



# IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023



Ideas.

Influence.

Action.

# Table of Contents

Seizing New Brunswick's Fast Growing Opportunities	2
<b>1. Housing and Immigration</b>	<b>3</b>
The Housing Hub of New Brunswick	5
Affordable Housing Advocacy	6
Construction and Immigration 100-Day Challenge	7
Immigration Advocacy	7
<b>2. Innovation and R&amp;D Investment</b>	<b>8</b>
Atlantic Investment Incentive	10
Innovation Strategy Development	11
<b>3. New Brunswick's Net Zero Competitiveness</b>	<b>12</b>
Roundtable: Greening Supply Chains and SMEs in New Brunswick	14
Innovation Lab to Green N.B. SMEs & Key Supply Chains	14
Climate Change Advocacy With the Province	15
Council Priorities Going Forward	15
Organizational Snapshot	16
NBBC Meeting Highlights	17
<b>Looking Back: NBBC's History and Achievements</b>	<b>18</b>



Letter from the Chair & CEO

# Seizing New Brunswick's Fast Growing Opportunities

Here at the New Brunswick Business Council (NBBC), we strive to be a do-tank, not just a think-tank, and this year was a great example of that.

New Brunswick is on a growth trajectory, and the NBBC has taken a leadership role in critical areas to support continued growth, competitiveness, and improved quality of life throughout the province.

We stepped up to advance notoriously tenacious challenges, spearheading innovative and impactful projects that will make a real difference.

One example is leading the creation of the Housing Hub of New Brunswick (HHNB), securing \$1.6 million in provincial and federal funding to accelerate affordable housing construction which will enable employers to attract workers to rural communities.

We took the lead on advocacy issues, including housing, by commissioning quality research that shed light on the need for more investment and support.

Regionally, we are a powerful voice in a coalition of 200-plus leading Atlantic businesses and organizations advancing the Atlantic Investment

Incentive Pilot project to drive investment in start-ups and scale ups across the region.

Net-zero competitiveness is a significant concern to all of us, and the NBBC initiated a roundtable that led to the creation of an Innovation Lab to Green N.B. SMEs and Supply Chains. We are looking forward to seeing the solutions that will emerge to help businesses in the Province make the transition.

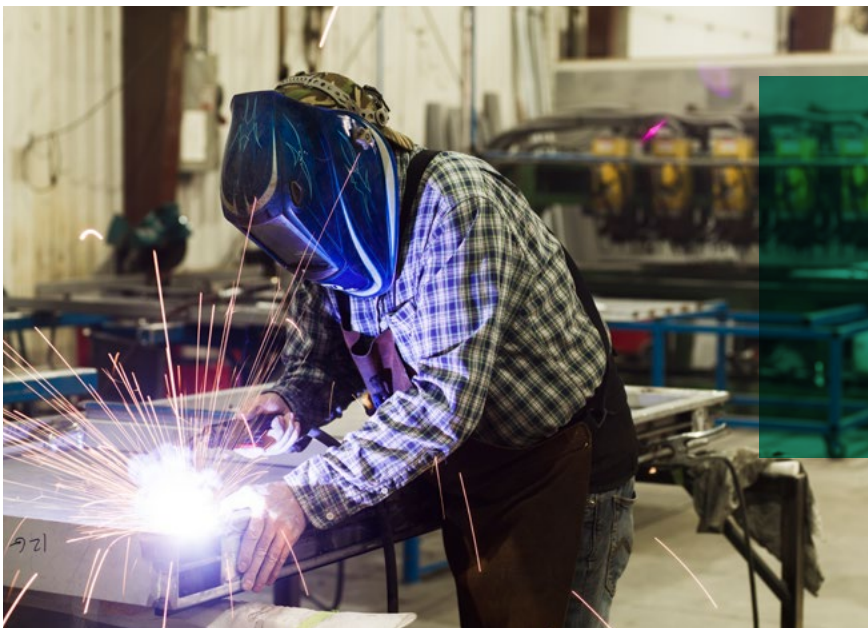
These and other initiatives over the past year are only possible due to the influence, input, and support of our membership and the open approach to cooperation and collaboration with our many partners. Thank you for your commitment to this Council and to New Brunswick.



