

# ***DRAFT COASTAL STRATEGY***

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...The coastline itself is a major public asset. That is why the Government of Nova Scotia is creating an ambitious coastal strategy, to insure the coast receives the attention and nurturing it needs to play its part in the province's plans for sustainable development.

## I - Introduction

Nova Scotia is defined by its coastline.

It is 13,300 kilometers long, and 70 per cent of Nova Scotians live on or near it.

The coast has shaped our past and will forge our future. Our coastline is what the people of the world imagine when they think of Nova Scotia.

The coast helps connect us to the world, and the world to us.

Much of our industry exists there, and the shoreline is the gateway to the province's major fishery.

The coast is also a playground and a retreat, not just for Nova Scotians but for the tens of thousands of tourists who visit each year.

In short, the coast remains vitally important to Nova Scotia. It must be protected, managed properly, and developed wisely. It must remain accessible to Nova Scotians and to the visitors we welcome to our shores.

**"The Coast helps us connect to  
the world, and the world to us."**

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to improving the way we manage our coast.

By taking a leadership role in developing a more streamlined and consistent approach to coastal management, we intend to protect the future of this timeless resource.

This document outlines in draft form Nova Scotia's coastal strategy for the next decade.

## II - The Wider Context

The Government of Nova Scotia has embarked on a course of economic and social development that emphasizes creating meaningful and durable jobs, here in the province. The strategy is called jobsHere.

A well-managed, prudently developed coastline is an important part of this strategy.

The province's approach is grounded in recognition of economic realities, and an understanding of Nova Scotia's strengths and assets.

One tough reality: For the past 20 years, Nova Scotia's economy has grown more slowly than that of any other Canadian province.

This province also has a declining workforce, expected to shrink by about 20,000 workers during the next four years.

Even as these challenges face Nova Scotians, the province's strengths and potential are grounds for optimism.

Nova Scotia benefits from an educated, motivated workforce and a mature education system that includes 11 universities and a modern, effective community college system.

The province is blessed by geography. Its location on global trade routes and access to major markets fosters international trade and transportation.

This has proven invaluable for industries as diverse as ship building, ocean container trade, energy production, tourism and fishing.

Nova Scotia fishers have access to some of the world's most bountiful fishing grounds, for traditional fishing activities, and for developing fishing enterprises such as aquaculture.

In short, the coastline itself is a major public asset.

The Government of Nova Scotia has embarked on a course of economic and social development that emphasizes creating meaningful and durable jobs here in the province. A well-managed, prudently developed coastline can form an important part of this strategy.

The coast provides Nova Scotians and others with extraordinary places to live and work and play.

It provides access to marine-based activity as varied as natural gas production, shipbuilding, national defense and commercial fishing. The coast is the threshold to the ocean sector of the provincial economy. This important sector was valued at \$2.6 Billion and accounted for 8.1 per cent of the provincial GDP between 2002 and 2006.

Land adjacent to the coastline is important for land-based economic activities such as forestry, mining, and agriculture. Beyond those activities, the coastline continues to be a defining cultural force in Nova Scotia that is home to important cultural and heritage sites.

The coastline can and must contribute to sensible, sustainable economic development. It must be included in the province's inventory of positive economic assets as a natural resource to be protected and carefully developed.

That is why the government is creating an ambitious coastal strategy, to ensure the coast receives the attention and nurturing it needs to play its part in the province's plans for sustainable development.

### **III - Where We Are Today**

The government is now releasing a draft of its coastal strategy for public review and feedback. This is a continuation of extensive public consultation that began two years ago.

At the government level, the first big step towards a coastal strategy was bringing together people from 15 provincial government departments and agencies, all of which have a stake in coastal management and development.

This group, the Provincial Oceans Network (PON), became the coastal leadership group inside government. It generated research, consulted the Nova Scotia public, and built effective relationships with federal and municipal organizations that share coastal interests.

The PON saw the need for information on the state of Nova Scotia's coast. The 2009 "State of Nova Scotia's Coast Technical Report" was the result.

The "State of Nova Scotia's Coast Technical Report" contains more information about the coast than the province has ever collected before.

It paints a detailed portrait of the Nova Scotia coast.

