



NSCSW

NOVA SCOTIA
COLLEGE OF
SOCIAL WORKERS

Submission to Law Amendments Committee – Bill 57

Date submitted: November 1, 2021

Who We Are

The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) exists to serve and protect Nova Scotians by effectively regulating the profession of social work. We work in solidarity with Nova Scotians to advocate for policies that improve social conditions, challenge injustice and value diversity.

Learn more about the College at nscsw.org/about.

Climate Justice

Social workers across the globe are committed to fighting climate change by advocating for climate justice. The NSCSW is committed to working with government to ensure that marginalized communities can share fully in the benefits of the transition to a green economy and aren't overburdened with the brunt of adjustment. **We are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.**

Proposed Amendments to the Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

Section 5:

5 (1)(d) support the well-being and quality of life of all Nova Scotians *(add to this)* **by reducing inequality and ensuring climate justice is integrated across government departments.**

Added as well should be:

5 (1)(e) **establish, adopt, and support an interconnected approach to end environmental racism.**

Section 8

8 (1) The Government shall create a strategic plan that addresses.

(d) clean inclusive growth *(add to this)* **rooted in climate justice and the reduction of inequality.**

Added as well should be:

(f) **ending environmental racism in all its forms.**

And;

(g) **a green jobs strategy focused through an equity lens to ensure that the benefits of the expected growth in permanent, full-time, high-wage green jobs are widely shared.**



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Incorporating Climate Justice.

Climate justice is crucial to the goals of the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* as it grounds climate policy in a clear focus on the social and economic effects of climate change, and acknowledges that **climate change affects people differently, depending on their position in society**. Climate justice must be a clear goal within any climate policy and strategy, as the most vulnerable must not bear the burden of transition away from a carbon economy.

Ending Environmental Racism

Environmental racism refers to the disproportionate locations of industrial and other environmentally hazardous activities near to communities of colour and the working poor. Environmental racism is also characterized by the lack of organization and political power that communities hold for advocating against these big industrial polluters. Environmental racism has many negative consequences most notably it creates health inequities across racial dimensions. We have a moral and ethical obligation to ensure that environmental racism is ended and ended quickly; it must be attached to any reasonable fight against climate change.

