

Themes from 2013-2014 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Stop giving money to businesses, corporations	All applications for financial assistance must go through a due-diligence process and projects must demonstrate a positive return to the province to be eligible for financial incentives. In many cases, the incentive is provided only after benefit to the province is received to better manage risk of default or unfulfilled company commitment. For example, the payroll rebate program provides assistance only after a business has hired the number of employees it committed to hiring.
Cut funding for economic development positions / agencies	The new regional economic delivery model that became operational on April 2, 2013, streamlines and improves the coordination of economic development operations through its five district offices and seven satellite offices.
Work with municipalities on economic growth plan	The department's economic development offices have a direct relationship with the regional service commissions whose boards are comprised of municipal and local service district representatives. This ensures community input in economic development planning across the province.
Offer financial incentives to people who invest their own money into the economy	The majority of provincial financial programs require investment by individuals and companies. Initiatives such as the Small Business Investor Tax Credit offer incentives to private sector investors.
EDUCATION	
Put off building new schools	Capital budget allocations take into consideration the fiscal capacity of the province. Current projects address health and safety issues, population growth areas or school rationalization.
Close / centralize / consolidate some schools	School infrastructure is routinely reviewed and, where necessary and appropriate, schools are closed and services are centralized. As part of the recent school district organization, the department is continually looking at ways to deliver services in a more efficient way.
More efficient operation of school buses	Efficient use of school buses and transportation is routinely examined.
Develop a draft budget for Education in March	Work has started to change the school district budget planning process with the goal of having the budget approved well in advance of the start of the school year.
Control overall number of TAs	To be considered as part of the action plan on inclusion.
Financial assistance for students	In the <i>Labour Force and Skills Development Strategy</i> released on August 26, 2013, Action 9 indicates the government plans to review student financial assistance programs to ensure that they better assist students with financial need to attend post-secondary education.
ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	
Shrink the environmental footprint	The government has implemented several initiatives to reduce its environmental impact including recycling programs, the green buildings policy, vehicle fleet procurement and operations policies, anti-idling policies and the use of renewable energy sources in government facilities.
Fewer municipalities; force amalgamations	Government has committed not to force amalgamation. However, the first objective of the <i>Action Plan for a New Local Governance System in New Brunswick</i> commits to encouraging communities to come together while maintaining their community identity.
Tax chemicals / pesticides that are harmful	The Department of Environment and Local Government has chosen other methods to curb pesticide use rather than taxation.
FINANCE	
Toll the highways	The issue has been reviewed but is not going forward at this time as a referendum would be required.
Increase corporate income taxes	Budget 2013-2014 increased the corporate income rate from 10% to 12%. This was effective July 1, 2013.
Increase the HST	This is not proceeding as a referendum would be required.

Themes from 2013-2014 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
Increase personal income tax rates	Budget 2013-2014 increased personal income tax rates and returned the rates to those that were in effect in 2006. This was effective July 1, 2013.
Increase property taxes on cottages	A white paper, <i>Improving New Brunswick's property tax system</i> , recommended reducing the \$1.4573 provincial rate to \$1.1233 on apartments, cottages and second homes over four years starting with the 2013 property tax year.
Increase corporate property taxes	A white paper, <i>Improving New Brunswick's property tax system</i> , recommended reducing the non-residential property tax rate from 2.186 to 1.856 over four years starting with the 2013 property tax year.
Scrap GeoSweep game	The Atlantic Lottery Corporation has recently decided to discontinue offering the GeoSweep game in the Atlantic region.
Increase gambling revenue	Casino revenues are governed by contractual arrangements. New Brunswick enjoys 100 per cent of the profit from the gaming revenue generated within the province by the ALC.
Increase tobacco taxes	Budget 2013-2014 increased tobacco taxes effective midnight March 26, 2013. The tax rate that is applied to all tobacco products in New Brunswick increased to 19 cents per cigarette or equivalent unit, except for cigars which will be taxed at 75 per cent of the retail price.
Collect outstanding accounts receivables	Efforts to collect using CRA programs have resulted in the collection of more than \$3 million this year. Furthermore, the increased focus on collections has resulted in attaining \$7.3 million in past due property taxes.
Tax unhealthy food products (junk food, energy drinks)	This has been reviewed; it is not practical to implement at this time.
Introduce a carbon tax	This was reviewed as part of a discussion paper in 2008 and the decision was made not to proceed. It is currently not under review.
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	
Find efficiencies in each department	Lean six sigma projects and waste walks have been ongoing since 2012 to address efficiencies and result in savings.
Adopt a process of continuous improvement	Continuous improvement is a key element of the Performance Excellence Process that is being adopted across all government departments.
Require Ministers to meet budget targets	Spending controls are in place and departments are accountable to achieve their budget targets.
Audit use of government vehicles	Individual departments are responsible for ensuring compliance with Vehicle Policy AD-1702 and making sure vehicles are used appropriately. Personal use of vehicles other than traveling between the employee's place of work and principal residence is prohibited.
Undertake P3 projects with neighbouring provinces	New Brunswick has extensive expertise in P3 procurement and will share this expertise, as required, with other jurisdictions to ensure proper consideration of major projects.
Outsource NBISA service desk functions to the private sector	Government adopted a shared service delivery model in 2010 for the delivery of core business functions including service desk. To date, NBISA has saved over \$400,000 by in-sourcing service desk and has identified the opportunity for more savings.
Increase fines	Fines are regularly reviewed across government.
HEALTH	
Introduce a health levy / user fees	There are no plans by government at this time to introduce user fees or to start charging New Brunswickers for using the health care system.
Expand the network of collaborative care centres	The primary health care framework is helping to create a health care system that is more responsive to the needs of communities and individuals. Family health teams are being established to provide better access, shorter wait times and improved health outcomes by managing chronic disease and improving care co-ordination.
Focus on preventative health care	Chronic diseases are the most significant cost driver in our health care system. A new chronic disease prevention and management framework is one of several initiatives designed to deliver a patient-focused and better integrated model of care.
Let pharmacists refill expired prescriptions	Amendments were made to the <i>Pharmacy Act</i> in 2008 to enable pharmacists to refill existing prescriptions if the prescription expires before the next physician visit.

