

Amanda McCallum, ICD.D
Executive Director
Mining Industry NL

Dear Amanda:

Mining development is among the Progressive Conservative Party's highest priorities, and I am thrilled to respond to your questionnaire about key issues of priority to Mining Industry NL members. Let me address the priority issues and questions you have raised, one by one.

Clean Energy and the Strategic Importance of Labrador

• How will your party ensure timely, reliable and cost-effective energy makes Newfoundland and Labrador an attractive destination for international investment in mining and energy-intensive industries, and notably with respect to Labrador's iron ore expansion and development opportunities?

It was shocking for us to hear in January that mining expansion opportunities in Labrador have been bottlenecked because of energy insufficiency. A province as energy-rich as ours should never see mining expansions throttled because of a lack of power to drive them. This is all the more important when we consider that enormous energy resources from this province are driving industrial growth beyond our borders while we receive a pittance of their value. This is the reason we must be enormously careful when discussing further Churchill energy projects – because this is the last-best such resource in North America, and it's ours – and we need the energy. NL Hydro has an obligation to forecast energy needs accurately and plan to meet them, and they must be held to that obligation. Energy needed in Labrador and on the island should be supplied to the places where it is needed, at reasonable costs, in a timely manner, by our government through NL Hydro, and they must not let our province down.

Our government will support the development of the Churchill River and the Gull Island project. However, given the information currently available, the proposed agreement with Quebec cannot be supported in good conscience. We have no reason to be confident that the Liberal deal is, in fact, the best possible deal. There can be no deal without real transparency and that requires a truly independent review. We will immediately end the Liberals sham 'review' that they are running with one of their donors – and replace it with a truly independent review. The results of this process will be fully shared with the public. Based on this independent review we will demand better terms for Newfoundland and Labrador. We will use the review to fix what needs to be fixed and to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador gets a better deal. We will not proceed with any deal on the Churchill River unless it is approved by the voters via a referendum.

Our approach will lead to the development of this amazing resource under terms that ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are the principal beneficiaries, and our mining industry can thrive. We will also explore opportunities to supply energy from other sources. We will maintain vigilant oversight of wind projects to ensure there is a local community benefits agreement that genuinely serves our communities' best interest, that decommissioning costs are transparently addressed, and that the highest environmental protection standards are upheld. We recognize the potential of wind-hydrogen to strengthen Newfoundland and Labrador's position as a North American leader in green energy production. We will also make the development of natural gas a priority by investing in a joint feasibility study, funded by the province and industry.

We also believe in Newfoundland and Labrador oil. Our light crude oil has a lower carbon footprint than other oil, and it is also extracted under strict environmental regulations and robust ethical codes, unlike many jurisdictions that export oil. How this oil is used and transported is a question for us to consider, alongside other provinces that are also talking about this.

The bottom line is that we need to capitalize on our energy resources and opportunities to maximize spinoffs in critical growth sectors such as mining, and we need to do this proactively and immediately. Mining projects on the drawing board benefit no one if the means of launching them are blocked. That is why we will develop and publish a brand new comprehensive 10-year Energy Plan, which will guide the development of both renewable and non-renewable resources, including oil, natural gas, mining, hydro, wind energy, solar energy, and tidal energy in an environmentally conscious manner, so the energy is available when and where it is needed. Such a plan was developed in the early 2000s, but it is shameful that Newfoundland and Labrador has passed the past decade without such a plan, while industries such as yours are left wondering where you will get the energy to grow. Our untapped mineral wealth could write a very bright future for Newfoundland and Labrador, but only under a government that understands that sound energy planning is one of the critical elements for bringing those opportunities to fruition. For the past 10 years, we have not had such a government. A government I lead will address this deficiency with the urgency it warrants.

Importance of Exploration and Investment Attractiveness

• How will you increase Newfoundland and Labrador's investment attractiveness for exploration and development? If your party forms government, will you establish new tax incentives, such as a Newfoundland and Labrador Mineral Exploration Tax Credit (NL-METC) to ensure this is additive with the federal METC? Will you commit to increasing investment in public geoscience to help attract continued exploration investment?

