September 15, 2020

The Honourable Elvis Loveless
Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture

Dear Minister Loveless:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture. As you advance activities in the interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I am confident that you will ensure that these key resource sectors in our province are vibrant and continue to contribute our economy. Your department is essential in managing these resources so that they are available to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, while supporting new opportunities for further growth.

This year has been marked by economic and social turmoil not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but around the world. But with great challenges come great opportunities. Through focused efforts I know that we will overcome these challenges and emerge as a stronger, more caring, more compassionate, and more diverse province. Future generations will judge us not based on the size of the challenges we faced but on how we have solidified the financial, social, and economic foundation of our province. Our Government has a responsibility to respond swiftly, decisively, and effectively. The time for action is now.

The economic status quo is no longer acceptable. We need to move away from the well-worn economic cycles of boom and bust and foster an economy that is diversified and sustainable. We need to reinvigorate our economy to harness the great potential that lies in our technology sector, our world-class arts sector, and every other sector from oil and gas to tourism, from fisheries and aquaculture to forestry and agrifoods. I know that the people of our province work hard in these and other sectors and the Government must work equally as hard for the people.

Our work to create a robust, stable economy will provide a firm foundation to ensure the delivery of vital social and other services to residents of the province. Our Government must always be mindful of the needs of the most vulnerable in our society and must ensure that quality social services are available and accessible to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. To ensure our Government is meeting this need, a Gender-Based Plus Analysis must be integrated into all policies and proposals.

The business of government must also advance from the status quo. We need to reimagine how government works so that it works for the people. This change is long overdue and it will be transformational.
In particular, I am tasking you to work with your colleagues in Cabinet, with all members of the House of Assembly, and with your departmental officials to advance the following priorities.

I ask you to continue our commitment to support aquaculture which includes the doubling of salmon and shellfish production in our province. This will include expanding public trust and confidence, and ensuring continued excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador’s aquaculture industry by developing robust legislation that supports the industry.

You will allocate funding from the Atlantic Fisheries Fund to assist fishing enterprises in the wild and farmed fisheries to adopt innovative and modern practices, and use the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund to advance marketing initiatives, target new markets, and leverage benefits emerging from free trade agreements with Europe and Asia. Please engage the Fisheries Advisory Council for input and guidance on growing the fishery, including the transition toward greater groundfish activities and managing change in the availability of shellfish. You will work with the Government of Canada and industry to identify and access markets for our seal fishery.

We must explore new ways to help young harvesters and women harvesters enter the fishery, and support the integration of technological advances in the industry. Together with industry, assess and reduce the carbon footprint within the fishing industry, and fully assess logistical issues in exporting and importing fishery and agriculture related products to support access to markets and increased self-sufficiency in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Agriculture and food self-sufficiency are critical areas of focus. I ask you to continue efforts to double food self-sufficiency from 10 per cent to 20 per cent through collaboration with farmers and producers. Furthermore, please work with industry to increase the availability of cold storage in Newfoundland and Labrador to enable local farmers to overcome barriers that constrain vegetable production, extend their market season, and ultimately expand operations.

Continue to implement the Forestry Sector Work Plan, in collaboration with industry, to assist in diversifying the forest industry, create new business activities, and increase job opportunities in the sector, including exploring opportunities for the forest sector in Labrador. I ask you to examine the feasibility of creating a Wood Products Innovation Centre. Support silviculture and research into reforestation and forest improvement, and work to protect forests from uncontrolled forest fires under the Fire Suppression Program and monitor and evaluate forest insect and disease conditions under the Insect Control Program. You will also oversee the efforts to conserve our wildlife resources through science-based management and collaborations.

I trust that you will be collaborative, honest, respectful, and transparent in your role as a minister. I also expect that you will hold yourself to the highest standards of ethical conduct and act at all times with integrity. Individually and collectively, we have a responsibility to seek out the best advice and the best ideas and to implement actions
only in the interests of the people of our great province. We must be guided by evidence and research and take into account diverse perspectives as we make our decisions.

We cannot change our past but we can shape our future. It is our job to build the bright future that our province and its people deserve.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

DR. ANDREW FUREY
Premier