**Andrea Feunekes,**  
Chair

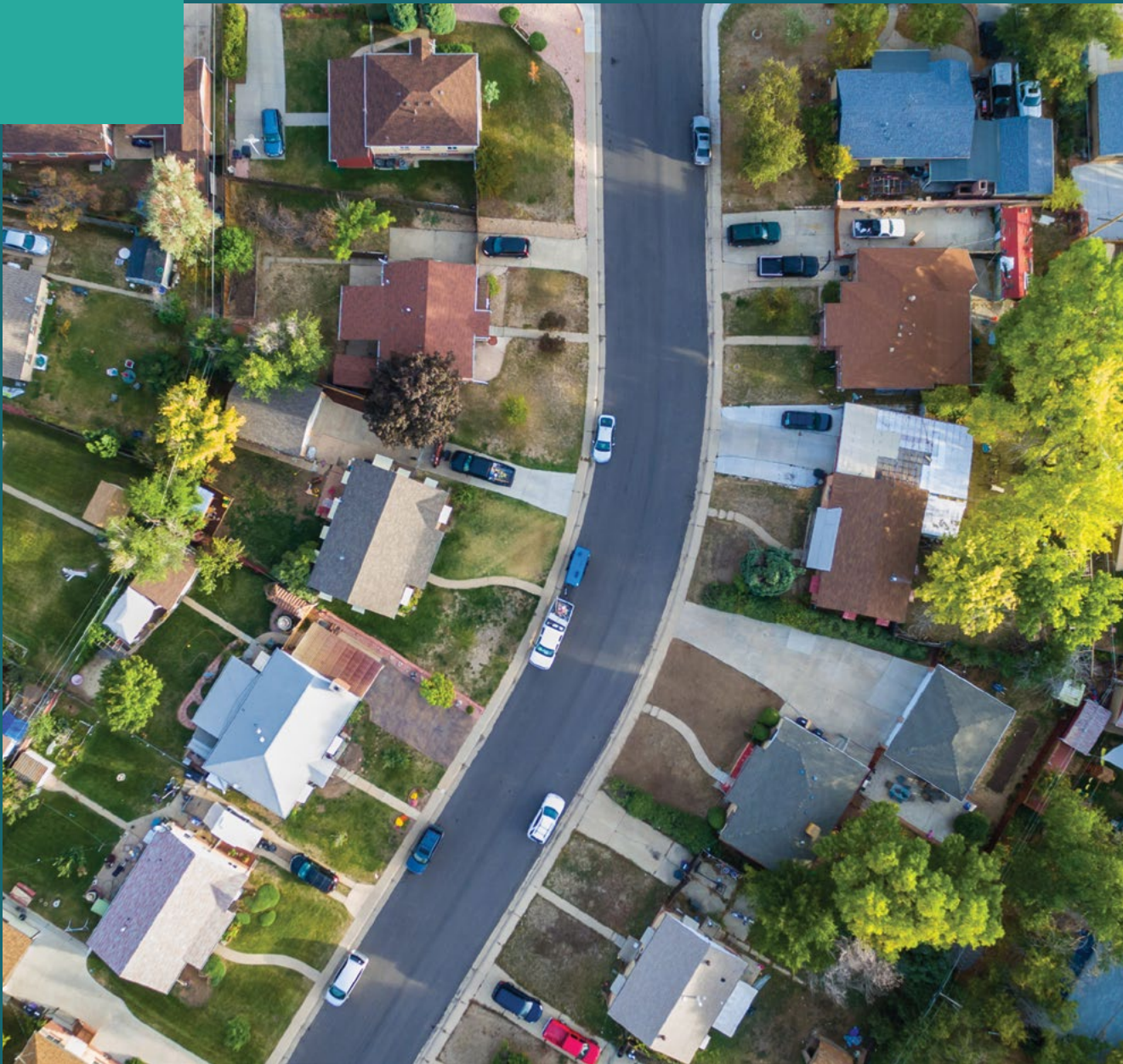


**Alex LeBlanc,**  
President and CEO





# 1. Housing and Immigration



# Housing, Immigration and Growth are Linked

New Brunswick is growing faster than at any other time on record, in no small part because of our growing success with immigration. In the last year, **more than 26,000 people moved to New Brunswick.**

This is excellent news, but it brings challenges.

Housing is a major barrier to recruiting new workers, with David Campbell projecting that our post-pandemic population boom alone will lead to **a deficit of 10,400 rental units by the end of 2023.** And despite record immigration, talent attraction remains a big concern, limiting growth and competitiveness. Too many companies are delaying expansion plans because they can't fill roles.

People will power our prosperity. We need adequate housing and services to maintain our growth trajectory and attract and retain new workers.