Themes from 2013-2014 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
Send statement of Medicare activity to NB residents / families	This idea is under review.
Reduce costs associated with transfer of critical patients	Ambulance New Brunswick is currently mandated to focus on emergency pre-hospital and inter-facility land and air ambulance services. If a patient requires or might require some sort of intervention or clinical custodial care between sites, that "transfer" falls to the ambulance system to coordinate and carry out.
Trim the number of managers in Horizon Health; surplus hospital personnel	Both RHAs and FacilicorpNB, under guidance and direction from the Office of Health System Renewal, have made drastic reductions to their senior management teams. The entire health system is being reviewed in an effort to utilize all of its resources in the most efficient manner.
Introduce a comprehensive rationalization process for diagnostic imaging requests	The RHAs have begun a review of their diagnostic testing protocols.
Have ambulances and hospitals use same IV needle models	The hospital system in New Brunswick is working towards standardization.
Be proactive in overcoming obesity	The Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities is continuing to implement initiatives in various settings under the <i>New Brunswick Wellness Strategy</i> , and is working with government and non-government partners to address social determinants of health, focusing on issues such as food security, physical activity, healthy eating, tobacco-free living, and mental fitness and resilience.
HUMAN RESOURCES	
Reduce the size of civil service	Since 2010, the size of government has been reduced by 1,260 people. We anticipate 1,500 voluntary exits in 2013 with about 1,000 of these positions being filled. The Office of Health System Renewal will also contribute to a reduction of non-clinical services in the hospital sector.
Control wages and salaries	A two-year wage freeze has been implemented. Future wage adjustments will more closely reflect the economic performance of the province.
Eliminate retirement allowance	Government is phasing out retirement allowance. Accumulation of service for the purpose of calculating retirement allowance ceased after March 31, 2013 for management and non-union employees.
Review and reduce sick leave	A comprehensive Attendance Management program will be implemented. The sick leave program will be re-evaluated depending on the Attendance Management program's success.
Address pensions	Government announced it will be introducing legislation to reform public sector pensions and convert them to a shared-risk model. The new model has been implemented for two plans; the PSSA pension plan is subject to implementation in 2014.
Cut pensions for MLAs	MLA pensions were reduced in 2011 and there will be additional changes in 2014 as the result of the plan converting to a shared-risk model.
Reduce the number of MLAs and their spending	As prescribed by the <i>Electoral Boundaries and Representation Act</i> , the report of the Electoral Boundaries and Representation Commission reduced the number of ridings from 55 to 49. The changes will be implemented for New Brunswick's next general election in September 2014, resulting in six fewer MLAs and a corresponding reduction in spending for Members' indemnities and allowances.
No more patronage appointments	Two bills have been introduced which will limit patronage appointments.
Direct employees to use their own vehicle for travel	The provincial travel policy was reviewed and in April 2013, government initiated an educational campaign and improved monitoring of employees who travel. Employees are instructed to utilize the most cost effective travel option while performing government business. Rental cars are a less expensive option for longer travel distances.
Book flights earlier to save money	Online booking of flights is currently being used as it is the most cost effective method when managed appropriately. The Department of Human Resources will continue to look at best practices to ensure that flights are booked earlier and by the least expensive method.
Eliminate double-dippers in the pension system	The Department of Human Resources will be working closely with all parts of government to reduce the number of retired public servants who return to work in the public service.

