

# Using Environmental Grey Literature to Engage Public Participation in Decision Making: Government Transparency in Coastal Policy Development

**Bertrum H. MacDonald, Suzuette S. Soomai, &  
Peter G. Wells**

Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada  
[www.eiui.ca](http://www.eiui.ca)

12th International Conference on Grey Literature, Prague, Czech Republic, 6-7 December 2010



“Your ‘Our Coast’ literature is sound. Distribute, distribute, etc. Talk to and engage the community, NGOs. Come visit us, talk with us — we’d be pleased to help with key local/provincial strategies.”



(A16, Open House, Antigonish, Nova Scotia May 2010)



“The community needs to have the final say in any development. I strongly recommend that these sessions come directly to the coastal communities so that the fishermen have a chance to ask questions and state their MANY concerns.”

W18, Open House, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, May 2010







***“The *State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report* provides an overview of the condition of our coast and information on priority coastal issues. We must look at ways to protect the coast where we live, work, and play. It is vital to who we are and a way of life that is valued by Nova Scotians.”***

***Sterling Belliveau, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture***

“This report is a snapshot of the current state of the province's coast, including its history. Using feedback from Nova Scotians, as well as information in the report, a coastal strategy will be developed for release in 2010.”

***Justin Huston, Chair of the  
Provincial Oceans Network***





Government of Nova Scotia | gov.ns.ca



# Our Coast

Live. Work. Play. Protect.

**SEARCH**

**HOME**

---

**STATE OF THE COAST REPORT**

---

**PRIORITY COASTAL ISSUES**

- > Coastal Development
- > Working Waterfronts
- > Public Access
- > Sea-level Rise and Storm Events
- > Coastal Water Quality
- > Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems

---

**SHARE YOUR VIEWS**

---

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

- > Links

---

**CONTACT US**

## Coastal Management in Nova Scotia

The Government of Nova Scotia has made coastal management a priority with the release of its **State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report**. This Report provides baseline information on our coastal areas and resources, which we will use to develop a **Coastal Strategy**. The Strategy will outline how we will take action to address the coastal issues that matter most to Nova Scotians.

**Updates** – [Report on Coastal Consultation now available, consultation on draft Coastal Strategy planned for 2011](http://gov.ns.ca/coast/2010consultationreport.htm). Le document « Qu'avons-nous entendu? » peut être consulté au <http://gov.ns.ca/coast/2010consultationreport.htm>

### The State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report

Learn more about Nova Scotia's coast and the issues that the Coastal Strategy will address.

TAKE ME THERE ➔



### Priority Coastal Issues

The government is focusing its coastal management efforts on six issues:

- Coastal Development**
- Working Waterfronts**
- Public Coastal Access**
- Sea-level Rise and Storm Events**
- Coastal Water Quality**
- Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems**

### What We Heard

2010 Report on Nova Scotia's Coastal Consultation

TAKE ME THERE ➔



## Further Information

Learn more about the Government of Nova Scotia's approach to coastal management [here](#).



**NOVA SCOTIA**  
*Come to Life*  
[novascotialife.com](http://novascotialife.com)

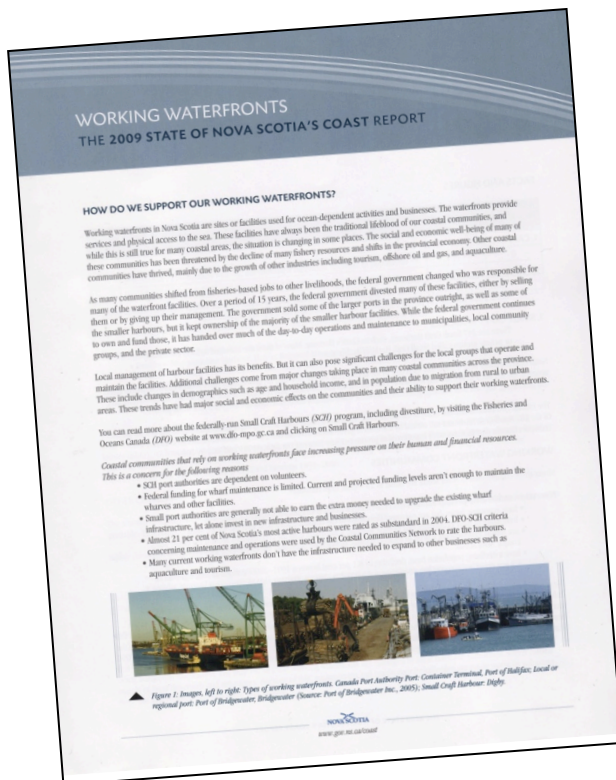
# Six Priority Coastal Issues

## Public Coastal Access



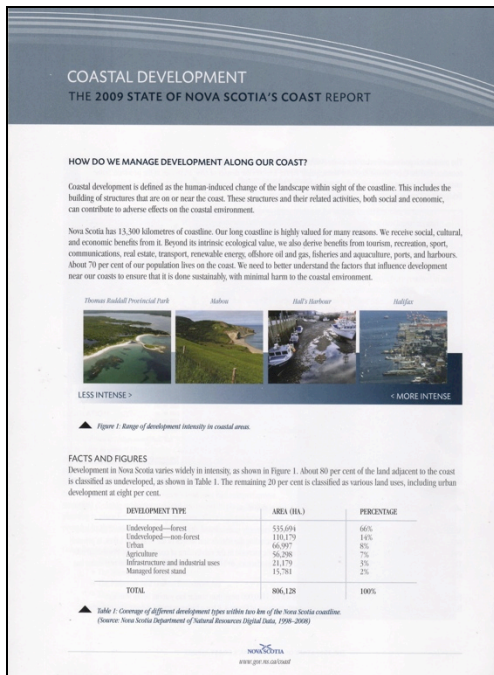
# Six Priority Coastal Issues (2)