Our mining policy is focused on maximizing the opportunities for growth. To understand how best to achieve growth, we will collaborate with Mining Industry NL and other local developers – listening and acting swiftly. We believe mining and minerals have huge potential to bring jobs and prosperity to rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We will work with developers to drive exploration and development while increasing value-added production and spinoff industries. We must push for competitive regulations so investment does not go elsewhere while waiting on approvals.

To unearth the potential of mining, my government will:

- Aggressively promote the province's wealth of undeveloped minerals worldwide to attract international interest and investment.
- Meet with mining proponents in our province to discuss any obstacles to launching or growing their operations. We will work collaboratively with them to overcome the challenges, get jobs growing, and proactively assist shovel-ready mining projects.
- Work with the mining industry to address the need for additional energy supply to facilitate growth in areas such as Labrador West.
- Work with the mining industry, local leaders and communities to ensure that services and homes are in place to meet an increase of new workers and new residents.
- Make prospecting and exploration easier by publishing maps and mineral geoscience data to help prospectors.
- Help protect communities where mines are established so there are sufficient clean-up measures to keep the local environment safe.
- Work with Mining NL, industry, and academic stakeholders to prepare the labour force for careers in the mining industry. The CNA campuses in Labrador West and Central Newfoundland will offer programming for individuals interested in careers in the mining sector.

Access to Land and Investment Uncertainty

• How will your party address the proposed restrictions to land accessibility throughout Newfoundland and Labrador? How will your party work to improve the regulatory process provincially to reduce duplication and/or over-reaching federal regulatory requirements to increase investment attractiveness and decrease the cost and timeline to develop mining projects?

As noted above, we will meet with mining proponents in our province to discuss any obstacles to launching or growing their operations. We will work collaboratively with them to overcome the challenges, get jobs growing, and proactively assist shovel-ready mining projects. We will not allow unfair impediments to land access to restrict growth. This means working with the federal government and municipalities to remove obstacles that ought to be removed, or certainly reduced.

Let me be clear that, when we are speaking about the land of Indigenous communities, those Indigenous communities must be front and centre in any such decisions and must fully and fairly benefit from any development. Indigenous communities have proven that they are valuable partners to grow industries such as mining, as long as they are driving the agenda, protecting their rights, safeguarding the environment, and benefiting the people of their communities.

We will also reduce the regulatory burden and needless duplication that throttles industry growth. We will certainly combat federal overreach, alongside likeminded provinces that will fight this battle with us. The federal Liberals since 2015 have raised barrier after barrier against growth in our province and country, and it has to end. We will join forces with others – including the federal parties – to rein in this antidevelopment agenda and free our province to grow. While the federal Liberal governments have impeded growth, successive Liberal provincial governments have said little and done little to defend Newfoundland and Labrador's best interests.

Under my government, we will put Newfoundland and Labrador first, and never roll over when a federal administration of any stripe undermines our rights and opportunities. With good policy, our attractiveness to investors in mining and other sectors will vastly improve, our timelines to development will improve, and international investments will come our way more freely. Nothing chases away investors like uncertainty and animosity. We will restore an attitude and atmosphere in this province that is conducive to entrepreneurship, ambition, innovation, development and growth.

South Coast Fjords National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA)

• Will your party modify the proposed NMCA to ensure areas of the south coast continue to have potential for port development to support exploration and mineral resource projects. Will you party ensure areas of mineral resource potential and prospectivity are excluded to mitigate negative impacts and unintended consequences?

Our Party opposes federal overreach that threatens local industries. Specifically, we cannot support the establishment of a National Marine Conservation Area on the South Coast, as it risks shutting down aquaculture operations and undermining the future of the very communities that rely on them. Our position is clear: we will not support the marine protected area because it puts the aquaculture industry at risk. Since the South Coast Fjords National Marine Conservation Area was proposed, our Party has joined with south coast communities in speaking out against this NMCA because of the harmful impact that Ottawa's far-reaching NMCA initiative would have on south coast communities and people. A measure that would cost jobs and harm the economy is the wrong approach. We are demanding that Ottawa take a different approach to coastal and ocean management that partners with Newfoundland and Labrador instead of imposing dictates on us, because these are waters that our people rely on and that we brought into Confederation in 1949.

