



NEWS RELEASE
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Moncton, N.B. – December 9, 2015: GMCC to host Minister Victor Boudreau on Choices to Move New Brunswick Forward

The province of New Brunswick is currently facing both economic and demographic challenges. We have a deficit over \$4.5 million and our province has been noted as having the fastest aging population in Canada.

In an effort to tackle the provincial deficit the Government of New Brunswick is taking action, or at least setting a plan in place to look at the options. Since Brian Gallant's government has been in office they have been reaching out to New Brunswickers and gathering their input as to what could help reduce the deficit. The hope is that changes can be made now to save us from irreparable damage to our social safety net in the future.

"We appreciate the engagement that the Government of New Brunswick has had with the general public, community stakeholders and non-profits representing various community interests throughout this process however it will be the government's responsibility to make the final decision," says GMCC CEO Carol O'Reilly.

After holding several public dialogue sessions last winter they have now released a report containing suggestions collected during these public sessions.

The report is split into two defined categories, both titled CHOICES. One is referred to as "Savings" and the other "Revenues". There are 20 options in total under the cost savings category which vary from transforming our health care system (which indicates a savings of \$50 to \$80 million), to improving the motor vehicle registration process (a savings of \$200, 000 to \$500, 000). What is clear when looking at this list of suggestions is that there is no clearly defined focus. What is also clear is that the hardest areas to be hit are health care and education.

Perhaps spending in these areas has been heavy in the past but if we are looking at an aging population and trying to attract young people to stay in their home province it remains to be seen if we can really afford to be sacrificing anything in these two areas.

"Several studies show that New Brunswick is not making enough headway to improve literacy," says O'Reilly. "We have one of the lowest literacy rates in the country and this is cause for concern. One of the suggestions in this report is that we increase classroom size and reduce the numbers of teachers however I'm not sure we can afford to make cuts in these areas."



On the revenue side, of the choices listed in the report, there are 12 revenue streams being suggested. Everything from allowing companies or individuals to purchase rights to name government owned assets such as buildings, parks and bridges to trying to bring in more returns from NB Liquor and cigarette taxes. Other suggestions are to increase the HST which is proposed to generate anywhere from \$175 to \$295 million and implementing tolls which could generate upwards of \$60 million.

The Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce is supportive of making changes, smart changes that will reduce the deficit and move us into a better fiscal position today and for future generations.

Minister Victor Boudreau will be speaking as part of the GMCC Distinguished Speakers Series luncheon next Monday, December 14th at the Four Points Sheraton, 40 Lady Ada Blvd., Moncton. If you would like to purchase a ticket please call the GMCC at 857-2883 or visit our website at gmcc.nb.ca

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The Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce is the voice of the business community for more than 825 businesses representing more than 35, 000 members in Moncton, Dieppe and Riverview and the vicinity.

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