

Themes from 2012-2013 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
TAXES/REVENUE	
Put tolls on roads	Tolls not proceeding; would require a referendum.
Increase HST	Government committed to not increasing the HST. An increase to the HST would require a referendum.
Remove the double taxation on non-owner occupied properties	On September 12, 2012, the government released a report, <i>Improving New Brunswick's property tax system: a white paper</i> , which recommended reducing the \$1.4573 provincial rate by \$0.334 to \$1.1233 on apartments, cottages and second homes over four years, starting with the 2013 property tax year.
Increase taxes in rural areas	On September 12, 2012, the government released a report, <i>Improving New Brunswick's property tax system: a white paper</i> , containing recommendations on how to make the property tax system more fair, equitable and transparent.
Flexibility to pay property taxes	Government is introducing a monthly Equalized Payment Plan that will allow homeowners to pay their property tax bills in 12 equal payments without incurring penalty.
Increase corporate tax	Effective April 1, 2012, the Financial Corporation Capital Tax increased from 3% to 4% which will generate an estimated \$5 million annually. In addition, the previously legislated CIT reduction was postponed (2011-2012 Budget).
Stop funding the horse racing industry	Effective March 31, 2013, the agreement providing supplemental funding to Horse Racing NB Inc. in support of the harness racing industry will be terminated, resulting in savings of an estimated \$600,000 beginning in 2013-2014.
Increase "sin" taxes	Tobacco taxes were increased in the 2011-2012 Budget. NB Liquor was directed to increase net income.
Increase fees	The <i>Annual Report on Fees</i> , released in January 2012, set out a number of fee increases across government.
More progressive income tax system	The 2011-2012 Budget increased the top marginal personal income tax rate. As well, previously legislated rate reductions were not implemented.
HUMAN RESOURCES	
Reduce the number of MLAs	The Electoral Boundaries and Representation Commission is tasked with redrawing the province's electoral map and replacing the current 55 ridings with 49 ridings.
Lower salaries / pensions for MLAs	MLAs have elected to forgo salary increases since 2009. Changes to MLA pensions were approved and implemented in 2011 and saw pension benefits reduced by approximately one third. The pension plan has adopted the new shared risk pension plan model recommended by the Task Force.
Re-evaluate public sector pensions	The government introduced a new pension model May 31, 2012, with the goal of making pensions in New Brunswick more secure, sustainable and affordable.
Reduce size of civil service	The government has initiated a new attrition program. Only positions that are critical to the delivery of core government services will be replaced, resulting in a net reduction in the size of the public service.

Themes from 2012-2013 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
Control salaries; salaries too high	Implementing a two-year salary freeze and other wage-related adjustments. Subject to further Government Renewal initiatives.
Eliminate bonuses	A freeze is in place for Parts I, II and III of the civil service.
Examine sick time use / misuse	Changes to the sick leave program are being introduced; a comprehensive attendance management program is being developed.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Eliminate grants, loans and handouts to business; more stringent criteria for government support	The Department of Economic Development and Invest NB may provide non-repayable support to eligible companies, but it is conditional upon the company meeting specified economic objectives that could include job creation, GDP, productivity improvement, etc. Both entities are choosing tools that help ensure that companies are fulfilling their terms and conditions before incentives are paid out. Invest NB also requires a minimum financial return of \$1.70 over and above the cost of providing the incentive and the operation of the Crown agency.
Consolidate economic development agencies	RDC and BNB have been amalgamated into one department, Economic Development. A decentralized delivery model, expected to be fully operational on April 1, 2013, will reduce overlap and increase coordination among local, provincial and federal economic development partners as well as empower regions with spending authority.
HEALTH	
Increase emphasis on home care and extra-mural programs	The Extra-Mural Program is designed to help people stay in their homes longer and reduce hospital admissions. The "Home First" program is being designed to support seniors staying in their homes with appropriate supports.
Stop food wastage in hospitals	Portion control measures are in place to minimize food wastage.
Increase the number of nurse practitioners	The government is increasing the number of nurse practitioners in a wide range of sectors in the health care system.
Exploit underutilized ORs in smaller hospitals	To help reduce wait times and travel for patients, some surgeons travel to smaller hospitals for day surgery procedures.
Duality in health system / one health authority	To ensure maximum efficiencies, New Brunswick has reduced the number of Regional Health Authorities from eight to two.
Improve delivery of / access to health care	The Primary Health Care Advisory Committee has been established to develop and implement new ways of improving access and delivering primary or first contact health care to New Brunswickers.
Change generic drug policy	A new generic drug pricing policy was announced in March 2012 to reduce drug costs for New Brunswickers.
Develop a catastrophic drug program	Government has committed to establishing a catastrophic drug plan.

