

Premiers Discuss Clean Energy Collaboration and Regional Priorities

For Immediate Release

St. John's, NL (January 13, 2020) – Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Dwight Ball, chair of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, hosted a meeting of the Council today. Premier Ball was joined by New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs, Prince Edward Island Premier Dennis King, and Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil.

Premiers noted with sadness the recent passing of the Honourable John Crosbie and offered condolences to the Crosbie family. As a strong advocate on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador and Atlantic Canada, he left a lasting and positive impact on our country.

Atlantic Premiers were joined by Québec Premier François Legault during a portion of their meeting to discuss opportunities to develop, transmit, and exchange Eastern Canada's clean energy resources such as hydro-electricity. Premiers agreed to continue to move forward in an expeditious manner on new clean, reliable, sustainable, and affordable electricity generation, improving transmission networks, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

The Atlantic Premiers' discussion focused on shared priorities for an upcoming First Ministers' Meeting, as set out by Canada's Premiers at their December 2019 meeting, including fiscal stabilization, health care and pharmacare, infrastructure, immigration, and economic competitiveness. Premiers agree on the importance of maintaining a strong and united Canada where all Canadians, regardless of where they live, can share fully in the nation's prosperity.

Premiers agreed that changes to the federal fiscal stabilization program are necessary to support provinces experiencing a significant decline in revenues, while not compromising other transfer programs.

Premiers remain united in their call on the federal government to ensure that federal health care funding recognizes the changing demographics of Atlantic Canada, and enables all provinces to deliver sustainable and reliable health care services for Canadians. Meeting the unique challenges facing health care for Atlantic Canadians will require innovative approaches for health care delivery. Premiers agreed to work together, engaging all health care professionals, to ensure our health care systems remain patient-focused and fully utilize the skillsets of all professionals to improve health outcomes. Premiers directed health ministers to work together to share best practices and innovative approaches with a particular focus in areas such as mental health and addictions services and the prevention and management of chronic diseases, like diabetes.

Atlantic Premiers discussed the federal government's commitment to national pharmacare. Premiers agreed that any federal program must be fully funded, long-term, sustainable, and provide a comparable level of pharmaceutical coverage, including drugs for catastrophic illnesses. Premiers also want to ensure that a federal national pharmacare program recognizes current private sector insurance systems and that all Atlantic Canadians have coverage. Supporting economic and population growth in

Atlantic Canada requires increased flexibility in federal programming. In particular, Premiers noted the need for infrastructure programs and immigration services to be responsive to the specific needs, challenges, and opportunities in the region.

Premiers noted the importance of Atlantic Canada's softwood lumber industry and the significant negative impact of U.S. tariffs on many employers and communities. Premiers agreed that New Brunswick's softwood lumber exports should have the same exclusion as the rest of Atlantic Canada.

Premiers discussed the importance of the responsible development of the resource economy in Atlantic Canada, and their shared commitment to maintain a competitive regulatory environment to attract investment and grow the economy in the region.

Premiers have reconfirmed their commitment to work together on improving trade and procurement in Atlantic Canada. Premiers are pleased to sign the Atlantic Trade and Procurement Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU is designed to increase the efficiency and harmonization of procurement processes, promote opportunities for Atlantic suppliers, and improve the conditions for doing business in the Atlantic region through a coordinated approach.

Premiers are committed to working together to address and prevent domestic violence and domestic violence-related homicide. To that end Premiers are establishing the Atlantic Domestic Homicide Review Network to enhance information sharing between the Atlantic provinces, jointly consider existing system responses, prevention efforts, identify partnership opportunities with research and academic institutions and best practices. This network will be created over the coming months.

Premiers also received an update on the work of the Ocean Supercluster, and recognize the opportunity this initiative presents to help diversify the ocean economy and create good jobs for Atlantic Canadians.

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