Themes from 2013-2014 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
Do not cut front line workers	Only those positions critical to the delivery of core government services will continue to be replaced.
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY	
Develop the shale gas industry	The responsible development of our natural resources is a key part of our government's plan to rebuild New Brunswick's economy and create jobs here at home. The Department of Energy and Mines has taken the necessary steps and will continue to work hard to ensure that New Brunswick is ready if exploration shows we can have an expanded oil and gas industry.
Explore benefits of a west-east pipeline	On August 1, 2013, the Premier announced TransCanada Corp.'s commitment to proceed with next steps to build and operate the west-east pipeline. Known as the Energy East Pipeline, it is a 4,500-kilometre pipeline that will carry 1.1-million barrels of crude oil per day from Alberta and Saskatchewan to refineries in Eastern Canada. In 2012, the construction of a pipeline to transport crude oil to Saint John received unanimous support of the Legislature. TransCanada will continue the process in determining the commercial viability of the project.
Change royalty regime for potash	The Department of Energy and Mines and the Department of Finance are currently reviewing the royalty regime for potash.
Invest in clean, green bio-fuel industry	The biomass work plan is underway, including an economic analysis of multiple renewable energy sources. Government will develop and implement supporting policies to optimize the energy output from our province's wood-based biomass resources.
Streamline NB Power	A new <i>Electricity Act</i> received Royal Assent on June 21, 2013. As of October 1st, 2013, the NB Power group of companies became a single, integrated Crown corporation responsible for generating, transmitting and distributing electricity throughout the province. Also, the New Brunswick System Operator and the New Brunswick Electric Finance Corporation were amalgamated into the new, vertically-integrated Crown utility to be called New Brunswick Power Corporation. As a result of the <i>Act</i> , the entire NB Power organization will be subjected to regulatory review and scrutiny by the New Brunswick Energy and Utilities Board.
Increase stumpage royalties	Stumpage rates that the forest industry pays for Crown volume is based on the fair market value of standing timber that is generated from private woodlots. For the 2013-2014 fiscal year, this has led to an increase in stumpage for Crown wood.
Increase Crown allocation of softwood	Government follows a sustainable forest management regime for Crown land management.
End subsidies to forest industry	Government works to ensure that New Brunswick companies are able to operate in a competitive business environment. Any assistance that is provided must adhere to and/or comply with international trade agreements.
Consider royalty rates for minerals and oil and gas	Government has introduced a natural gas royalty regime that ensures a fair return to New Brunswickers while encouraging investment in this sector. More information can be found at www.gnb.ca/energy
NB LIQUOR	
Sell NB Liquor	The notion of selling NB Liquor will be considered in the larger context of ownership and retail model options in the medium-term.
Sell alcohol in grocery / convenience stores	The <i>2012 Allain/Smith Report to Cabinet</i> promoted an expansion and restructuring of the retail network with a focus on depot outlets, specialty stores, additional agency stores, seasonal agency stores and online sales. Work is on schedule to address these initiatives as outlined in the report.
Raise liquor prices	Further aggressive price increases would not support long-term growth in revenue and net income.
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	
More nursing homes / special care homes	In addition to the 354 new nursing home beds and 704 new specialized care beds announced in the <i>2011-2016 Nursing Home Renovation and Replacement Plan</i> , the Department of Social Development is working with the Department of Health and the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities on initiatives to support seniors at home or in other community-based facilities.

Themes from 2013-2014 pre-budget consultations and submissions

Theme / Idea	Examples of Actions / Initiatives
Need quicker client / patient assessment	The long-term care assessment process is under review.
Collection of outstanding debt / arrears	The Department of Social Development is using the CRA Set-Off program to collect debts.
Reduce staff / duplication of services	The Department of Social Development is working on a number of process and productivity improvements, some of which include reviews of caseload sizes and ratios of front line staff to supervisory staff.
OTHER	
Remove front licence plate on vehicles	Under review.
Close the least visited SNB centres	SNB recently conducted a service centre rationalization initiative. It was determined that costs could be reduced if service capacity was better aligned to service demand. As a result, a decision was made to reduce the number of days open in certain service centres.