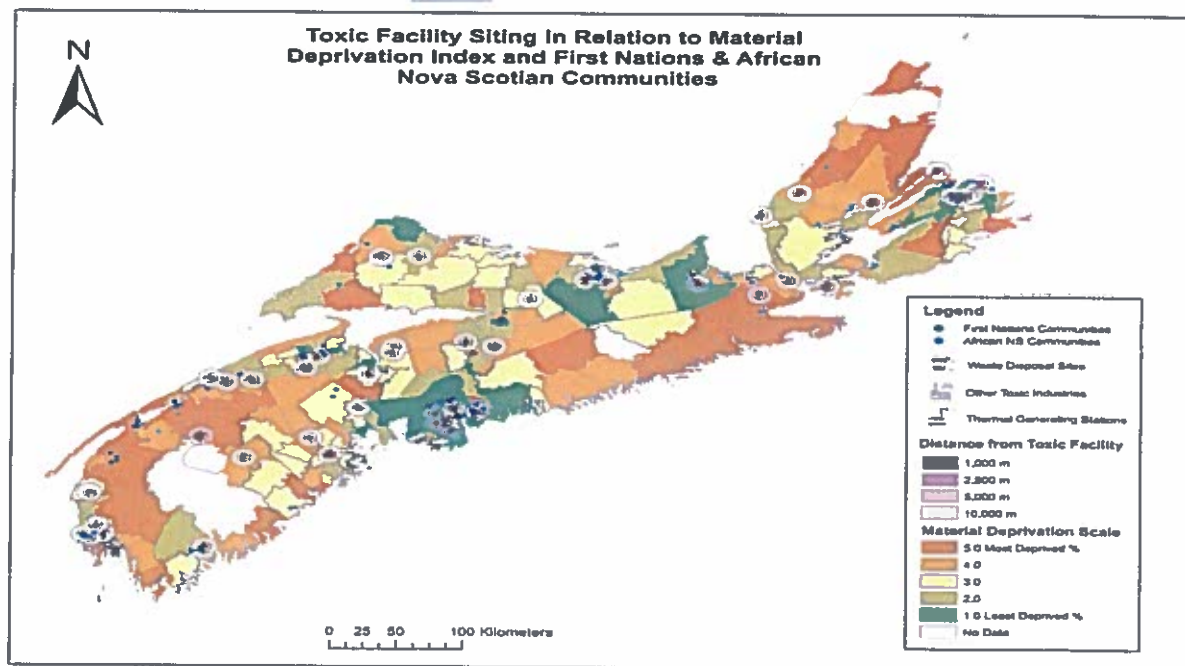


Figure 1- From -The ENRICH Project



Reducing Inequality

To be successful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning the economy away from fossil fuels there must be a clear focus on rising inequality. In 2018 the top 10 per cent of incomes in Nova Scotia grew to 16.3 times the income shares of the bottom 10 per cent, growing from 11.1 in 1988 (see figure 2). Rising inequality and the continued class divide between the rich and the poor has allowed the voices of the most vulnerable to go unnoticed, has eroded trust, and has increased anxiety and illness for all. This lack of trust appears to be growing. Engage Nova Scotia recently produced data demonstrating **only 27.1%** of Nova Scotians trust the provincial government. This erodes the social solidarity required to tackle large issues as it pits Nova Scotians against one another, fighting for resources perceived to be scarce rather than working together in solidarity towards the common good.

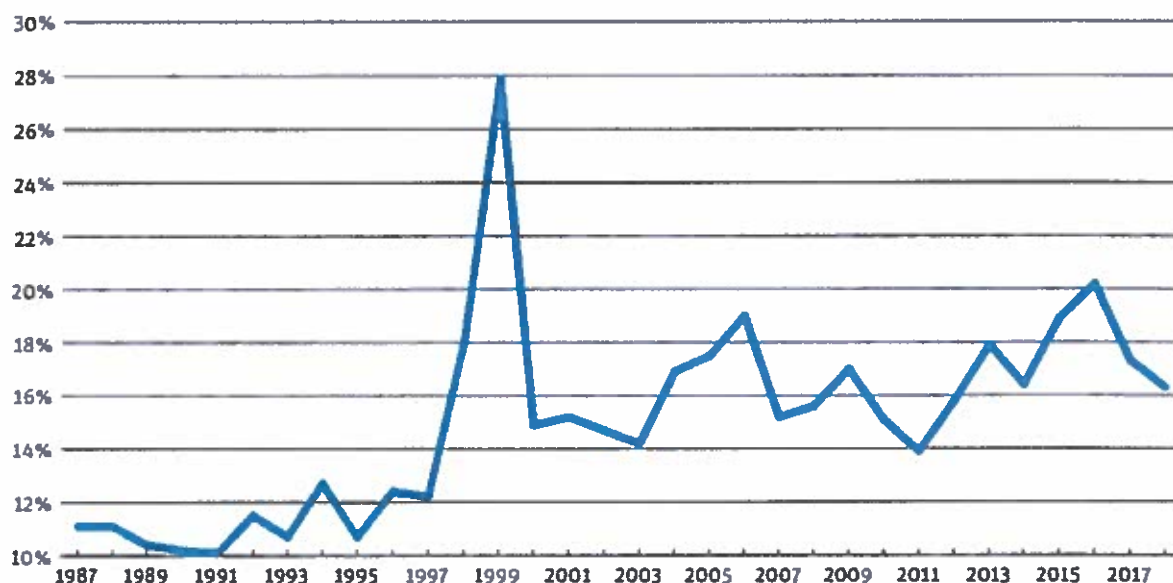


Figure 2- From *Creating the future we all deserve: A social policy framework for Nova Scotia*

Call to Action

Social workers are calling for the above amendments to *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*, which should be grounded in an updated vision of systemic social benefits that were envisioned for Canada in the transformative Marsh Report of 1942: a substantial social safety net to tackle the climate crisis and transition to a post carbon economy. This should be accompanied by a commitment to increase social spending by 2% of our total GDP, a **crucial fiscal policy required to reduce Income Inequality, end environmental racism and ensure climate justice.**