

Open letter to Premier Shawn Graham

Mr. Shawn Graham
New Brunswick Premier
Fredericton, NB

Premier Graham,

We were all enthused when we heard, back in October 2008, that your government was about to develop an initiative aimed at reducing poverty in this province.

Based on what was unveiled, we figured that the public would participate fully in this enterprise and would take an active part towards its realization up to the end of the process. We saw in this initiative a good example of participatory democracy.

This is the reason why there were over 2,500 citizens and a high number of organizations like ours involved in the public hearings as well as the written comments during the Phase I of the process, called The Public Dialogue. The document "A Choir of Voices -What Was Said Report" which followed the Dialogue seemed to be a true reflection of what had been discussed during these meetings.

Phase II, that of the Roundtable sessions, has just finished its work.

There were some thirty participants who debated during twelve days the various options and who came up with a document with specific options.

This document will serve as the basis for discussions in the Final Forum, from which yourself, as Chairperson, along with a new group of participants, will draw the final proposal to be submitted to Cabinet.

We are worried, however, **that this document is not available to the general public.** We see this as **an unfortunate breach to the democratic process** that you had undertaken.

There is no question, in our mind, that this important document should be made public to enable citizens to express their own options in terms of what should be done to reduce poverty. They could also propose the solutions they see best for society as a whole.

This is why we urge you to make this document public as soon as possible.

List of organizations endorsing this letter:

- Association acadienne et francophone des aînées et aînés du Nouveau-Brunswick - *Roland Gallant*
- Association des bibliothécaires, professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton -*Michèle Caron*
- Canadian Union of Public Employees – NB Division - *Daniel Légère*

- Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice in New Brunswick - *Sharon Flatt*
- Centre diocésain de solidarité et de justice sociale-Edmundston -
Sr.Céline Letourneau
- Chignecto Presbytery: The United Church of Canada - *Steve Bérubé*
- Comité des 12 - *Claude Snow*
- Comité de justice sociale, religieuses N.-D. du Sacré-Coeur -
Émilienne Frenette
- Equipe justice et solidarité du diocèse de Moncton - *Gladys Leblanc*
- Fédération d'alphabétisation du NB- *Roger Doiron*
- Fredericton Peace Coalition - *Tracy Glynn*
- Mount Alison Faculty Association - *Richard Hudson*
- New Brunswick Child Care Coalition - *Jody Dallaire*
- New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity - *Marilyn MacComack*
- New Brunswick Common Front for Social Justice - *John Gagnon*
- New Brunswick Federation of Labour - *Michel Boudreau*
- New Brunswick Nurses' Union - *Marilyn Quinn*
- New Brunswick Public Interest Research Group - *David Steele*
- New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation - *Robert Leblanc*
- Public Service Alliance of Canada – Atlantic Region -*Jeannie Baldwin*
- Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick - *Sarah Leblanc*
- Société des enseignantes et enseignants retraités francophones du
Nouveau-Brunswick - *Roger Doiron*
- Société de l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick - *Jean-Marie Nadeau*
- Students Helping Students - St Thomas University - *Marylynn Coté*

For Information:

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