Themes from 2012-2013 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
Reduce cost of administration	Administrative structures will be redesigned to be more effective and efficient. Targeted annual savings will be realized across the entire health care system.
Control physicians salaries	Wage restraint measures, including a two-year wage freeze (2012-2013 and 2013-2014) for fee-for-service physicians are being implemented.
EDUCATION	
Consolidate / reduce the number of schools	Utilization of schools is currently under review.
Examine busing system	The department is currently exploring the optimization of its student transportation system.
Provide more child care / day care assistance	This is being addressed in the Early Learning and Child Care plan.
Cut administration but not in classroom	This is being addressed through the department's recently announced reorganization plan.
Remove parental and spousal contributions from NB student loans	The reinstatement of the parental contribution aligns provincial and federal programs as well as those of most jurisdictions across the country. As part of Government Renewal, a comprehensive review of student financial assistance programs is being undertaken.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	
Build new nursing homes to free up hospital space	The 2011-2016 Nursing Home Renovation and Replacement Plan has been approved and construction has begun.
Reduce social assistance caseload	Government is developing a new service delivery model to increase exits of social assistance recipients leaving for employment.
More help to social assistance recipients / those in need	SD and PETL are working together to provide better access to training and job skills. Community inclusion networks have been established throughout the province and have begun work on developing poverty reduction plans.
GENERAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION	
Cut costs and programs	Through the Government Renewal process and corporate initiatives, expenditure savings have been identified. Consideration has and continues to be given to define government's core functions.
Control heating / cooling costs	Computerized building management systems are in place in major buildings which shut down ventilation and heating systems at the end of the day.
More accountability; implement better reporting mechanism	Currently implementing Performance Excellence processes.

Themes from 2012-2013 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
Cut back on mailings	The Department of Government Services provides regular and ongoing advice to departments aimed at reducing and/or eliminating costs of departmental mail-outs.
More efficient procurement practices	A Strategic Procurement unit was created in the spring of 2012 to achieve savings across government purchasing.
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY	
Study shale gas issue / development	On November 28, 2012, government announced it would develop an Oil and Gas Blueprint, which will consider the information from a number of reports in mapping out a path forward in this sector. The blueprint and its action items will be announced in the spring of 2013.
Increase royalties on oil and gas / natural resources	A comprehensive review of the province's existing royalty regime was conducted and a proposed new royalty regime is being developed.
Make NB Power more efficient	As part of the <i>New Brunswick Energy Blueprint</i> , government will amalgamate the NB Power Group of companies into a single Crown utility to improve transparency and to achieve meaningful cost reductions. Government and NB Power will also review structural and operational changes within NB Power to improve efficiencies and cost effectiveness.
Focus on renewable energy	As part of the <i>New Brunswick Energy Blueprint</i> , government will further develop renewable energy resources and support promising hydro, bio-energy and other emerging renewable energy technologies.
Energy plan for NB	The <i>New Brunswick Energy Blueprint</i> is a 10-year energy vision with a three-year action plan that is government's guide to an energy future based on low and stable energy prices, energy security, reliability of the electrical system, environmental responsibility and effective regulation.
OTHER	
Consolidate / downsize the number of provincial facilities	Further efficiencies across government are being examined. Government has a target for the sale of surplus assets.
Reform local governance	One of the objectives of the <i>Action Plan for a new Local Governance System</i> is to increase collaboration, communication and planning between communities. This initiative will encourage communities to come together to form new municipalities and rural communities. There are currently more than 25 community restructuring projects at various stages around the province.
Review signage on our roads	A committee has been established to review commercial signage. A report is expected early in 2013.
Raise minimum wage	The minimum wage was increased to \$10.00 an hour on April 1, 2012.
Restrict capital projects	In the 2012-2013 Capital Budget, a multi-year capital plan was tabled that returns capital spending to more sustainable levels and focuses on priority infrastructure. The 2013-2014 Capital Budget provides an update with respect to future capital spending levels.