



April 10, 2019

The Honorable Dwight Ball  
Premier, Newfoundland and Labrador  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Confederation Building, East Block  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Premier Ball:

Re: Upcoming Provincial Election

With the 2019 Provincial Election on the horizon, we are taking this opportunity to solicit your position on a number of issues important to our membership. Your response will be collated and shared with our membership in the lead-up to the provincial vote.

By way of background, Trades NL, the Building and Construction Trades Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, is a labour organization representing 16 craft unions and more than 15,000 members. Our vision is to be the organization of choice for quality construction labour solutions for Government, owners and contractors in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Trades NL is committed to providing highly trained, diverse, safe and highly productive working tradespersons to the Newfoundland and Labrador building and construction industry by fostering pride and professionalism in the trades through training for life-long career opportunities.

The mandate of our organization is to:

- promote the highest standards of health and safety practices and procedures;
- promote education, training and apprenticeships that uphold the highest standards of certification and produce the best possible tradespersons available;
- develop long-term positive working relationships with industry partners and government to maximize the opportunity for increased market share in the building and construction trades;
- develop a more harmonious relationship between employers and employees by facilitating clear communications between the affiliated unions and industry partners;

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- engage in research, legal and public relation activities to advance the interest of affiliated unions and their members; and
- coordinate and harmonize the activities, functions and interest of the affiliated unions in the building and construction trades.

Over the past 30 years our organization has played a key role in major projects that have contributed to a growing resource development industry in our province. Through all of this we have developed a world-class skilled-trades workforce and produced many world-class projects while ensuring a focus on productivity and safety. In 2017 we were awarded the Exxon Mobil Presidents' Award for Safety – a world-wide recognition of our commitment to safety and record of no lost-time for workplace injuries.

Our members continue to maintain an attitude of social responsibility, and a track record of investing in our communities when they are working. We have continued to support many community groups and organizations who are doing great work, with an investment of more than \$20 million over the past 5 years.

With that context, we ask that you please review the attached document and provide us with your party's position on each of the identified issues by April 22, 2019.

I would also like to welcome you to come meet with the Business Managers of the 16 Trades Unions. Please let me know of a time that would be convenient for you.

Thanking you in advance for your feedback, we remain

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Leonard".

**John Leonard**  
President

cc. Darin T. King, Ph.D, Executive Director



Provincial Election 2019  
**Provincial Political Party Survey**

1. A primary consideration of resource development projects in our province is ensuring that Newfoundland and Labrador receive **maximum benefits** for our residents. This has traditionally been achieved through a balanced approach which has included:
  - a. royalties accruing to government when the project is operational;
  - b. construction jobs for local residents, including strategies to increase the participation of women, aboriginals, and other under-represented groups within the industry; and
  - c. an equity stake in the project.

This approach ensures maximum investment in the province, significant opportunities for our skilled trades workers, and the continued development of our capacity in constructing world class projects.

- What is your policy or approach to resource development projects?
  - Are you committed to ensuring that the majority of construction on any future resource development project takes place in Newfoundland and Labrador, maximizing the number of jobs for our residents? If so, please elaborate on how your party would ensure our province receives maximum benefits.
  - If not, please explain your policy and commitment on this.
2. The **Bull Arm Fabrication Site** has been a cornerstone of the oil industry in our province since the construction of the Hibernia platform in the 1990s, and Trades NL members has been a major player in all of this work.
    - With the changing oil and gas industry, outline your plans for investment and development at Bull Arm, ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be positioned to avail of maximum work opportunities on current and new projects.
    - Will you commit to ensuring that the Bull Arm site remains a world-class facility, as part of our provincial infrastructure, available for major and minor project work in support of our oil and gas industry?
    - Will you commit to engaging Trades NL in future projects on the Bull Arm Site, through a Special Project Order (SPO)?
  3. On many of the oil projects completed in our province, owners have requested government approve a **Special Project Order (SPO)** to facilitate a healthy labour relations climate, and support projects getting completed on time and on budget. Our members have participated in each of these SPOs, and demonstrated they have the skills and expertise to get the job done, productively, in a safe and efficient manner.

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- Will you commit to ensuring any future SPOs contemplated for resource development projects include all member unions of Trades NL (thereby avoiding the possibility of “wall to wall” agreements and considerable labour unrest).
4. One strategy that supports economic activity within the province, and the continued development of our skilled trades workforce, is the adoption of a **Community Benefits Agreement** policy for Provincial Public Infrastructure work. Under this model, projects must demonstrate maximum benefit to the province (local contractors, labour supply, supply and service sector). Community Benefit Agreements will set out hiring provisions to help sustain our skilled trades workforce by including provisions for fair wages, hiring of local qualified residents, apprentices, females and indigenous workers. Community Benefit Agreements have been adopted by most other provinces, to ensure maximum benefits to their residents. The Canada Free Trade Agreement allows such agreements and policy. This is a tremendous economic diversification tool, and keeps investment at home, for benefit of all.
    - Will you commit to developing and implementing such a Community Benefits Agreement policy for Newfoundland and Labrador?
    - If yes, outline your thoughts on how this may be achieved.
    - If you are not supportive, please describe your reasons.
    - Will you engage and include Trades NL in the development of such policy?
  5. Many of our skilled trades workers spend considerable money travelling to and from their job sites, as well as in purchasing the tools they are required to have on the site.
    - Will you commit to implementing a **Provincial Income tax deduction/benefit/credit** for skilled trades workers, similar to a benefit available to other workers who incur expenses as part of their employment?
  6. It is important that the province maintain the highest standards of pre-employment training for skilled trades students. We are supportive of the current move towards harmonized training for the Atlantic provinces, but it cannot reduce the hands-on time students will receive as part of their training.

Provincial plans of training and the harmonized curriculum should provide adequate time and resources for students to do the practical components of their trade. More theory and less practical is not the best approach. The emphasis must continue to be on the "doing" and not just the "how" of a trade.

To ensure our apprentices properly trained, they must be able to demonstrate the hands-on part of their trade. In other words, the time allocated to training must include sufficient time to verify the ability of students to do the practical components.

- What is your party’s position on this issue?
- Will you commit to ensuring student training approved by the province will maintain, or enhance, current requirements for hands-on training as part of their pre-service course work?