**The NBBC is leading initiatives** to build capacity, drive investment in housing and support for a growing population, and push all levels of government to adopt a pro-growth agenda so we don't miss this opportunity.



# Housing & Immigration Projects

## 1. The Housing Hub of New Brunswick

The NBBC spearheaded the creation of the Housing Hub of New Brunswick (HHNB) to unlock more federal and provincial funding to develop affordable rental units at the speed and scale required to attract workers to rural communities.

On Nov. 7, ACOA, the Government of New Brunswick (GNB), and the NBBC announced \$1.6 million in funding for this

new provincial non-profit organization to move housing projects from concept to construction. The Housing Hub's official launch took place on May 3, with a mandate to:

- Access our fair share of \$82+ billion under the National Housing Strategy
- Develop 2,000 new affordable units in rural communities in the next ten years



The National Housing Strategy spent nearly

**\$617** per capita in Ontario

Versus only

**\$205** per person in Atlantic Canada.

(Census, 2021)

### Key Housing Hub initiatives since launching in May 2023:

- Launched a Request for Expressions of Interest for projects to build 220 new housing units to support rural workforce attraction. The province has already committed \$10 million towards the pilot, and CMHC has issued a letter of intent to support the project with negotiations on specific contributions ongoing. The expectation is to break ground on the first units in 2024, with final delivery by 2025.
- Launched a Request for Proposals to conduct a provincial research project on student housing needs, in partnership with all publicly funded universities and colleges, to identify their enrollment projections, the current housing stock, and projected housing needs for future student populations. Housing shortages hurt recruitment, especially of international students, a lifeline for our universities, colleges, and labour market.
- Thirteen additional projects in rural communities are undergoing feasibility studies, which could represent more than 500 new units.



We are acting to address the rural housing crisis by supporting the creation of a new non-profit organization to focus on accelerating the development of rural rental housing units in the province over the next decade.

**Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor,**  
Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for ACOA





## 2. Affordable Housing Advocacy

The NBBC stepped up to fill an advocacy vacuum in the lead-up to the provincial housing strategy. We partnered on discussion papers to explain New Brunswick's housing challenges and propose concrete fixes.

1. **New Brunswick's Housing Crunch: Scoping out the Challenge and the Stakes** by Richard Saillant examines housing market dynamics in the face of population growth.
2. **Housing Demand By Region In New Brunswick Through 2030** by David Campbell estimates housing demand by region to 2030.
3. These reports informed **Affordable and Adequate Housing for All: Forging a New Path Through Community Housing in New Brunswick**. Top recommendations include:
  - Invest \$200 million annually over five years to create 10,000 units;
  - Develop an aggressive strategy for immigration into construction and skilled trades that includes actions to support recruitment, upskilling, credential recognition, workplace integration, settlement, and retention;
  - Support the Regional Service Commissions to ensure up-to-date and accurate province-wide housing needs assessments and action plans;
  - Support capacity building in the community housing sector through strategic regional plans focused on succession, sustainability, and growth;
  - Explore the creation of a provincial Community Land Trust (CLT) to acquire land and housing assets to ensure affordability into perpetuity.

### 3. Construction and Immigration 100-Day Challenge

To welcome record numbers of new New Brunswickers, we need to accelerate building everything from schools and homes to commercial space. That takes a robust construction workforce, for which competition is fierce.

Training and upskilling our existing population is not enough. Immigration is crucial to growing this strategic sector to meet demand.

The NBBC partnered with the construction and homebuilding sector, PETL, and the Pond-Deshpande Centre's NouLab on a 100-Day Challenge. This methodology offers an accelerated way of testing policy and program solutions to increase immigration pathways into construction jobs. Project highlights:

- Secured \$250,000 from PETL;
- Created a provincial Labour Force Adjustment Committee to provide leadership and oversight of the broader workforce adjustment action plan;

- Recruited a committee chair to serve as administrative support to the committee, with work kicking off this summer;
- Engaged in active discussions with ACOA to complete the funding and enable a project kick-off with industry and government by October 2023.

The construction industry represents



**7%**

OF NEW BRUNSWICK'S GDP  
THE FIFTH HIGHEST OF ANY INDUSTRY.

NEARLY

**2,000**

CONSTRUCTION JOBS  
are unfilled, with

**10,000**

VACANCIES  
expected from 2018-2027.

Immigrants account for roughly **3% of the construction** workforce in New Brunswick versus **18% across Canada**.