Our ocean resources ought to be managed collaboratively under a mechanism along the lines of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord – one that works exclusively for our province and Ottawa to share joint management in our waters. We are not opposed to responsible marine conservation within reason, as we proved under the Atlantic Accord, which protects us from spills, but it must be a balanced approach that we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are front and centre in developing. Our Party will take action to ensure that areas of mineral resource potential and prospectivity are protected from federal overreach and unfair blocks to progress, in order to mitigate negative impacts and unintended consequences. We all benefit when development occurs in a respectful and responsible manner. What would our province and country be without the proper exploitation of critical resources such as minerals? Let us never forget that.

Skilled Workforce Development and Future Growth

• Will your party ensure the province's post secondary institutions work with industry to implement a critical minerals strategy to foster the talent pipeline?

As noted above, we will work with Mining NL, industry, and academic stakeholders to prepare the labour force for careers in the mining industry. The CNA campuses in Labrador West and Central Newfoundland will offer programming for individuals interested in careers in the mining sector.

This will complement our policies on postsecondary education. Postsecondary students and recent graduates should be focused on building their future and the future of this province, not on how they are going to pay for it. Our province's path to growth relies on our students, which is why a government I lead will:

- Put money back in the pockets of graduates. Graduates who stay, work, and live in this province will receive their tuition back.
- Provide paid work terms for students, training in hard to fill areas, who complete their placement within the health, social, and education services of the provincial government. This includes students who are studying to be nurses, teachers, social workers, and more.
- Recruit additional healthcare workers by providing every student, training in a program where there are staff shortages, an offer of employment at the beginning of their studies.
- Require Memorial University to be fiscally responsible with the funding it receives. We will not allow MUN to balance its books on the backs of students. We will not allow MUN to expand its footprint or increase tuition until it ends administrative bloat, resolves outstanding critical maintenance, and returns its focus to students.
- Immediately launch a review of tuition and fees at Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic, including the provincial student loans and grant programs.

These measures will help to prepare your future workforce and ensure our people are able to take competitive jobs that will open up as mining grows. Through proper education offered here at home, motivated students will acquire the skills and talents needed to ensure your companies are leaders in these fields. As you express it, we will drive our institutions to foster the talent pipeline.



But you are also asking something more – and I am listening. You want our postsecondary institutions to be leaders of our critical minerals strategy development, not just to prepare grads, but also to ensure we are making the very most of our opportunities to exploit all the critical minerals Newfoundland and Labrador abounds in. As you stated, the province is home to at least 27 of Canada's 34 critical minerals, boasting exceptional geological diversity. You cite high-purity iron ore, nickel and gold as three examples. You quote real numbers: "Newfoundland and Labrador's mineral resources sector industry is worth \$6.1 billion – powering jobs, innovation and growth in rural and remote regions of the province. From exploration to production, mineral resources activity is accelerating across the province, positioning Newfoundland and Labrador among Canada's most promising and underexplored mining frontiers. With \$258 million investment forecasted in exploration for 2025, and more than \$1 billion spent since 2021, there is tremendous untapped mineral potential." What you are describing is a situation of untapped opportunity, not a moment when we can afford any complacency or resting on laurels. You describe our frontier as underexplored despite its incredible promise, and that means our hardest work is still to come.

I am eager to work with you and your members to take early and bold action to drive mining industry growth far beyond its current level, stripping away impediments, and raising the bar on prosperity. You will find me and my government fully engaged and ready to do what's needed, without excuses or delays. Let's make Newfoundland and Labrador the mining leader that our mineral-rich, energy-rich, talent-rich jurisdiction truly ought to be.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Wakeham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tony" and last name "Wakeham" clearly visible.

Tony Wakeham
Leader
Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador