

## **Atlantic Premiers agree to additional and substantial regional regulatory efficiency initiatives**

Eliminating unnecessary, costly differences between the regulatory systems of the four Atlantic provinces is viewed and has been embraced as a significant economic opportunity for both the province and our region. That principle was the foundation for the creation of the Joint Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness. The Construction Association of Nova Scotia is a key contributor, advisor and partner in the work of the Office.

To act on this opportunity, the Office has overseen intergovernmental teams tasked with identifying areas to align, streamline or harmonize to eliminate unnecessary differences and make it easier for business operation and growth.

Based on this work, the Atlantic Premiers recently committed to additional and substantial initiatives for regional regulatory efficiency.

These commitments include:

- A phased-in approach to move from four separate provincial licenses to one regional license for activities and occupations in technical safety.
- An aligned application process and common duration of temporary permits for insurance adjusters to improve response time to severe weather events and other emergencies across the region.
- Broadening shared training of transportation enforcement officials across the region.
- A move for joint over-dimension permitting for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in transportation.
- A joint Atlantic study and consultation with the vendor community on government procurement to better understand challenges created by provincial differences and identify efficiencies.
- A workers' compensation Atlantic working group tasked with aligning systems in key areas to reduce administrative burden for employers.
- Mutual recognition for head and foot protection, for Occupational Health and Safety training and for first aid training across the region.

The above is in addition to the work already completed or underway, including:

- aligning timing of minimum wage changes and record-keeping requirements in the Maritimes
- the adoption of Canada Revenue Agency's One Business Number for simpler interaction with WCB systems
- and common solicitation documents for government procurement.

The four Atlantic provinces have also all adopted the Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation, have all proclaimed the "Regulatory Accountability and Reporting Act", as well as committed to a

common approach to measuring the regulatory burden. A model to assess regulatory impacts is well underway in Nova Scotia and soon to be implemented across the region.

A [recent report](#) by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council concluded the region's fragmented regulatory environment undermines the region's competitiveness and is a barrier to interprovincial trade and business growth. It also highlighted the significant economic opportunity of better aligning our regulatory systems and the urgency of this work given our fiscal and demographic challenges.

To put the size of the opportunity in context, two relatively small initiatives already complete – alignment of minimum wage changes and record-keeping requirements – are estimated to save Maritime businesses **\$440,000 every year**.

Based on the additional commitments, it is anticipated regional regulatory efficiency will save businesses that do work in more than one province millions of dollars annually. The hope is that it will also encourage more businesses to expand their reach. These are real savings realized without compromising valued employee, customer, health and environmental protections – all of which are hallmarks of a strong regulatory climate.