

Partnership for Growth Response

One of the great blessings of an election campaign is having the opportunity to speak to Islanders about their hopes and their concerns for the future of PEI. As I've trekked across our province, one thing has been abundantly clear: despite growth in our economy, many Islanders have not seen it translate into greater financial stability or well-being.

It is clear that we need to expand our narrow view of economic development.

Late last month, the Partnership for Growth - a collection of Island business and industry organizations - urged all PEI parties to work with the private sector to develop an economic plan that achieves a vision of being Canada's highest performing economy.

A Green government would commit to the creation of an economic plan. Reflective of our inclusive view of the economy, this plan would be developed not only with the private sector but with the community sector, municipalities, Indigenous communities, and post-secondary institutions. We believe this plan should not be rushed; rather, it should be developed with care. We would take the time necessary to achieve a plan that views the economy not in a silo but as integrated with other facets of Island life.

The Partnership has requested that clear and measurable metrics be included as part of the plan. We agree that metrics are an important tool for government accountability and we would be in support of targets that are monitored and reported on annually.

In fact, the very first bill I presented in the Legislature was the Well-being Measurement Act, which sought to establish a set of indicators of the economic, social and environmental well-being of people, communities and ecosystems in the province. While it's important to track traditional economic measures like GDP and exports, our party would also seek to track measures that directly impact the lives of Islanders like wage growth and the impact of business practices on the environment, all of which have important impacts on our provincial economy.

Our platform includes a number of measures that would support our Island's business community and workers. A Green government would review our existing grant and loan programs to incentivize training in high-demand skills, and provide additional debt forgiveness for graduates with these skills who choose to work on PEI. We would champion a regional Atlantic free market for the simple movement of products and services, and would expand micro-loan support for Island entrepreneurs and small businesses.

I would like to thank the members of the Partnership for Growth for their efforts to grow the economy, and I look forward to working with you to build a fairer, more prosperous, and sustainable Island economy.

Peter Bevan-Baker