

**For Immediate Release: Halifax, NS (May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007)  
Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative Launch – May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**HRM, Bell Aliant, Saint John, UPEI, and others sign pact to green Atlantic  
Canada**

Atlantic Canadian municipalities, businesses, and non-government organizations have signed a pact designed to turn Atlantic Canada into a model of sustainable development for Canada and North America.

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, GPI Atlantic, The Natural Step Canada, and 14 “Sustainability Partners” are launching the **Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative**. Partners include Halifax Regional Municipality, Bell Aliant, the City of Saint John, University of Prince Edward Island, iNova Credit Union, the Town of Wolfville, and others (see full list below), who have signed a project charter committing their organizations to sustainability action plans.

The program is being launched at a kick off dinner and workshop May 14-16 at Oak Island, Nova Scotia. Eighty five participants representing 33 organizations, including municipalities, businesses, government departments, NGOs, and universities throughout Atlantic Canada have signed up to attend the first sustainability training workshop, which uses The Natural Step framework – a sustainability training program used around the world –as its guide.

The new sustainability charter commits the 14 “Sustainability Partners” to attending intensive training sessions throughout the year, to embedding sustainability action plans into their organizations, to creating a collaborative network to support each other, to serving as role models and champions in their sectors and regions, and to seeking opportunities to help move the region towards sustainability. Specific actions will include reducing energy, waste, toxins, and greenhouse gas emissions, and adopting environmental technologies and green procurement policies.

“The world is on a collision course with nature, so sustainability is the greatest challenge of our time,” says GPI Atlantic Executive Director Ronald Colman. “We are thrilled to see the growing commitment from all sectors in Atlantic Canada to taking action now and to making this region a global leader in sustainable development.”

Committed Sustainability Partners who have signed the ACSI Charter, include:

- Antigonish Sustainable Development Committee
- Atlantic Institute for Sustainability
- Bathurst Sustainable Development
- Bell Aliant
- Halifax Regional Municipality
- Halifax Shambhala Centre
- iNova Credit Union
- Jacques Whitford Ltd.
- Just Us! Coffee Roasters

- P'lovers, the Environmental Store
- City of Saint John
- Town of Stratford
- University of Prince Edward Island
- Town of Wolfville

About 20 other interested organizations and government departments will also be present for the capacity building workshops. Financial support for the May 14-16 workshop has been provided by the Canadian Rural Partnership's Networking Initiative and the Resource Recovery Fund Board.

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**Press are invited to attend the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative launch dinner at 6.30pm Monday 14 May at Oak Island Resort (networking session begins at 5.30pm). For more information please contact**

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#### ***About The Natural Step Canada***

The Natural Step Canada is part of an international non-profit organization that helps communities and businesses become more sustainable. TNS Canada works with municipalities, businesses, and other community stakeholders to foster a collaborative approach to community sustainability and to help create sustainable solutions. TNS advisors coach municipal officials and business management teams on how to practically integrate sustainability principles into governance, decision making, and operations. See [www.naturalstep.ca](http://www.naturalstep.ca) for more information.

#### ***About Genuine Progress Index (GPI) Atlantic***

Founded in 1997, GPI Atlantic is an independent, Nova Scotia based non-profit research and education organization committed to the development of the Genuine Progress Index (GPI) – a new measure of sustainability, wellbeing and quality of life. See [www.gpiatlantic.org](http://www.gpiatlantic.org) for more information.