

NDP Caucus News

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Province Will Not Be Tourism Capital of Canada Without Investment: O’Leary

NDP MHA Sheilagh O’Leary (St. John’s East–Quidi Vidi) is challenging the PC government to back up its promise of making Newfoundland and Labrador the tourism capital of Canada, as its first budget delivers little to turn that ambition into reality.

With flatlined spending across the department, O’Leary warns that the artists and cultural workers who drive our creative economy and power our tourism sector will be left to continue struggling without the support they need to sustain their work and livelihoods.

“As I continue to dive deeper into the changes within the budget for the department, I am left with more questions than answers, and little hope that this government understands the importance of investing in tourism industries,” said O’Leary.

“We heard the Minister rise in the House of Assembly the day before the budget to acknowledge the 2025 [record breaking season for Parks NL](#). It surprised me then to see that Parks NL funding has seemingly remained the same, not to mention that this government canceled the feasibility study for the National Marine Conservation Area on the West Coast,” said O’Leary.

“During the campaign, the NDP ensured that artists were a focus, as we know that as the cost of everything goes up, artists need more support. Unfortunately, we did not see our ask to increase Arts NL grants for artists included,” said O’Leary. “We also see funding for our growing film and television industry remain status quo. An industry that not only provides good union jobs for artists, but shas surpassed \$1 billion in revenue for the province.”

“This morning during budget meetings, the Minister of Infrastructure agreed with me that the amount of money going towards maintaining our already crumbling Arts and Culture Centres – our public arts infrastructure – is not enough to keep up with maintenance.”

“Overall, it seems as if the government is prioritizing complementing our tourism industry instead of making tangible investments. It may not be oil and gas, but these sustainable industries are essential to our economy and our communities. I hope that I will be told to ‘stay tune’ for more investments, but I have little confidence after seeing the budget.”

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