(Statistics Canada, 2021)

### 4. Immigration Advocacy

New Brunswick needs immigration reform to welcome significantly more people and be more strategic in aligning to priority sectors such as construction.

For three years, the NBBC has been actively advocating with federal and provincial government leaders in immigration, pushing for more permanent resident spots, greater flexibility in matching immigrants to labour market needs, and higher investment in settlement and language support.

In April, **Ottawa approved a 67% increase in immigration nominations for New Brunswick** through the Provincial Nominee Program and Atlantic Immigration Program, both managed by the province.



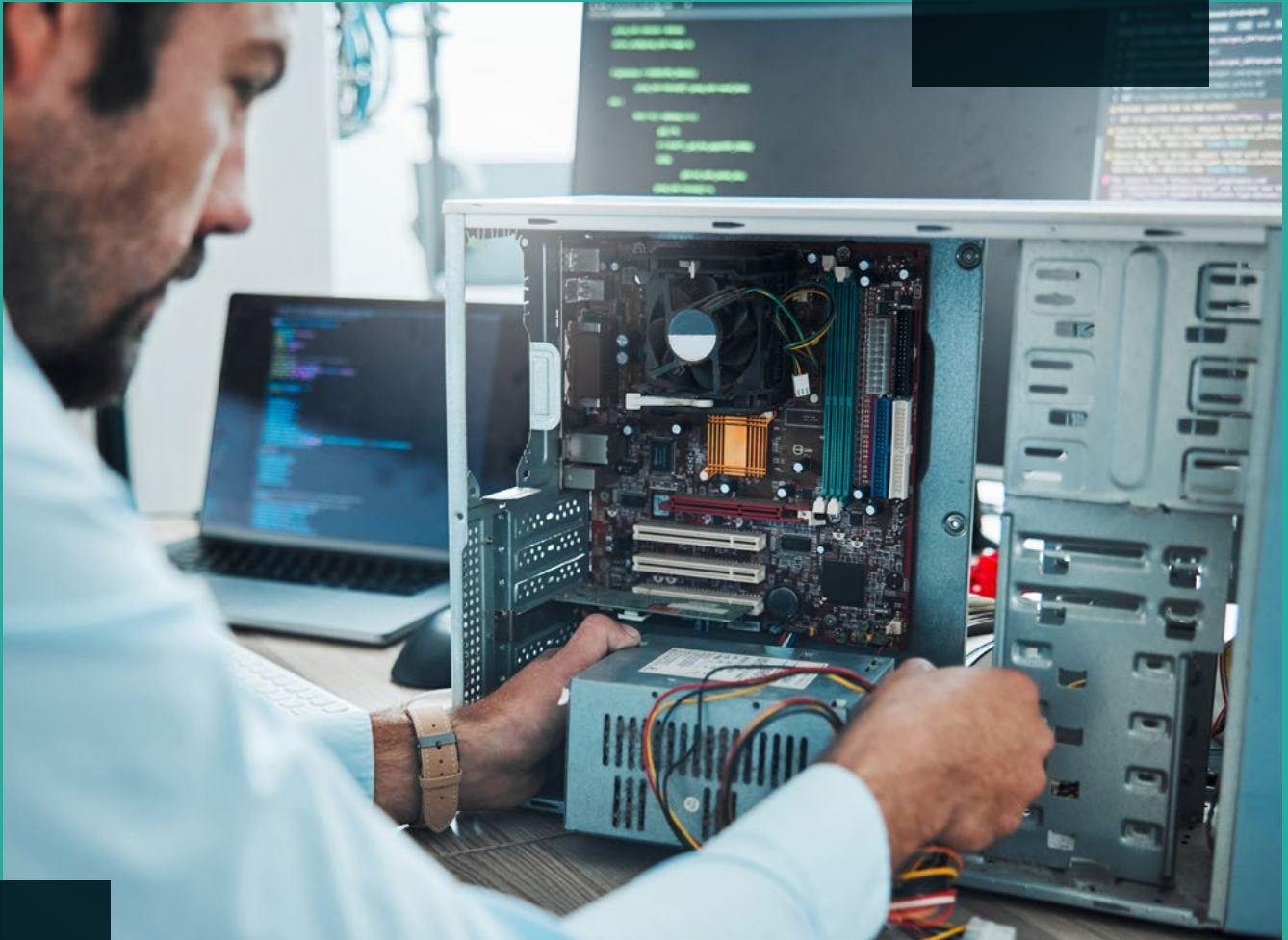
**1 million**

NBBC's 2040 New Brunswick population goal.





