



September 16, 2011

Ms. Lorraine Michael
Leader, Newfoundland and Labrador New Democratic Party
P.O. Box 5275
St. John's, NL A1C 5W1

Good morning,

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Technology Industries, more commonly referred to as NATI, is a not-for-profit business association that represents the interest of the growing technology sector in Newfoundland and Labrador. We provide a collective voice to the sector on such matters as recruitment and retention challenges, promotion and delivery of export initiatives around the globe, facilitating the alignment of government programs with the needs of our membership, and promoting the utilization of technology and further investment in innovation as key drivers for economic diversity and long term sustainability for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The global knowledge based economy is fast paced and ever changing. NATI believes that as an Atlantic Canadian Province, there is a need to be nimble and to be calculated risk takers to leverage a balance of local and global innovation, investing today for a brighter future.

NATI by way of its membership is becoming aware of several key issues that we believe will require the attention of the party that forms the next government post October 11, 2011. I am writing today to each of the leaders of the three provincial government parties seeking your opinion and party platform details on how your party plans to address these three areas of concern.

Please give the following questions careful consideration. Prepared responses should be addressed to my attention to the NATI address below or email nati.chair@gmail.com. A copy of this letter and your response will be shared with our membership and stakeholders directly as well as being posted on our web site (www.nati.net). If you wish to meet to discuss this in further detail with the Board of Directors of NATI, we will make every effort to accommodate in a timely fashion.

1. Post Non-Renewable Resource Socio- Economic Sustainability

NATI recognises the importance of non-renewable resources on the Newfoundland and Labrador economy and society. Non-renewable resources represent significant short to medium term economic benefits and are currently the major factor in transforming this province's economy, people, environment and its place in Canada and the world.

NATI posits that direct and indirect economic benefits including government royalties and Industrial Benefits Agreements (IBAs) are "one-time" or "limited-life" in nature and require effective stewardship now with a vision for deriving longer term positive value from them.



The technology based industries are ideally suited for the realisation of these longer term socio-economic benefits. Therefore it is NATI's position that these funds should not only be used to enhance the resource based industries from which they are obtained but also utilized to provide growth in all technology sectors, thus allowing for sustainability beyond the non-renewable resource base. Investments and planning in this sector now will allow for immediate and future high value, long term, non-environmentally evasive export oriented activities in both urban and rural locales.

Newfoundland and Labrador has an existing base in technology companies that can be leveraged for immediate prosperity and future sustainability. NATI advocates that existing and upcoming IBAs with natural resource industries and companies include mandatory investments in technology activities in the Province that are measurable, flexible and appropriate given the nature of the technology industry.

Inclusion of NATI's membership and high technology sector in IBAs requires vision and long term thinking and will help ensure a legacy of positive tax base and socio economic benefit to the Province long after non-renewable resources have been extracted. NATI advocates that provincial and federal governments recognise the importance of the technology based economy and act accordingly when developing natural resource projects and initiatives.

Q: What is the New Democratic Party's position on the use of non-renewable resource benefits to help develop longer term socio-economic sustainability through the knowledge based economy?

2. Broadband Accessibility

The most significant issue facing Newfoundland and Labrador regarding broadband is the ubiquitous availability of high-speed internet access throughout our province. Broadband is generally accepted as a basic requirement for future economic development and necessary for the provision of electronic government (e-government) services to citizens and businesses, especially in the areas of education, health and justice. Industry Canada reports that only 80% of the communities in Newfoundland and Labrador have access to high-speed broadband services. The sheer size and remote geography of the province is a significant contributing factor to this dilemma, as there is a cost impediment to investing in infrastructure that may not provide a sustainable business case for a broadband service provider. Investment will most likely be only achieved through joint private and public partnerships as well as joint funding agreements between provincial and federal government stakeholders.

NATI recognizes that there have been investments made over the past eight to ten years to improve broadband coverage in Newfoundland and Labrador. NATI recommends that a defined and measurable strategy be established and acted upon not only for current needs, but to ensure a required level of scalability as broadband needs and expectations continue to increase.



Q: What is the New Democratic Party's position on addressing the need for a cohesive government strategy that addresses an improvement to broadband accessibility throughout the province with a minimum acceptable bandwidth speed?

3. Government use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

NATI recognises that governments around the world are making use of technologies to deliver more diverse and improved services online to their stakeholders. This results in an increase in citizen satisfaction and relationship with their governments as services are more convenient, accessible and consistent regardless of socio-economic standing, geographic location, or type of service required.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has made use of ICT to deliver some services to citizens and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador (i.e. Motor Vehicle Registration Renewals, and Companies and Deeds Online). NATI proposes that the Province should make use of readily available and cost effective technology services in order to enhance services delivery from all provincial government departments and agencies to a wider range of clients across all regions. This will ensure that the improvement and modernisation of services delivery is accelerated and that the Province does not fall behind comparable regions around the world.

Q: What is New Democratic Party's strategy to ensure ICT services, where appropriate, are leveraged to the benefit of its stakeholders and in what other areas will technology play a role in effective government?

Yours in technology,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Dubé', is positioned below the text 'Yours in technology,'.

Paul Dubé
Chair, NATI

Cc: Dr. Dale Kirby – President, Newfoundland and Labrador New Democratic Party