

## **Circular Economy in Nova Scotia**

### **Executive summary**

A circular economy is needed in order to combat climate change. Canada is doing so much to implement changes that spark a better future for us all and the environment. Moreover, the government of Nova Scotia has been policing new ways for its citizens to create a more sustainable life, in turn, helping the environment and slowing global warming. These policies include a goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Further, the government legislated a ban on plastic bags. Despite having more policies to enact climate change in the province, Nova Scotia has been practicing a circular economy for a long time that its citizens do not even realize: public transportation.

### **Essay**

I have always been grateful to be raised in this beautiful country. Not only does Canada fight for what is best for the country, but Canada also implements changes to create a better future for all Canadians. Canada is a circular economy, which means that it tries to put nothing to waste in order to help public health, natural systems, and most importantly, the environment.<sup>1</sup> All products are retained and recovered as much as possible by reusing, repairing, repurposing or recycling materials. Being a circular economy results in choosing resources wisely and finding innovative ways to better the environment and economy.<sup>1</sup>

Everyone can be helpful towards a circular economy. Government plans do not need to be the only one practicing, but businesses and individuals can take part too. Not only do these groups help for the good of the environment, but money is saved too. For example, businesses can create new materials from product waste, such as turning used rope into fishing nets. There are even small businesses in Nova Scotia that continually help to be a green business. Although there are thrift or second-hand stores that lower waste in landfills, there are craft businesses that find used materials and repurpose them to create beautiful products. I have a small business with my sister where we do exactly that. I repurpose my gift wrappings and school supplies to make unique eco-friendly homemade cards. All money raised also goes towards my non-profit organization, Waves of Change, to combat climate change and to raise awareness about environmental activism and youth mobilization.

As individuals, we actually practice a circular economy every day. We cut our waste by reusing items such as food containers and reusable shopping bags, or even by using sharing services such as libraries and public transportation.<sup>1</sup> Although these actions seem small, it is a huge movement that has helped governments and leaders embrace more circular approaches. While every Nova Scotian produces 400 kilograms of waste per year according to a 2018 news release, the province has been trying to reduce solid waste disposal rates to around 300 kilograms per person, every year by 2030. We as Nova Scotians have been working hard because we have the country's highest recycling diversion rate as a province.<sup>2</sup> There are many other ways to practice a circular economy that do not create much disruptions in one's life.

These include buying used cars, using metal utensils, using technology to work and schoolwork, etc.

In December 2022, the government of Nova Scotia legislated an overall goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to 53 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.<sup>3</sup> This new plan features 68 measures, which includes a new goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity by 90 per cent by 2035, and to reduce home heating oil usage by at least 20 per cent by 2030.<sup>3</sup> By cutting back emissions, this is a small movement that allows Nova Scotians to see that “Refuse, Reduce, Repurpose, Reuse, Recycle” is the new way to live sustainably and helpfully. However, this new goal has not been heard by all Nova Scotians. Therefore, it is hard to create change if only a few hear about this. Social media has been a great way for effective communication between governments, and global news. Because of social media, so many young leaders have come out of their comfort zones to enact climate change. If the government of Nova Scotia continues to heavily broadcast their changes for combatting the environment, then its citizens would see that they are crucial in providing this change.

Effective on October 30th, 2020, the government of Nova Scotia banned plastic bags to encourage waste reduction and welcome a bigger partake in the circular economy to its citizens.<sup>4</sup> While it helped lessen plastic waste in the environment and ocean, in a 2021 regulatory burden reduction report, the government said that the ban saved businesses \$5 million province-wide at the end of 2020. Just merely 2 months, it saved millions of dollars, thus imagine the impact it had on the environment. Although it started as a means to decrease landfills, money has been saved that is going towards new thinking in creating a sustainable province. I believe that the banning of plastic bags has drastically improved the way Nova Scotians think as they constantly see a reduction in plastic waste, but they also continue to practice a sustainable lifestyle.

Overall, practicing a circular economy is important in combating global warming. With these policies that Nova Scotia is implementing to create change, its citizens will see that their actions are crucial in reaching these goals.

### **Sources**

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