It reports on changes in sea levels over the decades. It measures current coastal protection, such as parks and other protected coastal spaces. It charts the variety of ecosystems and wildlife habitats. It identifies the most important coastal issues, as defined by scientific and social research and government priorities.

Equally important, it identifies “information gaps” by highlighting issues about which information is incomplete or non-existent, or where more research is required.

In spring of 2010 Nova Scotians were invited to comment on the coastal report and the priority issues. An online questionnaire gathered detailed feedback from the public. A total of 119 questionnaires were completed and 45 written submissions were received from non-governmental organizations, municipalities and associations.

In May of 2010, public open houses were held in eight coastal communities: Antigonish, Bridgewater, Dartmouth, Digby, Sydney, Truro, Wolfville and Yarmouth. Some 350 people attended the open houses and 282 questionnaires were received.

In June of 2010, three workshops were organized with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, in Yarmouth, Halifax and Port Hawkesbury. Forty-four municipal representatives attended, and others wrote submissions.

Around the same time a telephone survey of 600 households was conducted, and a workshop at Dalhousie University in June 2010 brought together community groups, industry associations, academics, First Nations people and representatives from the three levels of government.

The complete package of material was gathered, analyzed and grouped by the Provincial Oceans Network. The results became a key document entitled “What We Heard”.

“What We Heard” shows us that Nova Scotians are proud of their coastline, of its beauty and of its potential. They understand environmental threats to sensitive wetlands and rich intertidal zones. And they say we must be stewards of our coastal legacy on behalf of future generations.

“What We Heard” has informed and influenced every aspect of this draft strategy.

Public consultation, already extensive, will continue as Nova Scotians respond to the draft strategy. Their input will help inform the final strategy which the government will be asked to approve and implement.

Implementation will be complex. Current regulation of the coast involves four levels of government – federal, provincial, municipal and Mi'kmaw - and many government departments and agencies.

In addition, the fact that the coastline is a major development asset means that a coastal strategy should complement and support the major economic strategies of the government, especially its jobsHere initiative.

## **IV Our Guiding Principles**

Nova Scotians and their government understand their coast better through this public policy process. We are already moving forward with greater awareness of coastal issues and sustainable economic activity.

The process has brought us a long way. Among other milestones, we have adopted the guiding principles that lie at the heart of the strategy:

### **Leadership and Collaboration**

Improving the way we manage our coast will require strong leadership by the provincial government and others. Only by working together is positive change possible.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability recognizes the relationship between maintaining healthy coastal ecosystems and essential economic development.

### **Informed decision-making**

This means incorporating into our decision-making processes the best available data from natural and social sciences, and from aboriginal and community-based knowledge.

### **Accountability & Transparency**

Decision-making must be evidence-based and open to review.

### **Diversity**

Nova Scotia's coast is as diverse as the natural forces that have shaped it. Coastal management efforts must reflect this diversity as well as constant change in our coastline.

### **Stewardship**

Stewardship is based on our individual and collective responsibility to maintain the environmental and socio-economic integrity of Nova Scotia's coast.

## V. The Seven Key Issues: A Call to Action

The Coastal Strategy will guide all of our efforts to improve coastal management in Nova Scotia.

It builds on earlier public policy initiatives including the *Coastal Management Framework* and the *State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report*.

This draft strategy is also consistent with Nova Scotia government actions outlined in the *Water Resource Management Strategy*, the *Climate Change Action Plan*, and the *Path We Share Natural Resources Strategy*.

This draft strategy focuses on seven issues that are crucial to effective coastal management in Nova Scotia:

- **Coastal development**
- **Working waterfronts**
- **Public coastal access**
- **Sea level rise & storm events**
- **Coastal ecosystems and habitats**
- **Coastal water quality**
- **Governance**

For each of these issues, the strategy establishes goals, objectives and actions. In many cases the same actions and objectives support several goals, and involve several government entities. This is why the idea of “integrated” management is so important—working together on connected issues and common goals.

...The fact that the coastline is a major development asset means that a coastal strategy should complement and support the major economic strategies of the government, especially the jobsHere initiative.

The seven priority issues are the touchstones of the draft strategy.

