipalities, especially in Northern NB have suffered ever since the Federal transfers were reduced back in 1994. They now face aging infrastructure, lack of funds to address energy efficiency and climate change and to support public transit.

- We recommend that the Task Force recommend an increase and improvement to the Federal/ Provincial Transfer system to increase financial support and transfers to each NB Municipality and a higher rate of transfer to the Northern Municipalities Northern Hub Cities.

## **10. Degree Programs in Northern Colleges**

- We recommend that all NB Community Colleges implement a full 2 year Child Development diploma granting program and a 3 year Early Childhood Program.
- The current 3 month training programs, while valuable to short certification of existing child care workers, is insufficient to allow new students to study child development in the “whole child” format, understanding social development needs and to build confidence in parents.
- With so many teacher’s about to retire, a comprehensive 3 year Early Childhood TC4 level Associate in Education diploma program in Northern NB Colleges offered in English as well as French would not only help replace some of the retiring Elementary teachers but will also expand opportunities for studies in English in the Northern region.
- The Northern Colleges would benefit by expand their degree granting capacity in English courses, implementing a Bachelor of Education Program, Bachelor of Arts and Sciences and increasing full Trades Courses in Colleges.
- Renewable energy technicians and energy efficient trades should be also added to the college programs.

## **11. Language Ability, Accreditation and Employment**

Currently some services and sectors in the Province are not hiring citizens unless they are fully bilingual. This means that some of our current able and trained citizens cannot find work in their field or in some cases, work at all.

Becoming bilingual is difficult especially for citizens who have lived all of their lives in other Provinces or countries where they have not been exposed to the French language or the English language. Going to night school after working all day or if you have children is also difficult and costly. The population outside of NB may be thinking that you must be bilingual in order to live and work here and so do not even consider our Province.

### Recommendations

- We recommend that if we need the number of new employees to move to our Province that the Task Force states in only a few years, that as a Province we will have to lower our expectation that these new citizens be bilingual. We need to get them to move here first and then we can help them learn a second language.

- We also recommend that the Province and Canada accelerate the acceptance of foreign professionally attained accreditation, skills training and education to accelerate the ability of these immigrants to be able to fill some of the higher skills positions in our Province.
- We recommend that a solution would be for companies to offer Lunch and Learn Language Modules at the work place to help with conversational language skills.
- If more public services could be split so that telephone access and front line workers are available in either French or English but not necessarily both languages in the same person it would allow more one language citizens to live and work in NB. In some cases, it is as simple as having a Press 1 for English and Press 2 for French and would work well for such services as the Tele Nursing Services. It also would allow unilingual Nurses in NB to access work from where they live without having to relocate.

## **12. Emerging Opportunities for Industries and Suppliers**

### *a) Agriculture and Local Food Supplies*

Adaptation to Climate change will require that we become self-sufficient in all of our survival needs and economic prosperity will require that we are able to produce additional supplies to help export, supply and feed areas of the world. Unfortunately, NB is poised to become a new global supplier of exportable food supplies to areas of the world where food production and water availability has tragically collapsed.

A large portion of our prosperity will come from our own abilities in innovation, adaptation, diversity, hard work, level of cooperation, increases in value added ready for market foods and products from the agriculture, fisheries and manufacturing sectors in NB. These sectors should be able to supply our Provincial food and goods, increase our ability to produce the final value added product from our own resources, reduce our dependency on foreign imports and decrease our exporting of raw materials.

### **Greenhouse and Hydroponics Production**

- Large scale winterized greenhouses, powered by renewable energy heating and vegetables and fruits produced by hydroponics will be needed on a global scale and if these agricultural facilities are established in Northern NB they will provide an environmentally friendly opportunity to employ hundreds of citizens and vast research and value added product production.

- We recommend that the Task Force Recommend to the government that the Province and Federal governments ensure stable farm subsidies, micro and long term financing for expanding our support for both existing and new farms, financing for increasing our capacity to process and prepare these farmed products here in NB for commercial sale and shipping them to NB stores and the global market.
- We recommend that the task Force recommend to the Province that they focus on an expansion in food storage capacity, canning, drying and freezing for both seasonal and winter vegetables and grain and a major expansion into year round technologies of agricultural production of fruits, vegetables, seafood, proteins. Agricultural research and development along with pilot products into growing non native crops, adaptation of seeds to climate variability, non indigenous fruits and vegetables will provide even more employment opportunities for diversification in agriculture markets.
- We recommend that the Task Force recommend to the Province that there are emerging employment opportunities for current NB citizens and new citizens interested in moving to the Province to work in the field of the expanded role of agriculture and that expanding agriculture can happen quickly if it is prioritized.

#### b) Aquaculture and Fisheries

Climate Change and the build up of CO<sub>2</sub> have pushed the earth oceans to the point where they can no longer absorb any further CO<sub>2</sub> and are increasing in their acidification. This means there will be collapse and reduction in all marine life and projected to be as high as 40% of all marine species. Increased acidification of the Earth's oceans is especially problematic for the shellfish species.

Over harvesting and bottom dragging has left our fisheries in a steady state of decline. Scientists have already forewarned us of a collapse and massive decline of the majority of marine life in the ocean environments by 2040.

Most aquaculture operations will be forced out of the Earth's oceans due to acidification increases that are now happening.

Northern NB and NB in general cannot with stand a total collapse of its fisheries sector.

