

April 15, 2021

The Honourable Gerry Byrne
Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills

Dear Minister Byrne:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills. As part of this Cabinet, you are working on behalf of, and alongside, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador to face the challenges confronting our province while preparing for the great opportunities ahead. I have confidence in our Government and in this province. This is the right team at the right time.

Together, we will deliver on our promises to the people of this province. Together, we will promote a healthy Newfoundland and Labrador, drive meaningful economic opportunities, foster inclusive population growth, modernize education and childcare, and build strong partnerships. We will realize our vision of a prosperous and fiscally responsible province that is inclusive and welcoming to people from all over the world.

As Minister, you will take a lead in building a prosperous future for this province. You will foster strong relationships with Indigenous governments and organizations and with relevant stakeholder groups. Each relationship must be founded upon respect and mutual understanding.

Now is the time to take meaningful steps on the path to prosperity, and decisive action to build a solid foundation for future generations. I am asking you to work with your Cabinet colleagues and with all Members of the House of Assembly to advance the following priorities.

Our province has the oldest population in Canada. We need to act swiftly to address our aging and shrinking population. Therefore, I ask you to lead the positioning of our province as a national leader on immigration settlement and retention.

You will lead the tripling of our immigration target from 1,700 to 5,100 newcomers per year by 2026. Ensure that we align our immigration targets with Canada's national efforts and implement a full suite of immigration policies to further strengthen the province for the future. We need to be bold in our thinking on immigration and population growth.

The demands of the labour markets in our province are continuously changing. I ask that you work closely with the federal government to ensure more immigration categories aimed at addressing specific labour market shortages in this province are included.

Please work with the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation to create an incentivized immigration pathway for artists to choose Newfoundland and Labrador as their home and base for creative production.

I ask you to continue to implement the Immigration Action Plan, including assisting migrant workers and international graduates to become permanent residents, engaging employers in facilitating workplace-based language training, introducing empowerment-focused employment initiatives for newcomer women, and promoting international entrepreneurship. These endeavors will further nurture a sense of belonging among newcomers to our province.

Continue to promote multiculturalism throughout the province. In collaboration with community stakeholders and key departments, including the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation, continue the development of a Ministerial Committee on Anti-Racism.

Building upon our awarding winning tourism campaigns, I ask that you work closely with the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation to develop a Remote Workers Pilot Project to showcase the province as a remote working destination of choice and to increase long-term stays and relocations to Newfoundland and Labrador. Please collaborate with your cabinet colleagues to find other innovative ways to grow our population, including exploring initiatives to retain young families in Newfoundland and Labrador, and ensuring our next generation is prepared for opportunities available in our growth industries.

Continue to implement workforce development initiatives, including the provision of dedicated staffing resources to work with the K-12 school system to provide relevant career-development supports and sector-specific labour market information products for inclusion in the new career education curricula. Collaborate with your colleagues, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, to 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.

Foster innovative approaches to workforce development, future skills development, and labour market attachment by supporting industry and community-led initiatives through the Province's Workforce Innovation Centre. Provide workforce adjustment and training supports, as required, to assist individuals affected by changes in industry and the workplace through allocation of funding supports under the Labour Market Development Agreement. Please review employment and training programs and service delivery models to ensure continuous improvement. Examine the expansion of Employment Assistance Services to inform the potential for further expansion.

You will continue to be responsible for apprenticeship and trades certification and industrial training. We must build innovation and flexibility in the province's apprenticeship system through increased harmonization and better access to online training and services.

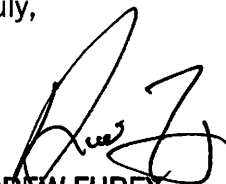
We will always remain focused on a robust economy where there is a place for all workers, an economy that embraces renewable energy while maximizing our oil and gas advantage. We will foster a business environment that supports new and growing technology and we will reimagine and reinvigorate our fishing and mining sectors to meet global demand for our abundant resources.

As we work to build a strong economy, we must also work to create a prosperous society. We envision a province with healthy, active residents who not only have access to the means to treat illness but also to achieve wellness. We envision a province with vibrant, engaged communities in which nobody is left behind. We must ensure that in our quest to build economic wealth we also build social and cultural wealth.

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.

I call on you and every other Newfoundlander and Labradorian to join me in my commitment to make a difference for our province. Together, we will harness our collective strengths and build a better and brighter future for this province.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Furey', written over a faint, illegible background.

DR. ANDREW FUREY
Premier