

## **Province Initiates Independent Review of Regional Development Authority Model Economic and Rural Development and Tourism**

**July 19, 2012**

An expert panel is reviewing the Regional Development Authority model and will report back to the province with recommendations on the best approach for helping to create good jobs, grow the economy and build stronger and sustainable communities.

"We are taking this opportunity to review the Regional Development Authority model to make sure we have the best model in place to support economic growth in all regions of Nova Scotia for the future," said Percy Paris, Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. "I look forward to the panel's recommendations and thank them for taking on this important work."

The panel of business and community leaders will provide arms-length, independent advice to help the province determine a sustainable and effective structure for supporting economic development in Nova Scotia.

The province is doing the review in partnership with municipalities, as an important partner in supporting economic development. The panel will consult with key groups, including municipalities, the federal government, community and business leaders, and Regional Development Authorities.

"Investments in economic development are necessary in all regions so that families can stay together in their communities," said Mr. Paris.

The panel members are:

- Jo Ann Fewer (chair), CEO of Perennia and former executive director of Colchester Regional Development Association
- Keith MacDonald, executive director, Cape Breton Partnership
- Bob MacEachern, a business owner from the Port Hawkesbury area -- Allister Surette, president of Université Ste. Anne.

"As a panel, we hope to come up with the best model for supporting economic development with the existing resources," said Jo Ann Fewer, panel chair. "Through this process, we'll listen to the ideas and feedback of groups with an interest in this area and make recommendations based on what we hear and learn. We recognize the valuable contributions that Regional Development Authorities have made to communities throughout the province."

A steering committee made up of representatives of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, on behalf of municipalities in the province, and the provincial government will support the panel.

"Promoting economic development is essential to growing our communities throughout the province," said Deputy Warden Jimmy MacAlpine, Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities president. "Municipalities have an important role to play in developing a new economic development model for Nova Scotia. I am pleased that the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities is participating in this process to ensure municipalities are engaged on such a vital issue."

The federal government announced it would be ending its funding for Regional Development Authorities in May 2013.

Regional Development Authorities are funded by three partners -- the federal government, the province and municipalities. Partners each provide \$2.1 million in operating funding each year. The Regional Development Authority model has been in place in Nova Scotia for close to 20 years.