#### **Sustainable Indoor Fisheries- Urban Aquaculture for the 21 st Century**

All aquaculture operations will need to be lifted out of the oceans acidifying water and operated on land in the form of Sustainable Indoor Fisheries for white fish, salmon, trout and various shellfish. These fish are not for release to the wild and are shipped directly

for processing or fresh to supermarkets for human consumption. New technologies in this sector have successfully reached close to zero environmental impact. Opportunities for R & D, hundreds of jobs, dozens of spin off products production can be attained from investment in this new sector.

For more information see:

<http://www.blueridgeaquaculture.com/index.cfm/topic/cobia>

<http://www.aquanic.org/beginner/systems/recycle.htm>

Research, development and the transition must begin immediately in order to avoid a total global collapse of fish food supplies for our Province and job losses in Northern NB.

Fish waste from these onland operating fish tanks can be safely collected and used for fertilizer for the increasing agriculture sector.

Opposition to “unnatural forms” of food production is strong however, the world is changing quickly and for some years, the public will need to accept that in order to feed the world during these devastating years, we must be open to changes. Hopefully, as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are lowered across the planet, the Earth’s oceans and its species will have the ability to recover and the ability of the natural ocean to provide food supplies will return. Northern NB fishermen and families are particularly vulnerable to this looming crisis in the fisheries.

### **Recreational Fisheries**

In the late 1990’s, under the NB- Canada Cooperative Agreement, it was studied, identified and recommended that NB make investments and partner with grassroots organizations working in the recreational fisheries to enhance this sector in our Province and that the value and economic spin-off in terms of fishing licenses, fees and tourism in this province had the potential to more than double the economic value of the recreational fisheries to NB. This recommendation was never put into action. Why?

### **Recommendations**

- That the task Force recommend that an On Land, Indoor Aquaculture research pilot project be launched in Northern NB to test, improve and establish this emerging sector and its ability to grow stable fish food supplies for local communities.

- That the Task Force recommend that a Value Added Food Processing facility be established in Northern NB to identify and produce viable value added food supplies for commercial markets.
- That the Task Force recommend to the Province, that an increase in investments in the recreational fisheries occurs and that the Province partner with grassroots organizations working in the recreational fisheries to enhance this sector in our Province to help increase the value and economic spin-off in terms of fishing licenses, fees and tourism in this province.

### c) Forestry Opportunities

#### Recommendations

We do not support the recommendation of the Task Force that Natural Protected Areas in our Province be reduced or that they permit an increase of harvesting on Crown Land by 25%. This is not a sustainable recommendation.

Protected forested areas in our Province should be increased and protected not decreased, including all lands surrounding surface waters. This is needed to be done in order to protect future water supplies.

Forests will be experiencing increasing challenges due to the impacts of climate change. Planning and protecting biodiversity in our forests will help them to be more resilient and increase their natural protection against changing seasonal trends, water availability, pests and severe weather.

The current forest companies have been in control of the sustainable management of their timber allocation and our forests for many years and have failed to effectively ensure that their harvesting methods, technologies used result in sustainable timber supplies balanced with the ability of the forest to grow back and supply the raw resource at the pace the automated mills demand to sustain corporate profit margins.

The introduction of exotic fast growing species, the convergence of mixed forest areas to these plantations is an objective of multi-national corporations whose goals are based on accessing our last remaining natural forest areas so that they can have the highest volume of raw fibre as possible and on profits not on a long term sustainability plan for the community. Far too often, these plantations are established and then left behind as the company closes our mill and leaves our communities devastated.

As has been proven in the past so many times, once the profits are lowered, the commitment to the community for employment is gone as well. They will not be here nor

will most wait around for the forest to recover enough to sustain their high volume of timber supply.

We recommend that the Province assist local NB communities to acquire ownership of their own mills for producing value added products, for producing forestry technologies, for conducting pilot projects and research and for producing co-generated energy to the community and allow our citizens to return to the forest that they and we own to work building a value added forest industry.

The proposal of the Wood Pellet facility in Northern NB would be an example of a more sustainable, environmentally friendly, economically viable forest product value added business. While it is true that wood pellet stoves produce GHG emissions, it is at a level significantly lower than conventional wood stoves and a rebate program to assist homeowners to change from the conventional to pellet stoves along with an increase in product emissions regulations will help to make this technology sustainable.

Many of the former mill workers, their associates and forest interest groups have excellent and viable value added products and ideas for survival of the forest sector. If partnered with the right technologies and assistance we believe that these citizens and their communities can be successful and competitive in their efforts and products.

If they are not given a chance the mills will stay closed for many years until the forest grows back, until the volume of pulp attainable in a short period satisfies the profit margins of a foreign company or until global supplies are in such short supply that wood prices dramatically rise.

### **13. Closing Remarks**

On behalf of BSD and our network of organizations and citizens we wish to take this opportunity to thank you for meeting with us today.

If we had one word of advice for the Task Force it would be to ensure that the people of NB have full and broad opportunity to participate in exploring and discussing all aspects, both negative and positive of any final recommendations made by the Task Force and decisions made by the Province and that the Task Force provide in their final report enough detailed information on each of the recommendation to ensure that citizens receive enough detailed information in order to be well informed which will help us all to make the right decision on the reforms being proposed.

Once again, we would like to thank the Premier for caring so much about NB and for his determination to help NB be a desirable, modern, leader in quality of life, equality and justice, environmental protection and opportunity for all regions of our Province.