## 2. Innovation and R&D Investment



# We Need More Investment in Innovation and R&D

The Public Policy Forum's 2023 Atlantic Canada Momentum Index shows population and immigration are up in our region. So are GDP per capita, productivity, and the employment rate.

Education, housing starts, life satisfaction? Up, up, and up.

But we're lagging in critical areas: innovation and investment.

New Brunswick is weak in BERD—business enterprise expenditures on R&D. The **Conference Board**

**of Canada's 2021 innovation scorecard** gives New Brunswick a D- on innovation. And private sector investment per worker in the Maritimes continues to be the lowest in the country.

We can significantly improve these almost-failing grades by developing an aggressive innovation strategy and making the right investments. Working with partners in the innovation and R&D space, the NBBC is helping to chart a course towards a more innovative province.



“

Our competitiveness is directly linked to our ability to attract top talent, innovate, and leverage new technologies. Winning companies in the future will be highly automated, digital, and continuously innovating.”

**Andrea Feunekes** • Chair,  
New Brunswick Business Council

# Innovation R&d Investment Projects:

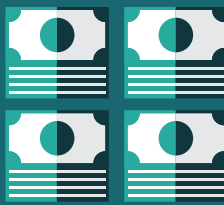
## 1. Atlantic Investment Incentive (previously the Atlantic Investment Bubble)

Atlantic Canada benefits when we make it easier for people, goods and services to flow between our provinces. Investment is ready for this kind of collaboration.

The Atlantic Investment Incentive Pilot project is supported by more than **200 business groups and entrepreneurs** to create a regional equity investment incentive. Targeted to sectors with high growth potential and an export focus, this direct rebate would complement existing provincial tax credits and apply to investments across provincial borders in the region: 35 percent for individuals and 20 percent for corporations/trusts.

The NBBC is pressing the Council of Atlantic Premiers and federal government to have the program in place by April 1, 2024, to spur the growth of high-potential companies and sectors and increase provincial tax revenues. The Atlantic Investment Incentive Pilot project is good for business and good for government.

### The ask



# 10 million

A YEAR OVER FOUR YEARS

cost-shared between the federal and four provincial governments.

### The impact



SUPPORT OVER

# 200 companies

In creating

# 2,000



# JOBS

And generating over



# \$400M

in GDP contributions.

(Jupia Consultants, 2021)



## 2. Innovation Strategy Development

### New Brunswick Needs an Innovation Strategy

The absence of a provincial strategy and under-investment are holding back New Brunswick's innovation competitiveness.

In February, in a letter to the Premier and Minister of Finance, we pushed for more innovation investment, including:

- Increase investment to 2% of GDP, or an additional ~\$25 million;
- Design the provincial program to leverage federal money and incentivize private investment in automation, digitalization, and productivity improvements;
- Increase funding for the R&D voucher program through NBIF and scrap limiting criteria that cause companies to forgo potential projects;
- Provide stable, predictable multi-year funding to applied research centres and invest in a dedicated applied research lab to support R&D and productivity improvements for manufacturers and exporters.

An incremental increase of **\$25 million** in provincial funding would bring us to the national average and could leverage **3-5 times** more private sector and federal investment, injecting **\$100-150 million** into R&D, automation, and innovation activities in New Brunswick.

*(Jupia Consultants, 2021)*



### 3.

# New Brunswick's Net Zero Competitiveness





*As the global economy decarbonizes and consumers shift towards cleaner and greener alternatives, New Brunswick must define and pursue its competitive advantage.*

### 3. New Brunswick's Net Zero Competitiveness

## Enhancing Our Net-Zero Competitiveness

As the global economy decarbonizes and consumers shift towards cleaner and greener alternatives, New Brunswick must define and pursue its competitive advantage.

Many larger New Brunswick companies are already refocusing their strategies toward sustainability, and there is significant investment interest in opportunities such as small modular reactors and green hydrogen. Electrification and a non-emitting grid by 2035 will support the greening of the province.

But the net-zero competitiveness of manufacturers, exporters, and SMEs needs more concerted action, including the right policies, incentives, and infrastructure. The NBBC is encouraging alignment among government, industry, and academia to ensure New Brunswick remains competitive and can seize the opportunities of the new green economy.



# Net-Zero Competitiveness Projects

## 1. UNB & NBBC Roundtable on New Brunswick's Competitiveness in a Net Zero Economy

On November 22, Dr. Paul J. Mazerolle, UNB President & Vice-Chancellor, and Andrea Feunekes, NBBC Chair, invited a select group of business leaders and subject matter experts for a Chatham House Rule discussion about how New Brunswick can enhance its net-zero competitiveness.

