

**Political Contributions Regime
Annual Report**



January 1 to December 31, 2015

Published June 2016 by Chief Electoral Officer
pursuant to the *Elections Act*



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This report is prepared pursuant to the *Elections Act*. This report is available on the Elections Nova Scotia website or by contacting Elections Nova Scotia.

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<http://nslegislature.ca/legc/index.htm> for electronic versions of the *Elections Act*

1. Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

June 2016

Elections Nova Scotia, under the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer, provides support to political persons, groups and parties to assist them in record keeping and in meeting their reporting obligations. It also provides to the House of Assembly an annual report outlining the provincial political contributions regime.

This report on the 2015 annual disclosure of political contributions is published in accordance with Section 240 of the Elections Act. It includes information on the timeliness and quality of the filings reporting political contributions to registered political parties and electoral district associations. The report contains the name and community of each contributor, plus the amount of the donation to a registered party, candidate or electoral district association.

Collecting and sharing this information in a timely way, as prescribed by the Elections Act, helps to enhance transparency of the financial activities of those registered parties and electoral district associations who have filed. In general, although improvement is noted, there remains an issue with filing information in a timely manner. The quality of reports filed has also improved.

Absent from this report are political contributions relating to the three by-elections that took place on July 14, 2015, in the districts of Cape Breton Centre, Dartmouth South and Sydney-Whitney Pier. Candidate contribution disclosures for these were published on the Elections Nova Scotia website as the reports were received from the Official Agents.

While it is not within the mandate of Elections Nova Scotia to undertake a detailed review of the filed reports, if financial contributions are not filed, the political parties and associations run the risk of become de-registered.

Copies of this report are available electronically in a searchable Excel format on Elections Nova Scotia's website at <http://www.electionsnovascotia.ca/content/political-contributions-candidate-disclosure-statement>.

Original signed by

Richard Temporale

2. Elections Nova Scotia Review Process

2.1 Political Contributions Rules

The *Elections Act* establishes the rules under which registered parties, electoral district associations and candidates may accept political contributions, make or receive loans, and issue tax receipts. The Act also provides the Chief Electoral Officer with the authority to prescribe forms and establishes deadlines by which these reports are to be filed.

2.2 Contribution Limit Review and Eligibility Review

Under subsection 236(1) of the *Elections Act* the contribution limit of \$5,000 applies to all contributions made to a registered party, its electoral district associations and its registered candidates combined in a calendar year. Compliance with the contribution limit can be problematic for a recognized party, electoral district association or candidate endorsed by that party since each associated entity can accept contributions independently. Even with collaboration, it is difficult to track contributions cumulatively in real time.

Elections Nova Scotia conducted a compliance review of the contribution limit after the reports were received and did not find any individual who had exceeded the limit. The review consolidated all political contributions disclosure statements for each registered party, its electoral district associations and its candidates on a contributor basis.

2.2.1 Registered Parties

Contributor eligibility respecting political contributions disclosure statements filed by each registered party was reviewed. Eligible contributors during the 2015 reporting year were limited to individuals resident in Nova Scotia. No evidence of ineligible contributors was found during the review.

2.2.2 Electoral District Associations

Contributor eligibility respecting political contributions disclosure statements filed by each electoral district association was reviewed. Either the official agent of the electoral district

association or the official agent of the registered party that endorsed the electoral district association addressed queries made by Elections Nova Scotia. Further communication with official agents is planned for outstanding issues with contributions. Amended disclosure statements were filed upon clarification, where appropriate. Several errors and omissions were found in disclosures for contributions through fundraising that were either not included, or provided for an incorrect value.

2.2.3 Candidates

Following the 2015 by-elections, the candidates' contribution reports were posted on Elections Nova Scotia website as they were received
<http://www.electionsnovascotia.ca/content/political-contributions-candidate-disclosure-statement>.

3. Registered Parties

Annually, by April 30th, the official agent of a registered party is required to file a disclosure statement detailing political contributions received by the official agent during the previous calendar year. While this statement discloses the name and full residential address of each contributor and the total amount of their contributions received by the official agent during the calendar year exceeding \$200, Elections Nova Scotia discloses only the community name of the contributor as per Section 251 (3) of the *Elections Act*.

For the reporting period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015, there were four registered parties in Nova Scotia:

- the Green Party of Nova Scotia (GPNS),
- the Nova Scotia Liberal Party (NSLP),
- the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party (NSNDP), and
- The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia (PC).

All four registered parties filed their statutory reports on or before the prescribed deadline.

4. Electoral District Associations

In 2015, there were 51 electoral districts in Nova Scotia; the Nova Scotia Liberal Party and The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia each had 51 electoral district associations. The Nova Scotia New Democratic Party had 44 and the Green Party of Nova Scotia did not have a registered electoral district association.

An electoral district association, with the endorsement of the leader of the registered party, must register in the prescribed form with the Chief Electoral Officer. The information contained in this registration must be confirmed annually under Section 196(2) of the *Elections Act*.

There were 146 registered electoral district associations in 2015. Of these, most filed *Electoral District Association's Financial Statements and Supporting Schedules*. Several did not complete the forms in full and did not sign the forms appropriately. The official agent is the legislated person responsible for completing the annual filings and signing the declarations.

Registered Party	Number of EDA reports due	Number of EDA reports filed before the March 31 2016 deadline	Number of EDA reports not submitted as of June 1, 2016
Green Party of Nova Scotia	0	0	0
Nova Scotia Liberal Party	51	49	0
Nova Scotia New Democratic Party	44	31	6
The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia	51	43	0

5. Candidates

Subsection 230(1)(f) of the *Elections Act* requires the official agent of a candidate to provide a written loan agreement respecting all loans for their candidate's campaign. The loan agreement must be filed at the same time the official agent files their disclosure statement of political contributions. The Act requires the official agent to report the outstanding balance of a loan and any changes to the loan agreement in years subsequent to the original loan contact. Loans must be paid within 2 years.

There were no loans outstanding following the October 8, 2013 Provincial General Election, or the July 14, 2015 by elections.

Links to Disclosure Reports

Registered Party	Disclosure Report for Party	Disclosure Report for EDA
Green Party of Nova Scotia (GPNS)	GPNS	N/A
Nova Scotia Liberal Party (NSLP)	NSLP	NSLP
Nova Scotia New Democratic Party (NSNDP)	NSNDP	NSNDP
The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia (PC)	PC	PC