

# 2017 Nova Scotia Election May 30th | #NSelxn

## The Voice of Retail

What you need to know to  
speak up during the  
2017 Election Campaign.

[Voteretail.ca](http://Voteretail.ca)

@RetailCouncil @RCCMySTORE  
#voteretail #NSelxn @RCCAtlantic

## Retail is everywhere – make our case for driving growth and providing employment for Nova Scotians

The Nova Scotia election is an opportunity for every retailer to make sure that our future members of the Legislative Assembly and provincial government understand the role that merchants play in Nova Scotians' lives and in our economy.

When your local candidate knocks on your door or you meet them at an event, share with them the pride you have as part of Nova Scotia's retail industry. Take time to share your experiences but also let them know that you are part of Nova Scotia's largest private employment sector and that our industry offers paths for Nova Scotians to gain experience and establish rapidly-advancing careers. Retail also has a significant impact on the success of other industries, including transportation, IT, financial services and property development, to name but a few. Here are some ideas of what you can share with your candidate when you have an opportunity to spread the word about retail

- Over 59,900 Nova Scotians are employed in retail (Nova Scotia's largest private sector employer)
- There are over 4,300 retail establishments in Nova Scotia, more store locations than any other sector.
- Retail and wholesale accounts for 6.52% of Nova Scotia's GDP.

RCC has prepared this toolkit to provide background on the key issues but also to provide ideas on how to get engaged in the provincial election in your neighbourhood. Read on to find out the many ways you can impact this provincial election at the local level. Most importantly, the toolkit will provide you with the necessary resources to help ensure that retail issues are a top priority in this campaign.

- Now that the provincial budget is balanced, take steps to lower the provincial portion of the HST to 13%; to lower the corporate tax rate to 14% and to maintain the recent government commitment to increase the small business tax threshold to \$500,000.
- Continue regulatory harmonization between Atlantic Provinces through ongoing support of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness.
- Recognize the importance of the retail sector by developing a strategy that supports the growth of small, mid-sized and large retailers.

## How Can I Get Involved?

An election campaign is the best time to reach out and meet your local candidates. It is a great opportunity to share your perspectives and discuss how government can help small, mid-sized and large businesses grow and prosper.

RCC needs your help to get the retail industry's message front and centre. Given that the retail industry is vital to every community in Nova Scotia, we have a unique opportunity to ensure that every candidate in every constituency knows the importance of our sector and, if elected, how they can help ensure the competitiveness of our industry. Spread the message in your community:

- ✓ Learn about your local candidates by visiting the party websites:
  - The Green Party of Nova Scotia - <http://greenparty.ns.ca/>
  - The Liberal Party of Nova Scotia - <http://liberal.ns.ca>
  - The New Democratic Party of Nova Scotia - <http://nsndp.ca/>
  - The Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia - <http://www.pcparty.ns.ca>
  - The Atlantica Party of Nova Scotia – <http://atlanticaparty.ca>
  
- ✓ Request a meeting with each of your local candidates to discuss issues facing retailers in your community and across Nova Scotia. RCC has prepared one pagers on the key issues to help guide your discussions.
  
- ✓ Attend events where candidates will be in attendance. To find out about upcoming events, check your candidates' websites, sign up for their newsletters or follow them on social media.

## Key Messages: Retail Matters!

The retail industry is proud of the substantial contribution it makes to the Nova Scotia economy. Our focus is on our communities, and how our businesses positively impact our standard of living. The campaign is a crucial time to reinforce the importance of our sector.

You'll likely find most candidates will not be familiar with the scope of retail in Nova Scotia. This is your opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the industry, or to help them fill in any gaps in knowledge. Take the opportunity to share key facts about your store or employer and what challenges and opportunities you face on a daily basis. Every party is interested in creating jobs, growing the economy, expanding businesses, and increasing our standard of living. These are all outcomes of a thriving retail industry.

It is also important to explain to candidates the role you and your business, or employer, play within your community. You can discuss your purchasing of goods and services from other local businesses, volunteerism and the sponsorships to which you commit, and in-kind services for local non-profits or charities. These are crucial messages that will support the specific retail priorities for the provincial election and build our industry's profile after the election.

# What You Need to Know: Contributing to Provincial Political Parties

Ensure that you know the rules before lending your support to a provincial political party and its campaign. Here is a quick summary:

## Who can contribute?

Only individuals normally residing in Nova Scotia.

## What is the contribution limit?

The maximum contribution by any individual is \$5000 total in a calendar year per political party. This includes both monetary and non-monetary contributions.

## How can a contribution be made?

Only individuals can contribute to a candidate, an electoral district association or a registered political party (a spouse can contribute on behalf of their partner).

## Who can receive contributions?

Contributions must be made through the Official Agent of a nominated candidate, an electoral district association or a registered political party. The Official Agent must be a resident of Nova Scotia and must keep a complete record of each contribution including the name of the recipient. Tax receipts for contributions can only be issued by the Official Agent.

## What are the restrictions?

An Official Agent cannot accept more than \$100 **in cash** from any contributor in a calendar year.

Individuals cannot contribute more than \$5000 (see above) and donations are prohibited from organizations (corporations, partnerships, trade unions) or anonymous donors. An individual is exempt from reporting up to \$50 in donations in kind in a calendar year but the Official Agent must track all *donations in kind* contributions to ensure an individual does not exceed their limit.

Sections 235-258 of the *Election's Act* provide additional information regarding monetary and non-monetary contributions to political campaigns. **More information can be found at: <https://electionsnovascotia.ca/faq>**

As part of election work we are looking for candidates who have “retail in their blood.” Help us to gather information about your candidates’ key areas of interest and those with a retail background. We will follow up with these individuals following the election to help support issues that are important to our industry.