The roundtable identified four critical areas of concern:



In response to feedback from the roundtable, the NBBC partnered with the Pond Deshpande Centre's NouLab to develop a project focused explicitly on greening SMEs and supply chains in New Brunswick.

## 2. Innovation Lab to Green N.B. SMEs & Key Supply Chains

According to Statistics Canada, 99.8 percent of businesses in New Brunswick are SMEs – and 98 percent have less than 100 employees. SMEs are our economy's backbone and contribute significantly to the supply chains of large industries.

To stay competitive, they must align with changing regulations and the decarbonization goals of big business. But many SMEs lack the capacity, expertise, or time for this work, putting their businesses and our supply chains at risk. We are working with NouLab at the Pond-Deshpande Centre at UNB on two-year applied research project to build solutions to support the decarbonization of SMEs and key supply chains.

By September, we hope to have secured a funding commitment from both ACOA and GNB to launch the project in October.

Only about

**3%** OF ATLANTIC SMES ADOPTED  
CLEAN TECHNOLOGY IN 2020,

compared to

**4/6%** IN OTHER  
CANADIAN REGIONS.



**ONLY 1% OF ATLANTIC BUSINESSES USED  
RENEWABLE FUELS FROM 2017 TO 2019,  
THE COUNTRY'S LOWEST RATE.**

**CANADIAN BUSINESSES WITH UNDER FIVE EMPLOYEES  
HAD A 4% RATE OF CLEAN TECH ADOPTION IN 2020,  
LESS THAN HALF THE 9% RATE FOR COMPANIES WITH  
100-499 EMPLOYEES.**

*(Atlantic Economic Council, 2023)*

### 3. Climate Change Advocacy With the Province



Climate change is causing serious, sometimes catastrophic, economic, social and environmental damage in our province and region. Council members overwhelmingly want to do their part and see the province reduce greenhouse gas emissions, take climate action, and ensure the sustainability and vibrancy of our province for future generations.

Many NBBC members, including the **Belledune Port Authority**, **Atlantic Industries Limited** and **McCain Foods**, have taken proactive steps to address their environmental impact and limit carbon emissions.

On Jan. 19, 2022, NBBC President and CEO Alex LeBlanc spoke to the New Brunswick Legislature's Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship to provide recommendations for the updated

New Brunswick Climate Action Plan, released in September. Council recommendations fell into three categories:

- Set clear and measurable targets and provide long-term predictability to businesses;
- Make investments to help businesses adapt, support emerging technologies, and build policy capacity and expertise in government;
- Create the conditions for investment and clean competitiveness by modernizing policies, regulations, and strategies in partnership with communities, First Nations, and the private sector.

“While all businesses are concerned about increasing energy and transportation costs, I am also hearing increasing concerns about the cost of inaction and lost competitiveness due to not adapting quickly enough.”

Alex LeBlanc, President & CEO, NBBC

### Council Priorities Going Forward

In a survey in May 2023, members identified the following top priorities, which will inform Council's strategic focus and operational plans going forward:

- Energy transition and net-zero competitiveness
- Immigration and affordable housing
- Innovation and R&D
- Healthcare
- Indigenous partnership



# Organizational Snapshot

## Meet Our Executive Committee and Members



**Andrea Feunekes,**  
Chair



**Allison McCain,**  
Member Emeritus, Past  
Chairman of the Board  
of McCain Foods Ltd.



**Bryana Ganong,**  
Past Chair and President  
and CEO of Ganong Bros Ltd.



**Blair Hyslop,**  
Co-CEO and Co-Owner  
of Mrs. Dunster's Inc.

Our members are leaders and CEOs with a deep, personal stake in this province and its future.



