

The Chamber asked pre-election:

As a candidate running for federal office, in your view, what is the role that Halifax should have in the Atlantic Gateway?

Michael John Savage, MP - Liberal, Dartmouth – Cole Harbour:

“As the only party who has presented a plan specifically for Atlantic Canada, we recognize that the Atlantic Gateway is critical to our success. We have committed to improving and updating our current Atlantic Gateway infrastructure, including port facilities, as well as rail, highway and ferry links. The Liberal Party will also increase financial support for marketing our region's ports. The Port of Halifax is the deepest container port on the East Coast of North America, and we need to ensure that it has the tools to bring in business from emerging markets like India and China.”

Geoff Regan, MP - Liberal, Halifax West:

“I would like to refer you to the Liberal Party's Atlantic Platform, the only region platform unveiled by any of the major parties running in this campaign.”

“As the Liberal Action Plan for Atlantic Canada states, our party is committed making the necessary investments to improve and update the current Atlantic Gateway infrastructure, including port facilities, rail and highways. We will also increase financial support for marketing our region's ports. Both of these commitments would mean obvious benefits for Halifax, which will play a major role in the Atlantic Gateway.”

“And if you read our national platform you will see a commitment to allocate at least \$4.5 billion for our country's gateways, corridors and borders to ensure Canada's infrastructure promotes our trade and tourism industries.”

Megan Leslie, MP - NDP, Halifax:

The Port of Halifax is one of the most important on the Eastern seaboard. As such, Halifax is central to the Atlantic Gateway.

Although the Gateway needs in Atlantic Canada are different than those on the West Coast, or on the

Prairies, fundamental fairness requires that this region have the benefit of federal investment to make the most of Atlantic Canada as a gateway for North America.

The main Gateway decisions will be made in the private sector on the basis of a solid business case.

As MP, I would encourage cooperation among the key stakeholders. The federal government can support that cooperation, engage in vigorous international promotion of the efficient routes we offer, ensure reliable port security, skills development and training, and strong relationships with the major shipping companies. The immediate goal must be to increase Halifax's share of world traffic, since our port is so under-used.

The need to limit the use of fossil fuel makes it ever more important to maximize the use of Halifax and other Atlantic ports as a coordinated Gateway for imports that can reach their market more quickly, with less fuel. For the most part, these are the Mid-West markets that have an excellent, fast rail link with our ports. Halifax and the associated Atlantic ports offer an increasingly fuel-efficient option. Nova Scotians need to recognize that our own industries, plus many others in eastern Canada, can export their products competitively when import traffic brings a steady flow of ships into Halifax. We need to import so we can afford to export Nova Scotia's excellent products.

CN Rail, the owners and developers of container terminals, and the shippers all need to know that Halifax and its role as the centrepiece of an Atlantic Gateway are important to Canada. The NDP knows how important jobs and investment are to families in Halifax and Nova Scotia.

The Port of Halifax is crucially important to the economic well being of our city. Outgoing NDP MP Alexa McDonough has, many times in the past 11 years, forcefully made this point in the House of Commons on behalf of the people of Halifax.

Peter Stoffer, MP - NDP, Sackville-Eastern Shore:

“We are fully supportive of the Atlantic Gateway. Halifax should be working very closely with the province and the federal government to market the Port – one level of government can’t do it on its own. If all of us pull together, we will be far more effective. “