Our goals and objectives emerge from those priorities, and our proposed actions represent our responses to them. Together, these proposed actions are what the final Coastal Strategy will deliver in the months and years ahead.

We believe the current draft of the strategy provides the architecture from which to build a healthy and prosperous future for Nova Scotia's Coast.

## **Coastal Development**

Coastal development refers to human-made changes to the coast, such as the building of homes, businesses, roads and other infrastructure.

The coast is where most Nova Scotians live and where many make their living. It is one of our greatest assets. We must be good stewards of our coast if we are to grow the economy and improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians.

A healthy environment and safe coastal infrastructure are critical to the development of sustainable industries such as fishing and aquaculture, marine renewable energy and tourism.

Without good planning, coastal development can have unintended impacts. The environment can be harmed, economic opportunities lost, and homes and businesses can be put at risk.

We must be good stewards of our coast if we are  
to grow the economy and improve the quality of life  
for Nova Scotians.

Sustainable coastal development means balancing various environmental, social, cultural, and economic needs. Only careful planning can achieve this balance.



## GOAL

### Coastal development that accommodates natural coastal processes

## OBJECTIVES

- **Build and maintain buildings and infrastructure in locations and in ways that minimize impacts to and from the natural coastline.**

Building activity along the coast and in near-shore waters can impact coastal ecosystems. Managing these impacts is important for the long-term sustainability of our coast.

- **Manage provincially-regulated activities to minimize impacts to and from the coast.**

Prudent management of provincially-regulated activities such as agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture will minimize coastal impacts, reduce costs and encourage sustainable development.

## ACTIONS

- **Establish coastal development standards**

These standards, including setback requirements, will enable planning aimed at protecting homes, businesses and the environment.

- **Partner with municipalities to establish planning strategies and land-use by-laws in coastal areas**

It is important that municipal land-use plans and bylaws take into account the coastal environment. Planning strategies provide a legal framework for coastal planning and development standards.

- **Incorporate up-to-date knowledge about coastal processes in provincial policies**

This is about using the best information available to establish effective policies to protect the coast and foster sustainable economic activity.

- **Increase awareness and knowledge about coastal landscapes, processes, and resources**

Providing good information to Nova Scotians about their coast will help lead to changes in behaviour and business practices that will help protect coastal areas, keep people and property safe, and sustain economic activity. It is about working closely with property owners and developers, to share information and encourage best practices.

## Working Waterfronts

Working waterfronts are sites or facilities that provide services and physical access to the sea for ocean-related uses and businesses. Fish plants, wharves, and shipyards are all traditional working waterfront structures in Nova Scotia.

Working waterfronts provide essential support to some of Nova Scotia's most important industries. Fishing, aquaculture, oil and gas, shipping, and tourism all rely on infrastructure found on waterfronts throughout the province.

Ensuring safe and accessible waterfront facilities is important for economic development and job growth in coastal communities.

Emerging technologies such as marine renewable energy, including tidal power, will also increase the need for high quality, well-maintained waterfronts.

Waterfronts also serve as social gathering places and give many Nova Scotia communities their distinctive look and feel.

Ensuring safe and accessible waterfront facilities is important for economic development and job growth in coastal communities.

Feedback from public consultations demonstrated that Nova Scotians understand the critical role these sites play in coastal communities, and their importance to the province as a whole.

Supporting a geographically diverse network of waterfront sites, with a wide range of sizes and capacities from small wharves to large ports, is essential for the future of Nova Scotia's coastal and ocean industries.

### GOAL

**Working waterfronts that are safe, efficient and support a mix of industry and community uses**

## OBJECTIVES

- **Increase the ability of local communities to manage and use working waterfronts**

The diverse organizations that manage working waterfronts need to be aligned and strengthened to contribute to the long-term sustainability of coastal industries.

- **Maintain and enhance industrial access to working waterfronts**

Working waterfronts provide essential ocean access for Nova Scotia's marine industries. They also provide infrastructure for some of the biggest sectors of the provincial economy--forestry, mining, shipping and tourism. These industries must continue to have access to safe, well-maintained facilities.

## ACTIONS

- **Identify and address the priority needs of working waterfronts**

Each working waterfront has its own unique strengths and challenges. The province will work closely with other governments, harbor authorities and coastal communities to help facilitate needed change at local and regional levels.

