



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Newfoundland and Labrador

James Dinn, M.H.A.
District of St. John's Centre

Siobhan Coady, Minister
Department of Finance
PO Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

March 4, 2025

Dear Minister Coady,

I write regarding the upcoming provincial budget. I appreciate the amount of work that goes into planning a fiscal year across government and recognize that this year must carry new stresses with political and economic uncertainties south of the border.

As always, I believe the first priority of government is the well-being of its people.

Residents of the province continue to struggle with day-to-day affordability, and we must consider this in all aspects of budgeting. This year, we should also consider our role in Team Canada and how we as a province can contribute to the nation's stance against the actions of the US President.

I suggested to Premier Furey in a recent letter that we should discontinue any provincial EV rebates for Tesla-branded vehicles. While I certainly believe we should incentivize the purchase of green technology and continue the program after March 31, it would make sense at this time to not fund Tesla purchases and redirect those funds to purchases of Canadian-made vehicles.

In the same vein, I would hope your government is examining any and all contracts with U.S.-based companies (including consultants) and future purchases of American-made goods and services, including those purchased by companies contracted to do government work. I have a particular concern about personal data being stored with companies such as Teladoc, but also believe it is important at this time to examine any transactions that funnel money to the United States, and any instances where personal data is released to, and stored by, an American company.

As Finance Minister, you would undoubtedly be involved in any discussion about lowering inter-provincial regulations designed to protect health, safety, and workers. While I do not oppose re-examining measures that could make it easier for Newfoundland companies to supply goods to the rest of the country, it is important that we do not lower health, safety, and/or labour relations standards in an overly hasty impulse to react to threats from south of the border.

As the people of Newfoundland and Labrador continue to be concerned about day-to-day affordability, I would also urge you again to remove the provincial portion of the HST from home heating sources, including electricity. This would bring much-needed relief to everybody in the province, particularly at a time when last year's electricity rate hikes are resonating with winter increases.

Your government could also ease the financial burden for the people of the province by taking sales tax from children's essentials such as diapers, clothing, and car seats. The recent HST forgiveness initiated by the federal government made a huge difference to many thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I would also urge you and your cabinet colleagues to prioritize negotiating both dental care and pharmacare with your Ottawa counterparts. Dental care should have been expanded on January 1 to all residents of the province. Coverage for diabetes medicine and birth control should also be available now. Both are pending your government signing agreements with the government of Canada. I would hope you are vigorously pursuing both measures and I hope to see allotment for same in the budget document this spring.

Please also make home ownership more attainable for young people and families by doubling the amount allotted for the First-Time Homebuyer Program and investing in non-market community-based housing.

My colleague from Labrador West witnessed first-hand the intense uncertainty and fear of his constituents during the wildfires and evacuations last summer. We hope to see some increased funding for firefighting, especially a definite commitment for the bird dog plane announced last September by Premier Furey.

I'd be willing to speak to you at any time on these suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Jim Dinn
MHA, St. John's Centre
Leader, NL NDP