The Honourable Andrew Parsons, Q.C.
Minister of Industry, Energy, and Technology
Attorney General

Dear Minister Parsons:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Industry, Energy, and Technology and Attorney General. As you advance activities in the interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I am confident that you will ensure the delivery of programs that allow for our Province to prosper with contributions from key sectors such as oil and gas, mining and electricity while ensuring that our business community has the supports it needs to grow and support our provincial economy. Your department is essential in ensuring the economic engine of our Province is sound, and will contribute significantly to the economic success of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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.

Continue to ensure effective oversight and management of the Muskrat Falls project as it reaches final development. Work with the federal government to finalize a strong deal for Newfoundland and Labrador and advance provincial-led opportunities to support rate mitigation. I also ask you to implement the actions from the Commission of Inquiry Respecting the Muskrat Falls Project. This will include appointing an expert panel with a mandate to determine the best approach to be taken by the Province in its attempt to ensure maximum long-term benefits from the Churchill Falls generating station and other potential generation sites on the Churchill River in preparation for 2041. You will also work with the Minister of Finance to finalize electricity rate mitigation agreements.

You will lead our Province’s move toward a green economy and an investment in green energy technology that capitalizes on Newfoundland and Labrador’s low carbon oil while taking advantage of our abundance of clean, green energy. Work with industry and stakeholders to deliver a renewable energy strategy that is focused on creating employment opportunities and further positioning the province as an energy hub.

In collaboration with the Atlantic Provinces, electric utilities, and the Government of Canada, develop a Clean Power Roadmap for Atlantic Canada, which will outline a collective vision for how jurisdictions can collaborate over the coming decades to build a clean power network across the region that will provide economic and environmental benefits. Consider new export energy sector development including wind, hydrogen, and other opportunities.

Ensure Newfoundland and Labrador is a globally-preferred location for investment in oil and gas to ensure lasting benefits and employ more people directly in the industry. This should be advanced by emphasizing exploration in an environmentally sustainable manner to drive discovery and higher production; improving supply and service sector opportunities; and, improving global competitiveness. Advance opportunities through the Innovation and Business Development Fund, which assists in supporting innovation and enhancing supply and service capabilities, business development, and infrastructure.

Business growth, innovation, and regional development will be key areas of focus. Develop a strong and diversified economy by supporting entrepreneurship, providing access to capital, and investing in regional and sectoral development, diversification, and innovation in all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Support regional economic development initiatives led by municipalities, industry organizations, social enterprises and co-operatives, and other not-for-profit groups, and capitalize on projected growth in the global ocean economy and the opportunities presented by the Atlantic Ocean Supercluster. I also ask you to collaborate with the
Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities, to continue work on a Natural Areas System Plan.

Deliver on the Business Innovation Agenda, strengthening businesses as the engine of our economy, providing support, and helping companies to start, innovate, scale, and grow sales in local, national, and international markets. Work with the Innovation and Business Investment Corporation to deliver provincial government supports for innovation, research and development, business development, and growth. Advance the provincial Social Enterprise Action Plan, and support the growth of the technology sector in Newfoundland and Labrador and the scale-up of high growth firms. In order to facilitate these developments, collaborate to advance long-term connectivity needs of homes, business, and institutions.

Continue to position Newfoundland and Labrador as a top tier global jurisdiction for safe, environmentally responsible exploration and mining growth, and to maximize benefits and opportunities to be competitive in global markets. Collaborate with the Government of Canada, and other provincial and territorial governments in the implementation of the Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan actions towards solidifying Canada’s position as a global mining leader and to lay the foundation for lasting success at home and abroad. Continue to support and fund the Junior Exploration Assistance Program and prospector grants throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Improve administrative processes and make use of leading edge technology to enhance service delivery.

Working with your colleagues, the Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour and the Minister of Education, please develop targeted approaches for ensuring the provincial workforce supports the creation of an ecosystem that can attract and retain firms in the technology sector, including enhanced coding opportunities in the K-12 education system.

Finally, please collaborate with the Minister of Justice and Public Safety to leverage the infrastructure from a single, province-wide public safety radio system to provide improved cell-phone coverage across Newfoundland and Labrador.

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,

DR. ANDREW FUREY
Premier