- **Develop tools and resources for planning and capacity building that support economic activities and address safety issues**

Industries and communities are working hard to ensure the long-term viability of working waterfronts. This is essential to help advance the province's jobsHere development strategy. Given the economic significance of working waterfronts, supporting these efforts makes good sense.

- **Adapt successful models from Nova Scotia and other jurisdictions**

Thriving working waterfronts can help keep young Nova Scotians at home. They can help attract new immigrants, and foster new and expanded industries such as aquaculture, alternative energy developments and eco-tourism.

## Public Coastal Access

Public coastal access refers to people's ability to view, reach, and move along the shorelines of Nova Scotia, whether on the mainland or nearby islands.

The coast is an important economic driver. Public coastal access is critical to Nova Scotia's tourism industry and visitors seeking a seacoast experience. Access also is vital for people to earn their living from the sea.

The ability to access the coast is important to other Nova Scotians as well, many of whom use the coast for recreation and for social and cultural activities.

The need to ensure public access to the coast must be balanced with the need to respect sensitive environmental and cultural areas and the rights of private landowners.

The *State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report* pointed to coastal residential development as the greatest barrier to public access. The need to ensure public access to the coast must be balanced with the need to respect sensitive environmental and cultural areas and the rights of private landowners.

The report and feedback from Nova Scotians identified a need for greater information about existing access points as well as the rights and responsibilities of public and private landowners. People also said that acquiring more public access should be a priority.

## GOAL

**Public access to the coast**

## OBJECTIVES

- **Increase the number of public access points to the coastline**

Existing public access points must be preserved. Governments, communities and landowners must work together to establish new access points.

- **Increase the quality and diversity of public access to the coast**

People access the coast in different ways for different reasons. This is about having adequate space and infrastructure to fulfill the range of coastal access needs.

## ACTIONS

- **Create an inventory of existing public access points**

A province-wide inventory will help Nova Scotians make better use of existing access points and identify additional access opportunities.

- **Increase education and awareness about public access and citizens' rights and responsibilities**

Maps, guides and other information about coastal access in Nova Scotia will provide more opportunities for Nova Scotians to use and enjoy the coast, and will help resolve questions about the rights of citizens and private landowners.

- **Protect and enhance public access on Crown Lands**

Crown coastal land such as parks, wilderness areas, beaches, islands and roads provide important public access to the shoreline. Increasing access via Crown Lands will multiply the opportunities for Nova Scotians and tourists to use the coastline.

- **Remove barriers and create incentives for private landowners to allow public access**

Most coastal land is in private hands. Maintaining and increasing coastal access across private land means working with landowners to create incentives to allow for public access, and to resolve issues about liability and property damage.

## Sea-Level Rise and Storm Events

Sea-level rise is caused by a combination of the thermal expansion of ocean water and the melting of glaciers and land-based ice. Climate change has been identified as a key contributor to rising sea levels and the increase and severity of storm events.

Nova Scotia can expect a rise in sea level of at least one metre over the next century. Extreme storm events, such as hurricanes and nor'easters could result in large waves, high winds, storm surge, shoreline erosion and coastal flooding. The impacts of rising sea levels and storm events can be characterized as *coastal hazards*. Coastal hazards threaten people, property, and coastal landscapes.

We cannot afford to ignore the fact that our coast is changing. By making smart decisions now and preventing damage from coastal hazards, we can protect our economy and way of life and support sustainable development.

Consultations showed that Nova Scotians are increasingly worried about coastal flooding and erosion. The *State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report* reported that we do not know enough about these coastal hazards and the threat they pose to property and infrastructure. More research is needed.

We cannot afford to ignore the fact that our coast is changing. By making smart decisions now and preventing damage from coastal hazards, we can protect our economy and way of life and support sustainable development.

Many Nova Scotians say that development should be restricted or controlled in high-risk areas to protect people, natural and cultural features and property.

## GOAL

**People and property are safe from coastal hazards**

## OBJECTIVES

- **Buildings and infrastructure should be located, built and maintained in a manner that minimizes impacts from rising sea levels and storms**  
Erosion, flooding and storm surges can damage coastal infrastructure. Maintaining existing infrastructure and new developments should be done in ways that minimize risks.