**FEEDBACK FORM**  
Please print!

Name and business name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of candidate you met with: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate’s political party: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Was the candidate familiar with the retail industry issues?

Yes

Somewhat

No

2. Was the candidate supportive of the retail agenda?

Yes

Somewhat

No

Of what were they most supportive? Where did they disagree? What were their points of view? Do you have any general comments?

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Please fax this form back to (613) 230-2669 or email to [info@voteretail.ca](mailto:info@voteretail.ca).

## Key Issues

The following pages provide detailed background on key issues RCC will be driving during the election.

- ✓ **Financial Stability**
- ✓ **Reducing Costs for Retailers and Consumers**
- ✓ **Development of Retail Sector Strategy**



## Provincial Taxes

### Corporate Tax, Provincial Portion of Harmonized Sales Tax, Small Business Tax Threshold

Nova Scotia retailers are looking for the provincial government to find ways to lower costs for retailers and consumers, not increase them.

The Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) in Nova Scotia is 16%, which is the highest in Canada. The provincial portion of the HST increased from 8% to 10% in 2010. Nova Scotia's corporate tax rate is also 16%. This too, is the highest in the country. The government only recently committed to increase the revenue threshold to qualify for the NS small business tax credit from \$350,000 (the lowest in Canada) to \$500,000.

RCC has been and remains strongly opposed to the high tax rates in Nova Scotia. Elevated corporate tax rates make it increasingly difficult for retailers to survive in Nova Scotia while having the highest HST in Canada raises the price of goods for Nova Scotia consumers. This increases the difficulty for retailers to do business in the province.

#### What to ask your Candidate

- Will your party commit to take steps to lower the HST to 13% now that the provincial budget is balanced?
- Will your party commit to lowering the corporate tax rate to 14% so as to maintain regional competitiveness?
- Will your party honour the government's pledge to increase the small business tax threshold from \$350,000 to a regionally competitive \$500,000?



## Regulatory Harmonization

The current government should be commended for its support of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness. The Office has been effective in part due to the support of the Atlantic Provincial governments and the leadership of each Atlantic Provincial Premier. However, Nova Scotia still has work to do.

### Minimum Wage Order

Under the Minimum Wage Order of Nova Scotia's Labour Standards Code, employers pay minimum wage workers for time where the employee is not working. If a minimum wage employee works 1 minute beyond the end of their shift, the employer must pay the employee to 15 minutes past the hour. If the employee works 16 minutes past the end of their shift, the employer must pay the employee to 30 minutes past the hour. However, if the employee works 31 minutes past the end of their shift, the employer must pay the employee to the top of the hour. This inexplicable jump from a 15 to a 30 minute interval does not occur in other Canadian Provinces. This Nova Scotian regulation results in an employer being forced to pay a minimum wage employee for 29 minutes of work that the employee did not perform.

Retailers are perplexed by this rule as it creates needless red tape and it does not send a message that the province is open for business. Retailers have mentioned that policing this rule to prevent abuse by employees creates additional supervisory demands on businesses. Such demands are especially problematic for small retailers.

### Environmental Stewardship

The Nova Scotia Department of Environment consulted with stakeholders and has proposed changes to seven areas of the provincial solid waste regulations: product stewardship, disposal bans and approval requirements, used tire management program, removal of the requirement for regional solid waste management plans, clarity on the rules for energy from waste, improved enforceability of the solid waste regulation, and the beverage container deposit-refund program. Many provinces in Canada have already made the changes being proposed for Nova Scotia. These provinces have learned from mistakes and worked with stakeholders to develop well-functioning stewardship programs that are harmonized across provinces.

## What to ask your candidate

- Will your party commit to providing ongoing support of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness?
  - Will your party commit to changing the Labour Standards Code so that the amount an employer pays a minimum wage worker who works past their regular shift would always be in 15 minute intervals?
  - Will your Party ensure that Nova Scotia policies related to solid waste regulations are harmonized with best practices across Canada? This must include remaining silent on the administration of Environmental Handling Fees (EHFs) and no Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Program for the Industrial Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) sector.
  - As the consultation regarding a packaging program was most contentious among stakeholders, will your Party commit to work towards stakeholder consensus on EPR for packaging before introducing regulations related to packaging stewardship?

# Reducing Cost with a Retail Sector Strategy

Retailers in Nova Scotia face significant, cumulative cost pressures due to changes in government legislation, regulation and policies, increased taxes, increasing utility rates, increasing salary structures, and other external factors.

Government has tended to see the retail sector as a predictable source of jobs and tax revenues. But in the modern age of retail, there is no certainty that Nova Scotians will continue to be served by Nova Scotians. There are simply too many channels, national, foreign and offshore, to be complacent about the future of “bricks and mortar” stores in our communities or about the capacity of retailers in Nova Scotia to invest in online offerings.

While other industries (e.g., natural resources, energy, environment and economic development) have been the focus of sector strategies and incentives, retail has long been overlooked. Retail needs a proper sectoral policy focus commensurate with the size of our industry and the number of jobs we create. Over 59,900 Nova Scotians work in retail, making retail the largest private employment sector in Nova Scotia. The sector generates almost \$14 billion in annual sales for the province (\$8.5 billion if not including motor vehicle parts and gasoline retail).

## What to ask your candidate

Commit to the development of a retail industry sector strategy. Components of this strategy should include:

- Reducing or mitigating the cumulative costs on the retail sector that result from actions or decisions taken by the provincial government.
- Work to attract greater investment and job growth.
- Work to attract and retain human resource talent.
- Work to harmonize regulatory requirements across Canadian and especially Atlantic Provinces.
- Provide incentives for independent retailers to invest in people, technology and e-commerce.
- To ensure Nova Scotia’s retail sector is a key component and contributor in Nova Scotia’s overall economic strategy.