

## **Elections Nova Scotia 2025–2026 Budget Estimates**

*Presentation to the Special Committee of the House of Assembly to Review the Estimates of the Auditor General and the Chief Electoral Officer*

**Speaking Notes: Li Chao, Chief Financial Officer**

January 29, 2025

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to present our 2025-2026 budget request.

Elections Nova Scotia is an independent non-partisan agency, that reports to the members of the House of Assembly through the Speaker. Our mission, to deliver provincial elections impartially and professionally, is drawn from the *Elections Act*.

My presentation of our budget estimates to you provides transparency and accountability to the Members of the Assembly.

As outlined in our budget submission, an additional \$2.8M is required in 2025-2026 to continue to fulfill our mandate. This amount includes

1. \$1.5M to purchase new IT equipment in preparation for the next election. Approximately 1100 pieces of IT equipment used in the last three general elections have reached the end of their life cycle and must be replaced to ensure security and connectivity.
2. \$839K to wrap up the 42nd Provincial General Election. Major activities planned for the upcoming fiscal year include compliance review of candidate financial reports, post event debrief, as well as decommission of tech equipment.
3. \$260K for one potential by-election. This is based on historical occurrence and costs.
4. \$100K for the outreach strategy to support our inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility programming, and
5. \$54K for external legal counsel.

I respectfully request that you accept our budget as presented and recommend it, without alteration, to Treasury and Policy Board.

I commit to sending a report to members of this committee, summarizing any changes made once our final 2025-2026 budget allocation is approved by Treasury and Policy Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Li Chao

Chief Financial Officer

Elections Nova Scotia