- **Prepare communities for storm-related emergencies**

Planning for severe weather events on our coast requires a co-ordinated approach based on the best available information.

## *ACTIONS*

- **Assess the vulnerability of communities to coastal hazards**

Understanding the vulnerability of our communities is a complex process, but it is important for helping coastal towns and cities plan for the future. There are many aspects of a community that can be impacted by coastal hazards. These include private homes, businesses, public buildings, dykes and roads, as well as cultural and heritage sites and natural areas such as beaches and parks.

- **Establish coastal development standards**

These standards, including setback requirements, will help enable planning aimed at reducing risks from coastal hazards.

- **Partner with municipalities to establish planning strategies and land-use by-laws in coastal areas.**

It is important that municipal land-use plans and bylaws take into account risks from coastal hazards. Planning strategies provide a legal framework for coastal planning and development standards.

- **Implement policies so that provincial funding of coastal infrastructure takes into account coastal hazards**

The provincial government should ensure that public funds (for example, supporting construction or maintenance of a wharf, road, or dyke) are not put at risk from coastal hazards that can be avoided or mitigated.

- **Ensure that emergency management planning reflects the best available knowledge of coastal hazards.**

Incorporating reliable information into emergency planning is critical to an effective response when a disaster occurs.

- **Educate property owners and the development community about how to minimize risks from coastal hazards**

By raising people's awareness about coastal hazards and what they can do to avoid them or adapt to them, Nova Scotians will be able to plan for the future and take practical steps to protect their communities.

## Coastal Ecosystems and Habitats

Coastal ecosystems and habitats refer to the natural systems, landscapes and features along the coast, including salt marshes, wetlands, beaches, dunes or islands.

Significant coastal landscapes include scenic cliffs, beaches, marshes and dykelands. They are distinguished by their predominantly natural or undeveloped character. They often are home to important cultural and heritage sites.

The social and economic health of Nova Scotia's coastal communities, and indeed the province as a whole, relies on having healthy, productive coastal ecosystems.

Public consultations showed that Nova Scotians understand this. At the same time, consultations and the *State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report* reveal significant gaps in our understanding of coastal ecosystems and their importance in the Province.

Protecting coastal biodiversity and representative coastal landscapes will help to sustain the ecological integrity of the coast.

### GOAL

#### **Conserve sensitive coastal areas**

### OBJECTIVES

- **Sustain natural coastal landscapes and processes, and prevent biodiversity loss**

Improve provincial conservation and protection measures and apply them consistently to coastal conservation planning.

- **Coordinate marine and land-based conservation efforts**

Departments should better co-ordinate the planning and implementation of existing and any new conservation efforts, and work with other levels of government to ensure a systematic, consistent approach.



- **Focus restoration efforts on priority coastal areas**

A number of restoration programs are already underway across the province. Coordinating and strengthening restoration efforts in coastal areas impacted by human activity will help restore natural coastal ecosystems.

## *ACTIONS*

- **Map coastal ecosystems**

Accurate base and thematic mapping for coastal areas is essential for informed decision-making at all levels.

- **Prioritize coastal areas for conservation and restoration**

Some ecosystems and habitats are more vulnerable than others and are more important when it comes to ecosystem conservation and restoration. Research and analysis would determine which coastal areas are most in need of conservation and restoration.

- **Establish coastal development standards**

These standards, including setback requirements, will help enable planning aimed at managing coastal development and conserving coastal ecosystems.

- **Protect more coastal land in Nova Scotia**

Less than 3% of Nova Scotia's coastline lies within protected areas. Prioritizing coastal areas in protected area planning will help ensure that more coastal land will be protected.

- **Review key legislation**

The province will review legislation under its control to ensure effective conservation of vulnerable areas and maintain natural coastal processes.

- **Work in partnership with the federal government on marine conservation planning**

Collaborate with federal departments to better integrate land and marine conservation planning in Nova Scotia, including marine protected areas.

- **Coordinate and strengthen restoration programs**

Work together across departments and governments to pool resources and expertise to restore degraded coastal areas.

