



Prince Edward Island Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Legislative Assembly

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Official Opposition priorities for the Speech from the Throne

8 February 2021

The Premier has indicated his intent to prorogue the Legislative Assembly and introduce a new Speech from the Throne in the upcoming winter-spring sitting. Furthermore, he has asked the Government House Leader to consult with opposition parties about what priorities should be included in this Throne Speech. The Official Opposition caucus appreciates this opportunity to share our priorities with government.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a severe disruption in the lives of many Islanders. As we emerge from the pandemic, there will be many important choices to make about how we collectively recover and rebuild, choices that will affect the lives of Islanders for decades to come. We may never be able to return all aspects of Island life to pre-pandemic conditions. However, we are also presented with opportunities to rebuild our economy in a way that is fairer, cleaner, and more inclusive. This post-pandemic recovery will take a great deal of work. While all Islanders and businesses will be involved in this work, it is government that must take the lead on planning the recovery so that no Islanders are left behind. This upcoming Speech from the Throne is an ideal place to lay out this government's vision for how it will lead this post-pandemic recovery.

Accordingly, the Official Opposition caucus expects to see government address the following priorities in the Speech from the Throne.

- 1. Collaboration with Mi'kmaq leaders to support a moderate livelihood fishery this spring free from violence, intimidation, threats, or prejudice.**
- 2. Building an equitable and inclusive society:**
 - a. Develop a strategy for the elimination of poverty, including concrete progress towards a guaranteed basic income program.
 - b. Recognize housing as a basic right, and decisive action to end the provincial housing crisis.
 - c. Reform the *Residential Tenancy Act*, including a fair and transparent consultation process.
 - d. Expand early learning programs and supports, including universal pre-kindergarten and the universal school food program.
 - e. A plan for the adoption of universal childcare, including wage increases for Early Childhood Educators.

- f. Support for marginalized communities and activities furthering: reconciliation between all treaty peoples; anti-racism and diversity; newcomer retention and integration; inclusion of other marginalized groups such as women, gender diverse people, and youth.
- g. The right to vote for 16 and 17 year-olds.

3. A clean and prosperous economy:

- a. Promote the growth of low-emitting strategic sectors.
- b. Encourage Islanders to support local by shifting 20% of their spending to local businesses.
- c. Support existing sectors to become more sustainable.
- d. Broaden innovation programs to include all sectors and review the focus on exports.
- e. Diversity and inclusion targets in all economic development programs.
- f. Commit to carbon pricing and consider adopting a fee-and-dividend model.
- g. Detailed plan for reaching government's net-zero targets.
- h. Climate lens in infrastructure planning.
- i. Ensure access to critical services (internet, health, education, etc.) in all communities.
- j. Work with community stakeholders towards building stronger local governance.
- k. Support for farmers to transition towards more sustainable agriculture.
- l. Reform the *Lands Protection Act* without delay and ensure its spirit is enforced.
- m. Immediately reform the *Planning Act* in accordance with the 2014 recommendations of the *Task Force on Land Use Policy*.

4. Health and wellbeing for every Islander:

- a. Restore and expand mental health and addictions services, including expediting construction of the new Mental Health hospital.
- b. Work with the new chief physician recruiter to attract and retain healthcare workers.
- c. Expand funding for public homecare services (e.g. COACH program).
- d. Increase funding for the drug formulary; enable funding for treatments available on the provincial formulary for rare diseases; greater transparency and thoughtfulness in responses to formulary requests.
- e. Extend dental care coverage to seniors and low-income Islanders with no private dental insurance coverage.
- f. Eliminate age discrimination in the provincial Insulin Pump Program and provide off-loading devices to all Islanders in need.

- g. Implement midwifery.
- h. Introduce the Women's Health Strategy.
- i. Return decision-making power to the Health PEI board.