

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY *Under embargo until speech begins*

Date: **April 15, 2015 - Charlottetown**

Thank you for coming.

This week I have been travelling across our province talking about the Liberal Party's plan to grow our economy and foster job creation.

This plan focuses on building on our unique Island advantages – what sets us apart – and aggressively promoting those advantages beyond our borders.

It builds on the successes we've seen in our primary industries – our world-class seafood, potatoes and farm products. Our plan builds on the success we have seen in our knowledge-based industries, such as aerospace, financial services and IT.

And importantly, our plan recognizes that job creation requires us to work hard to identify our strengths and to then focus our efforts on a series of supports to build on those strengths.

While this will require a coordinated, sharp-focused effort, it will prove more successful than seeking a single, large 'quick fix.'

That's why our plan also focuses on supporting small businesses and emerging start-up companies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am here today to talk to you about jobs and job creation. Jobs that are created when we continue our dramatic growth in exports.

Jobs that are created when we invest strategically in our Island manufacturers and processors to help them improve productivity and competitiveness.

Jobs that will be created when we launch our most aggressive prospecting plan ever.

Jobs that will be created when we invest in our emerging Marine Technologies Cluster.

Jobs that will be created when we successfully invest in facilities in rural PEI to house new export-focused companies, and jobs that are created when we reduce our trade imbalance with a call to action encouraging all Islanders to work together and buy local.

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Leader's Remarks

Let me explain. Today I am outlining the importance of Trade, Export and Prospecting. These are exciting times.

In 2014 we set records as PEI total exports - for the first time ever - exceeded \$1 billion.

PEI's growth in exports has been dramatic, increasing by 44 per cent since 2007.

To maintain this momentum we will support PEI companies as they research opportunities in new international markets. We will provide funding for PEI companies to participate in trade missions. We will continue to provide tax incentives to export-focused bioscience and aerospace companies, and we will help new entrepreneurs and start-up businesses with a full suite of programs and incentives.

But we will do more. I am extremely pleased to announce today that we will launch new incentives to accelerate growth in an emerging PEI Marine Technologies Cluster. And we will invest strategically in underutilized facilities in rural Prince Edward Island where new manufacturing and technology businesses can grow and prosper.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we want to repeat the success story that is Aspen Kemp & Associates - industry and government working together to create jobs for Islanders.

We firmly believe in the work ethic, the creativity, the ingenuity and the drive of our PEI entrepreneurs and we want to help them grow.

As we know, PEI is an exceptional place to live, and to conduct business. We have a quality of life second to none.

We have a cost effective business environment, we have excellent infrastructure and we have a skilled and dedicated workforce.

In the coming months we will become more proactive in selling PEI as a great place to live, work and to grow a business.

We will also sharpen our focus on building a network of business leaders and former Islanders who can help us grow our economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are going to launch our most aggressive prospecting strategy ever – Sales Force PEI – established solely to bring new companies to PEI, to promote PEI products and to identify opportunities for PEI companies.

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Leader's Remarks

Our plan to establish Sales Force PEI can, and will, make a difference and create new jobs and opportunities for Islanders.

There is one other matter I want to talk about today.

When we talk about export and trade, we must recognize that PEI has a trade imbalance of approximately \$1.3 Billion.

Our trade imbalance is the amount by which international and interprovincial imports exceeds our exports.

By way of big picture thinking, the extent to which Islanders can work together to close this gap will help build a stronger and more self-sustaining economy.

Of course we can close the trade gap by increasing exports and we will do this through initiatives such as:

- Implementing a new Foods Strategy;
- Strengthening our resource-based industries;
- Investing in our knowledge-based sectors; and
- Working with our post-secondary institutions to create a workforce for the future.

But there is more we can do.

We will launch a new strategy appropriately named "It All Starts at Home" where we will work together with Islanders to buy more local products and services, thereby decreasing our imports and closing the trade gap one purchase at a time.

It all starts with where and how we shop: where we spend our vacation dollars, where we buy our food, our products and our services.

We will do more to promote the importance of buying local to help our PEI businesses grow and create jobs here in PEI.

Let me conclude my message on trade, export and prospecting by saying this:

If we work together we can build on success, we can grow our exports, we can attract new businesses to PEI, we can buy more local products and we can create more jobs for Islanders.

Thank you for coming.

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