## Coastal Water Quality

Coastal water quality refers to the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of salt and brackish water. A host of factors, both natural and man-made, influence the quality of coastal water. Human threats to coastal water quality can originate on land, the shoreline or in marine areas.

Coastal water quality helps determine the overall environmental state of our coastal zone which in turn is important to the health and economic prosperity of all Nova Scotians. This part of the Coastal Strategy intersects with and complements other key government strategies such as the Aquaculture Strategy and the Water Resources Strategy.

Coastal water quality in some areas of the province is declining. Recurring shellfish closures due to bacterial contamination is one indication. This threatens people's ability to use the coast and to earn a living.

Nova Scotians are worried about coastal water quality, especially the impacts of sewage. *The State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report* reported that land-based activities pose the greatest threat to coastal water quality.

Industries such as fishing, aquaculture, and tourism can be impacted by - and can also impact - the health of coastal water.

Coastal water quality helps determine the overall environmental state of our coastal zone which in turn is important to the health and economic prosperity of all Nova Scotians.

*The State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report* noted that existing water quality monitoring programs are limited to certain sectors and are poorly coordinated within and across levels of government and non-governmental organizations.

Better information on coastal water quality is needed, and targeted action is required to safeguard the health of Nova Scotians and maintain a strong and diverse coastal economy.

### GOAL

**Coastal water quality that supports healthy ecosystems, recreation, fish harvesting and aquaculture.**

## OBJECTIVES

- **Water quality at public beaches meets or exceeds health standards**

In a province virtually surrounded by ocean, people should have access to clean beaches and coastal waters. If coastal water quality meets the high health standards for swimming it can be considered safe for boating, kayaking and other recreational activities.

- **Improve water quality in areas where marine harvesting takes place**

Aquaculture, fishing and other marine harvesting activities require clean coastal water, and can also impact water quality. It is important to monitor and improve water quality in areas important to marine harvesting.

## ACTIONS

- **Establish coastal water quality standards and thresholds**

Water quality is important for human use and to protect the environment. Standards and thresholds could be based on those defined by the Canadian Council for Ministers of the Environment (CCME).

- **Improve and integrate coastal water quality monitoring**

The government of Nova Scotia will work with federal, municipal and the Mi'kmaw levels of government as well as industry and non-government organizations to integrate coastal water quality monitoring across the province.

- **Identify and prioritize areas impacted by poor coastal water quality and reduce pollution sources.**

Collaborative efforts by governments, industry and citizens are needed to address sources of pollution. These efforts need to recognize the key role municipalities play in regulating coastal development and the need to work with them to address water quality issues.

- **Establish coastal development standards**

These standards, including setback requirements, will help enable planning aimed at managing coastal development and reducing impacts to coastal water quality.

## Governance

Governance refers to the system of authority, decision-making and accountability used to achieve societal goals. Governance relates to how governments work with each other and with outside groups, particularly when it comes to sharing authority and decision-making.

Good governance of the coast is very important for Nova Scotia. The province's coastal areas and resources provide us with good jobs, opportunities for sustainable economic growth, and a high quality of life.

If we are to capitalize on our coastal assets and leave a positive legacy for future generations, we must improve the current governance system. The way the coast is now managed and regulated is complex and confusing, involving many government agencies with overlapping or competing coastal mandates.

In the confusion, opportunities for sustainable development can be lost, the environment can be damaged, and people's ability to use and enjoy the coast can be diminished.

The province's coastal areas and resources provide us with good jobs, opportunities for sustainable economic growth, and a high quality of life. Good governance of the coast is very important for Nova Scotia.

The complexity and confusion about how the coast is managed was identified in both the *State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report* and by members of the public as a major issue.

Different levels of government, coastal industries, community organizations and the general public agree that we need to work together to effectively manage our coastal areas and resources.

## GOAL

**Governments and citizens working together to better manage the coast**

## OBJECTIVES

- **Improve public awareness and knowledge of the coastal environment, economy and people**  
Continue to evaluate current knowledge base, and attempt to fill information gaps identified in the “State of Nova Scotia’s Coast Technical Report”.
- **Share information among departments, governments, and the public**  
Share information that is collected and/or analysed by one department or stakeholder to improve decision-making by others.
- **Create opportunities for Nova Scotians to address coastal issues in their communities**  
Give people the information and tools they need to improve stewardship of coastal areas.
- **Improve cooperation among departments and levels of government**  
Coastal planning and management can only be improved through closer collaboration across departments and governments.