**Alain Bossé,**  
Groupe Savoie



**Andrée Caissie**  
**Savoie,** Imperial  
Manufacturing  
Group



**Barry Kyle,**  
Industrial  
Rubber



**Bernard Lord,**  
Medavie Blue  
Cross



**Chief Aaron**  
**Sock,** McGraw  
Seafood



**Danielle Pelletier,**  
Autism  
Intervention  
Services (AIS)



**Denis D. Caron,**  
Belledune Port  
Authority



**Denis Larocque,**  
Major Drilling Group  
International Inc.



**Dr Denis**  
**Prud'homme,**  
Université de  
Moncton



**Dr. David Elias,**  
Canadian Health  
Solutions



**Dr. Paul J.**  
**Mazerolle,**  
University of  
New Brunswick



**Eric Lloyd,**  
President,  
Sunny Corner  
Enterprises Inc.



**Francis P. McGuire,**  
Member emeritus



**Gerry Pond,**  
Mariner Partners  
Inc.



**Glen LeBlanc,**  
BCE et Bell  
Canada



**Gordie Lavoie,**  
Sunny Corner  
Enterprises



**John K.F. Irving,**  
Ocean Capital  
Holdings Limited



**Keith McIntosh,**  
PLATO Testing



**Lori Clark,**  
NB Power



**Mike Timani,**  
Fancy Pokket  
Corporation



**Mike Wilson,**  
The AIL Group of  
Companies



**Normand**  
**Caissie,** Imperial  
Manufacturing  
Group



**Patrick Daigle,**  
Atlantic Lottery  
Corporation



**Ronald Losier,**  
St. Isidore Asphalte  
Ltee

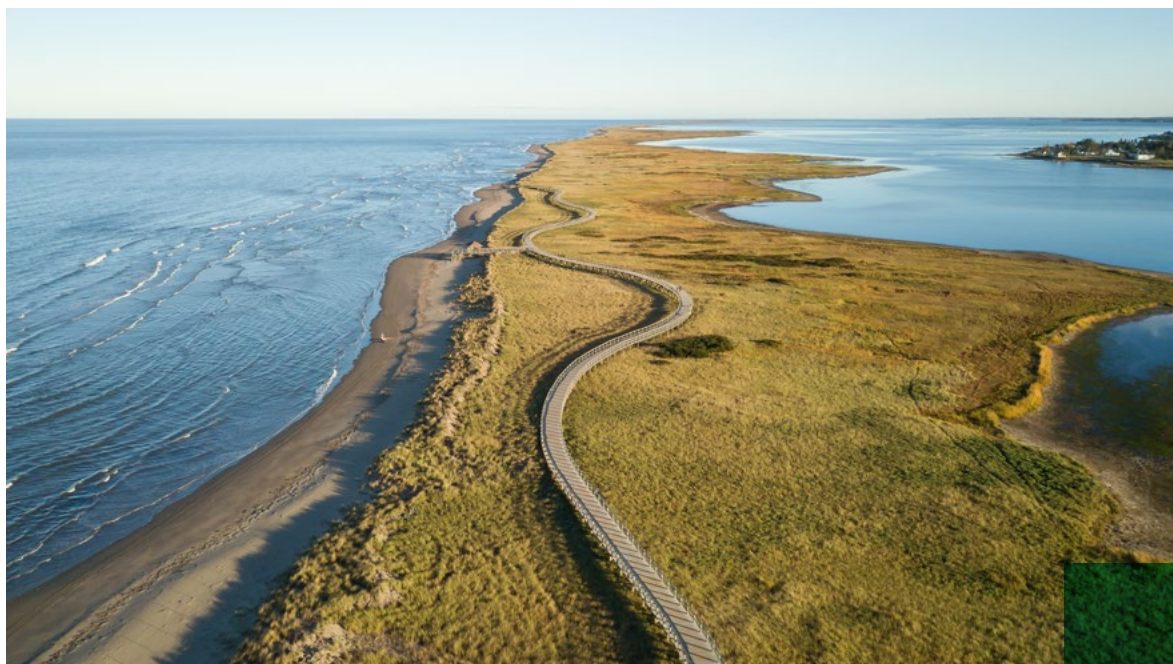


**Sébastien**  
**Dupuis,**  
Assumption Life



**Terry Malley,**  
Malley  
Industries Inc.





## NBBC Meeting Highlights

Over the past year, council meetings focused on various issues, including clean energy opportunities and the way forward for NB Power, defining an innovation and R&D agenda for New Brunswick, healthcare, and Indigenous partnership for economic development.

