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Speaking Notes  
Presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance  
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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

I'm here to talk about the growth prospects

For Halifax

And how partnership between business and government

Has helped us grow

Now, those same partnerships

Are going to drive that growth

In the future

10 years ago

Halifax was in a serious state of decline.

Our economic outlook

Was bleak.

While most of North America

Was coming out of economic downturn,

We were still sinking.

There were deep government budget cuts

And civil service layoffs.  
The Defense Department  
Was cutting jobs and spending  
In total  
Over 8,000 public sector jobs  
Gone  
300 million dollars in annual payroll  
Gone

This city lost more than jobs  
We lost pride  
And...we lost confidence

Business confidence  
Was the lowest in the country  
We were at rock bottom  
And we knew it.  
We had to do something.

A group of key business and government leaders  
Got together to talk about how we could start  
Getting ourselves out of this mess.  
So

Led by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce  
We formed the Greater Halifax Partnership.

The next step was getting rid of the in-fighting  
Between economic development organizations  
And between the business and government.

We had to recognize that  
Our problems  
Weren't the fault of  
Government cutting jobs.  
It wasn't the central Canadian media  
Saying negative things.  
The problem was us.  
Our attitude

We had to change our attitude  
And we did.

Today  
Halifax businesses  
Are among the most optimistic in the country  
Today

Halifax ranks 3<sup>rd</sup>

In business confidence

Among Canada's largest cities.

Today

92% of business people in Halifax

Feel positive about their future.

This is important

Confident business grow faster

Hire more people

Enter into international relationships

More easily

A confident business

And a confident Community

Will take on the world

In 10 years

Halifax has turned around

Now Ladies and Gentlemen

Halifax has set its sights on bigger goals

In the last year

We have completed

A Cultural Plan

An Immigration Strategy

We have completed a Regional Plan

And we have completed

HRM's first ever Economic Plan

A plan

That will build on the public and private partnerships

That have made Halifax successful

Over the last 10 years.

This Economic Strategy

Is a plan

To keep our kids

To grow our economy

To be competitive

And to build the best community

In the world.

A strong Halifax is good for Nova Scotia

A strong Halifax is good for Canada

Our economic strategy is

All about people

It's also about investing in Creativity

It's about the world

Getting to know us

Better

It's about having

Confidence in ourselves

It's about building new partnerships

And it's about having the best business climate

In Canada

We have an economic vision

We have an economic plan

We know exactly where we're going

We know exactly what we need to get there

We also know

The federal government will be a key partners

In our future growth

Let me give you a few examples

This strategy recognizes that

Communities have to invest

In the social and cultural infrastructure

That enhances quality of life

In this respect

Canada's bid to host the

2014 Commonwealth Games

Represents the best chance

In three generations to fast track this kind of investment

We need this investment

To attract and hold the young people

That will help build our future

We are pleased that the federal government

Is a committed partner in funding

These games.

Second

Our partnership of business and government

Knows

We have to pay more attention to our largest employer

The Canadian Military

They put hundreds of millions of dollars

Into our economy every single, year

And they are going to grow

And we want them to grow here.

So the business community

Along with local government partners

Are working to develop and enhance

The business case for Defense expansion

Here in HRM

Third

The Halifax Gateway represents

An important economic opportunity

Not just for Nova Scotia

But all of Canada

The Halifax Gateway Council

Is a Partnership of Public Sector agencies

And Business organizations

This group has identified clear

Priorities for growing the Halifax Gateway.

Halifax represents a real alternative for Asian Cargo

Coming to Canada.

Halifax is already handling Asian Cargo coming through Suez

The distance from Hong Kong to Vancouver

And the distance from Hong Kong to Halifax

Is about the same.

So Asian cargo flowing through east cost ports is building

Related business activity

Is building.

Canadian Business has already decided  
That Halifax represents a real option  
For Asian Cargo coming to North America.  
It's time for the Government of Canada to  
Follow business and move  
To a two ocean gateway policy  
  
Finally  
Lets talk about  
Our business climate  
We've got a lot of work to do here  
To meet our goal of having  
The best business climate in the country  
  
Current discussion on  
Fiscal transfers will have  
A big impact on our business climate  
And our competitiveness  
For example, a simple measure

Like removing resource rents

From the equalization formula

Could cost Nova Scotia

250 million dollars

That cost that would have to be absorbed

Through increased local taxes

Or reduction in services

So cuts to fiscal transfers

Would undermine our competitiveness

I would urge the government to be

Balanced and fare in these negotiations

Thank you for this opportunity to put forward the views of

Halifax's Partnership for economic growth

I would be happy to answer any of your questions.