## ACTIONS

- **Create a lead body for coastal management within the Government of Nova Scotia**  
This body will be responsible for facilitating integrated approaches to coastal management across the provincial government and with other levels of government and coastal stakeholders.
- **Clarify the roles and responsibilities of governments in coastal management**  
Four levels of government and numerous Government of Nova Scotia departments now manage coastal areas and resources. It is important that roles and responsibilities be defined and clarified.
- **Establish coastal development standards**  
These standards, including setback requirements, will help enable planning aimed at managing coastal development and conserving coastal ecosystems.

- **Partner with municipalities to establish planning strategies and land-use by-laws in coastal areas.**

It is important that municipal land-use plans and bylaws take into account the coastal environment. Planning strategies provide a legal framework for coastal planning and development standards.

- **Find ongoing and consistent ways to engage Nova Scotians in implementation of the Coastal Strategy**

One option might be a citizens' advisory group - or perhaps a less formal mechanism - to make recommendations to government.

- **Strengthen provincial participation in integrated coastal planning initiatives**

The Government of Nova Scotia must play an effective leadership role in coastal planning initiatives at the regional, provincial and national levels.

- **Develop and implement education and awareness initiatives to inform Nova Scotians about coastal issues**

Public education is fundamental to good coastal stewardship and enabling community action on important coastal issues.

- **Continue support for research, community development and stewardship projects**

This action would focus on problem-solving at the local, community and provincial policy levels. This would build upon existing research and stewardship programs.

- **Improve on-line access to coastal information and mapping**

By working with other levels of government, industry, community groups, and academia, the government can ensure easier access to maps and other key information about the coast.

- **The minister responsible for the lead body would report to Nova Scotians annually on the progress of the Coastal Strategy**

By reporting activities carried out under the Coastal Strategy, the government would allow Nova Scotians to assess their effectiveness. Updates on the Coastal Strategy could be released annually.

## **VI Finalizing the Report**

This draft Coastal Strategy has set out what government now sees as the priority issues and major goals of an effective coastal strategy.

Now we want to hear back from individuals, organizations and businesses in Nova Scotia.

During the Spring 2010 consultations, people made it clear they want Nova Scotians to work together to meet those challenges.

The draft coastal strategy reflects the government's commitment to finding a new and better way to engage with citizens.

Government cannot do it alone. We recognize that implementing a strategy of this scope must be collaborative. We must work with the general public, business and community groups and environmental organizations.

Knowledge and priorities will change over time. The tools and approaches we use may also need to change.

This report is a draft in the true sense of the word. We have put forward a number of goals, objectives, actions, and ideas for your consideration.

Your input will influence the final strategy.

This document was developed by the inter-departmental Provincial Oceans Network based on information compiled in the *State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report*.

There has been substantial input from the general public, non-government organizations, academia, community groups, industry sectors and other levels of government. This input is summarized in a report titled *What We Heard*. Both reports can be accessed at [www.gov.ns.ca/coast](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coast), along with other information on coastal management in Nova Scotia.

Government cannot do it alone. Your input will influence the final strategy.

We are now asking for your feedback. Specifically, we'd like to hear your thoughts on the following questions:

***i) Do the goals and objectives establish the right overall direction, in terms of developing an effective coastal strategy?***

***ii) What actions do you think are most likely to achieve the goals and objectives?***

***iii) What actions do you think are most important?***

***iv) How can you or your organization/community help achieve the goals and objectives?***

***v) What can the provincial government do to encourage and support your help?***

We are asking everyone to provide feedback electronically through our website, [www.gov.ns.ca/coast](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coast). This will allow us to analyze the input and post the submissions online.

Feedback from stakeholders and the general public that is submitted online will be posted at the end of the consultation period for everyone to see.

In addition, input will be solicited from working groups with expertise in specific coastal issues. This feedback will also be posted online.

Government-to-government discussions will continue with municipal, federal and Mi'kmaw representatives. The information we receive from all parties will shape the final version of the Coastal Strategy, slated for completion by Spring 2012.