Guest speakers included:

- **Hon. Blaine Higgs**, Premier of New Brunswick
- **David Amirault**, Economist and Senior Advisor at Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- **Pierre Zundel**, President of Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
- **Lori Clark**, CEO of NB Power
- **Charles Firlotte**, Chair of NB Power
- **Dr. David Elias**, President and CEO of Canadian Health Solutions
- **Denis Caron**, President and CEO of the Belledune Port Authority
- **William Labbe**, President and CEO of ARC Clean Technology
- **Susan Holt**, MLA and Leader of the Liberal Party of NB
- **Chief Terrence Paul**, Pabineau First Nation
- **Barry and Colin Kyle**, Industrial Rubber Co.
- **Chief Aaron Sock**, Chief of Elsipogtog and Chairman of McGraw Seafood
- **Jake Augustine**, General Manager of McGraw Seafood

# Looking Back: NBBC's History and Achievements

## Founding

**2005:** The New Brunswick Business Council is created by a diverse group of leaders of larger companies who saw a greater role for the private sector to fill a policy vacuum and forge a new narrative for New Brunswick.



## The First Five Years

The NBBC emerges as a thought leader with a bold vision for a more self-sufficient province. Along with direct engagement with government and the public, this period focuses on cultivating an eco-system to support the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders through the Wallace McCain Institute and 21inc leadership program.

2006

NBBC member Don Dennison's **The Power to Change: A Letter to New Brunswickers** expresses members' widely held concerns and ambitions for the province and galvanizes collaborative action towards self-sufficiency and economic growth.

2007

NBBC member Francis McGuire co-chairs **New Brunswick's Self Sufficiency Task Force** which led to the creation of **NB 2026**, a plan to drive progress across key action areas.

2009

Successful advocacy for improvements to the Small Business Investor Tax Credit. Maximum investments increased from \$80k in 2007 to \$250k in 2009, and the tax credit percentage later increased from 30-50% in 2015.

## 2010-2015

The NBBC is a leading voice on transformative economic development initiatives, including the Northern Economic Development Plan, Invest NB, and Atlantic Gateway.

2010

Creates the **Future NB** summit and strategy, engaging 250+ New Brunswickers in a constructive dialogue on our economic future.

- Major contributor to the Action Plan for Northern Economic Development.
- Contributed to the Atlantic Gateway proposal

- Contributed to NB Power debate
- Contributed to the shale gas debate
- Ambassador for the Startup Canada tour, engaging 400 entrepreneurs in celebrating NB

## 2016-2020

Demographics and immigration drive the agenda in these years, as an aging and declining population negatively impacts the province's economy and prosperity. This period also includes advocacy on issues including the economic benefits of bilingualism and accelerated twinning of Highway 185 between Quebec and New Brunswick.

2017

- Co-creates the **Economic Immigration Lab** to support the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program's success by developing innovative prototype projects.
- Initiates the **Carbon Pricing Symposium** with industry, policymakers, and key stakeholders to inform New Brunswick's carbon pricing policy.

2018

- Launches the **We Choose Growth** advocacy campaign for the 2018 provincial election in partnership with Conseil économique du N-B; chambers of commerce in Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John; and Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.
- Champions creation of **Future NB** in partnership with GNB and publicly funded

universities to promote workforce development and retention through experiential learning.

2020

- Co-creates **Turning Point**, an eight-part virtual conference on New Brunswick's post-pandemic future.

## 2021-2024

The Council actively responds to the impacts and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on population growth, workforce shifts, and the housing crunch. Innovation and the environment continue to be key issue drivers.

2021

- Champions and spearheads the **Atlantic Investment Bubble** proposal promoting inter-provincial investment in start-ups and scale-ups across the region.
- Leads the **We Choose Growth 2.0** federal election advocacy campaign.

2022

- Creates the **Housing Hub of New Brunswick** to drive affordable housing development so small and medium-sized communities can attract workers and thrive.

2023

- Commissions a three-part housing discussion paper series authored by leading economists Richard Saillant and David Campbell.
- Planned launch of a **100-day Challenge** with construction and homebuilding sectors to increase the participation of immigrants entering the skilled trades.
- Planned launch of **Greening N.B. SMEs and Supply Chain Lab** with UNB's Pond Deshpande Centre.





## Past NBBC Chairs

**2005-2006:** David Ganong

**2006-2007:** Gerry Pond

**2007-2008:** Ed Barrett

**2008-2009:** Denis Losier

**2009-2010:** Derek Oland

**2010-2011:** David Ganong

**2011-2012:** Gordie Lavoie

**2012-2014:** Francis McGuire

**2014-2016:** Mike Wilson

**2016-2017:** Andrea Feunekes & Francis McGuire (Chair Emeritus)

**2017- 2018:** André Vincent

**2018-2020:** Lee Corey

**2020-2022:** Bryana Ganong

**2022-present:** Andrea Feunekes





NEW BRUNSWICK  
**BUSINESS  
COUNCIL**

