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New Brunswick
BUSINESS COUNCIL
CONSEIL D'ENTREPRISES
du Nouveau-Brunswick



August 20, 2018

Mr. Blaine Higgs
Leader of the New Brunswick Progressive Conservative Party
Via email: Blaine.Higgs@gnb.ca

Re: **We Choose Growth** Group Recommendations for Optimizing the Five Growth Principles

Dear Mr. Higgs,

On March 19th, our group of New Brunswick business organizations announced a progressive platform that we believe will provide a foundation for economic growth in New Brunswick. The **We Choose Growth** group continues to enlist public support for a provincial government to reduce barriers and allow businesses to grow and create jobs.

It is clear if New Brunswick is to reach its full potential all political parties must strive to create conditions that will allow companies to maintain and grow employment and ensure they can compete on the world stage. New Brunswickers deserve a government that will commit to:

- Supporting a private sector driven economy where businesses create jobs and economic growth;
- Reducing delays in approving resource development projects are limiting investment;
- Reducing the number of jobs vacancies because skilled labour is not available;
- Supporting business growth in export markets; and
- Stop mortgaging our future and reduce the amount of taxes lost to interest payments.

Acknowledgement of the challenges is a first step to creating a growth economy. But progress depends on establishing specific objectives to guide our efforts. The members of **We Choose Growth** hope to build on our previous discussions and are providing each of the political parties with a short list of achievable objectives to get New Brunswick started down a road to growth and collective prosperity. Our group submits the following recommendations are not exhaustive in terms of maximizing economic growth opportunities, and we commit to work with the next provincial government to improve the well-being of employees and employers alike.

Using the **We Choose Growth** framework, we are asking our politicians to demonstrate leadership and commit to the following 10 objectives:

Private Sector Driven Economy

1. Accept the recommendations of the WorkSafeNB Task Force Report and act upon them in the first sitting of the Fall legislature;
2. Create a competitive environment for business by adopting APEC's recommendation for a Pan-Atlantic Regulatory Framework and develop an Atlantic Canadian Roadmap for the next 10 years to harmonize or mutually recognize regulations across the region.

Responsible Natural Resource Development

1. Identify current, emerging and potential energy sectors with growth potential and include as objectives in the province's growth plan;
2. Within one year define a regulatory review process that aligns governmental and inter-departmental requirements to create efficiencies and provide predictable, timely and reliable outcomes for industry.

Export Focused Economy

1. Continue to assist New Brunswick companies diversify into export markets and create in-market support resources in key export markets;
2. Encourage expansion of value-add products and services to increase the value of exports to the local economy with incentives such as investment tax credits for exporting companies.

Labour Force Development

1. Provide international students with residency status and remove the work experience requirement to increase the ability to attract and retain international students;
2. Similar to university and community college students, grant post-graduate work permits to international students attending private career colleges to increase attraction and retention to grow our workforce and expand business.

Responsible Fiscal Management

1. Balance the provincial budget by 2019 and release a four-year comprehensive debt and deficit management strategy with clear, transparent timelines and metrics;
2. Conduct a comprehensive tax review with the objectives of improving fairness, reducing taxes and costs of operating a business in New Brunswick.

Previous discussions with each party indicated general support for the broad principles of the We Choose Growth platform. Recently, the alliance has created a website (www.wechoosegrowth.ca) that posts the written responses received from political parties to our [platform issues](#) and allows NB businesses to register their support for a government committed to a private sector-led economy.

As part of our continuing efforts to influence positive change, we intend to promote these objectives publicly and expand our core messaging to emphasize the urgency that our next provincial government create a business drive economic growth plan and commit to the proposals outlined in the list above.

The provincial credit card is maxed out, and we can no longer spend our way to prosperity. Thank you for the interest you have shown to date in recognizing that our future depends primarily on a vibrant private sector. Our members would be happy to discuss your party's reaction to the refined **We Choose Growth** platform at your convenience.

On behalf of the growing business alliance supporters, sincerely,



Sheri Somerville, Atlantic Chamber of Commerce



Thomas Raffy, Conseil économique du Nouveau Brunswick



Krista Ross, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce



John Wishart, Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce



Adrienne O'Pray, New Brunswick Business Council



David Duplisea, Saint John Chamber