

Provincial Tourism Advocacy Communiqué

As Newfoundlanders and Labradorians prepare for elections in 2015, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador would like to ensure that candidates are informed about the importance of the tourism industry to our communities, the current value of the tourism industry and the public policy priorities that can be taken to ensure the tourism sector continues to grow and prosper well into the future.

With \$1 billion in annual spending, 2,400 tourism-related businesses and organizations and 8 percent of provincial jobs directly attributed to tourism, it is also important that candidates inform the tourism industry how they envision seizing the enormous potential of tourism for Newfoundland and Labrador's economic diversification and rural development.

What can you do?

Elections provide an opportunity to advocate for what matters in the hearts of our communities. Hospitality NL encourages all tourism stakeholders to take advantage of opportunities to meet with candidates and talk about the critical issues impacting the future development and growth of the tourism sector. As such, Hospitality NL has assembled this Provincial Tourism Advocacy Communiqué.

Featured in this communiqué is a summary of key priorities for the industry, which can be communicated to prospective candidates for their information, and key messages on the importance of the tourism sector to our economy and social fabric.

Vision 2020

In order to reach our industry's potential, private, non-profit and public stakeholders of the tourism industry came together in 2009 to establish *Uncommon Potential: A Vision for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism (Vision 2020)*. *Vision 2020* provides a blueprint for extraordinary growth by identifying key challenges and priorities to be addressed. *Vision 2020* enables all tourism stakeholders to continue to build a sustainable tourism industry and enable the industry to continue to be an economic driver for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hospitality NL encourages all tourism operators and partners to ask their candidates and/or representatives how they intend to demonstrate their support for the long-term sustainable development of the tourism industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The following are three key areas to discuss with candidates and/or representatives for the development of a sustainable and successful tourism industry.

- 1. Tourism Strategy**
- 2. Access and Transportation**
- 3. Regulatory**

1: Tourism Strategy

Government's role in the long-term viability of the tourism sector cannot be overstated and it is imperative that elected officials recognize the tremendous potential of the tourism industry and commits to supporting its growth and development.

There are several critical ways in which government can demonstrate its support including financial investment, policy initiatives and appropriate legislation all designed to facilitate sustained growth.

Key areas of focus:

- Competitive, sustained level of strategic tourism marketing investment
- Destination Development, with investments in tourism based on strategic priorities established under the guidance of the NL Tourism Board
- Quality Assurance to ensure continued development and enhancement of provincial standards designed to elevate offerings and provide consistency across NL

2: Access and Transportation

Access and transportation continues to be a major strategic priority for the growth of the tourism industry. Travel to, from, and around the province, whether by sea, air, or road is often inhibited by issues of affordability, capacity, infrastructure and quality. Newfoundland and Labrador's tourism industry depends on an accessible, affordable and reliable transportation system in order to grow and government must establish a comprehensive multi-modal transportation strategy that will ensure a reliable, affordable and efficient system that can meet the evolving needs of users.

Key areas of focus:

- Establish comprehensive multi-modal transportation strategy
 - Establish strategy for Marine Atlantic
 - Enhanced reliability, services and capacity of provincial ferry services
 - Enhanced air access capacity and reduced costs
 - Implement Tourist Oriented Directional Signage system

3: Regulatory

Small and medium-sized businesses are not only the backbone of the tourism industry, but also the backbone of the economy. As such, it is essential that federal, provincial and municipal regulatory requirements and processes are flexible, straightforward and eliminate unnecessary red tape in order to facilitate business growth and development. For businesses to successfully operate in a supportive and innovative environment, a concerted effort must be made to ensure legislation is effective and enforced.

Key areas of focus:

- Ensure Room Levies are industry led, focused and managed
- Ensure equal-playing field through the enforcement of Tourism Establishment Act and Regulations, specifically targeting unlicensed accommodations throughout the province
- Ensure protection and preservation of critical tourism natural and cultural resources and assets, such as Gros Morne National Park, through provincial policy and regulatory frameworks

Why Tourism Matters

In Newfoundland and Labrador:

- Tourism spending is \$1 billion annually, which is distributed throughout all regions of the province, especially in rural NL.
- Tourism currently supports over 8% of provincial jobs with demand outpacing supply.
- There are more than 2,400 tourism businesses located in all regions - 83% are SMEs.
- In recent years, job growth in tourism has outpaced job growth in NL overall with 41% growth in average hourly compensation in tourism occupations since 2008.
- Tourism helps preserve and protect NL's unique natural heritage, culture and history and helps grow economic opportunities in our rural communities.

Nationally:

In recent years, Canada's tourism industry has represented more of Canada's GDP than agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined; generated **\$84.3 billion in economic activity**; was responsible for more than **\$18.2 billion in export revenue**; generated **\$9.6 billion in federal government revenue** and fostered **618,300 jobs** across the country spread across all 308 ridings.

Globally:

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, tourism is the world's 5th fastest growing industry, with one billion international travellers, \$1.53 trillion in global revenues and 5% growth globally per year.

Three Simple Steps to Make a Difference in Upcoming Elections

1. **Be Informed:** Use the Provincial Tourism Advocacy Communiqué and communicate it with those campaigning in your community.
2. **Take Action:** Voice your priorities to candidates.
3. **Share Your Information:** Share your story of tourism and the contribution you make to your community and district - candidates and tourism sector colleagues alike. Knowledge is power!