## Working Waterfronts

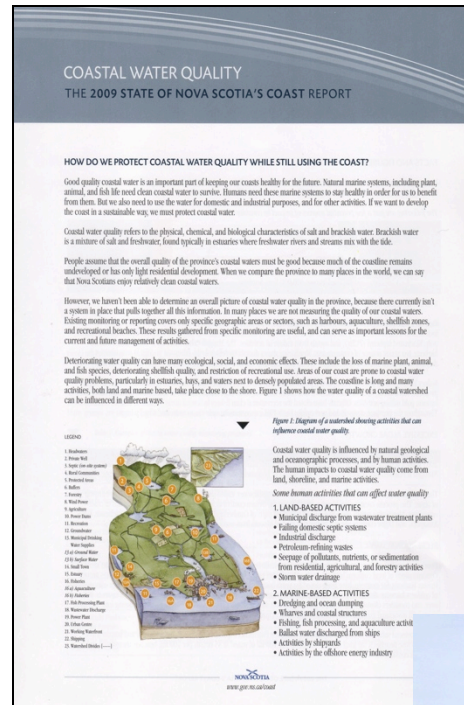


# Six Priority Coastal Issues (3)

## Coastal Development



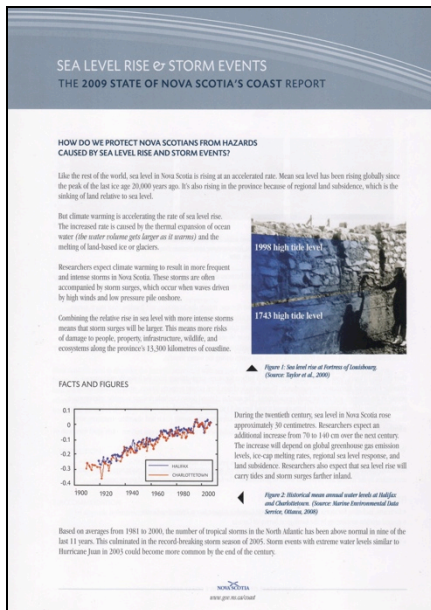
## Coastal Water Quality



# Six Priority Coastal Issues (4)

## Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems & Habitats

### Sea Level Rise and Storm Events



# Public Launch — Media Accounts

## The ChronicleHerald

PUBLISHED BY THE HALIFAX HERALD LIMITED  
2717 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, Nova Scotia  
P.O. Box 610, B3J 2T2

The Chronicle Herald stands for the Atlantic Provinces' progress and development and is dedicated to the service of the people that no good cause shall lack a champion and that wrong shall not thrive unopposed.

### WARMING WARNING

## Make coast a priority

THE planet is getting hotter. Sea levels are getting higher. Sadly, what isn't rising in tandem with the temperature and the waves is a sense of urgency to radically reform coastal policy in this province.

This summer's environmental debates have centred around the suitability of biomass for power generation and the overhaul of our forestry-management plans. But coastal policy has never been taken with the same level of seriousness. It should be. Climate change is coming to a beach near you.

Last week, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released its analysis of data compiled by more than 300 scientists in 48 countries. It proclaimed global warming to be "undeniable" and intensifying with each passing decade. (The researchers sidestepped the question of causes and of human responsibility for this phenomenon.)

"There is now evidence that over 90 per cent of warming over the past 50 years has gone into our oceans," said Deke Arndt, co-editor of the report. That finding dovetails with last week's news, delivered by Dalhousie University scientists, who discovered that phytoplankton — microscopic algae that form the base of the marine food chain — have declined 40 per cent since 1950.

Melting ice caps and warming oceans also spell higher seas, eroding shorelines, more violent storms and more forceful storm surges.

Given what we know, it is the height of folly to continue to allow haphazard development of homes and settlements too close to the shore in Nova Scotia. Coastal building permits are governed by a loose patchwork of municipal bylaws, while coastal policy touches on the turf of 15 different government departments.

## Water rising as shellfish slump, coast study finds

By The Canadian Press  
and DAVENE JEFFREY  
Staff Reporter

A new report on Nova Scotia's coastline says the quantity of shellfish caught off the province dropped by more than half from 2003 to 2006.

The report, titled the State of Nova Scotia's Coast, said the province will suffer physically,

ipitation of those with a stake in the future of the

It also said storm damage worse along Nova Scotia's kilometres of coastline as sea levels rise and the economic levels of shellfish and other coastal resources are threatened by warming waters.

The province says the first of its kind in Canada and involves the participation of those with a stake in the future of the

## Have your say on the coast

Province urged to speed protection of shorelines as public meetings set

By CLARE MELLOR  
Staff Reporter

Nova Scotia needs a coastal act by 2012 with binding laws and regulations



### CATCH THE WAVE

The government is seeking public input to help with the management of Nova Scotia's coastlines.

Open houses will be held at the following locations from 4 to 8 p.m.:

**Bridgewater:** Tuesday, Bridgewater Curling Club, 90 Dominion St.

**Main St.**  
**Truro:** May 18, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Cumming Hall, 62 Cumming Dr.  
**Antigonish:** May 19, Royal Canadian Legion, 294 Main St.  
**Sydney:** May 20, Days Inn, 480 Kings Rd.  
**Dartmouth:** May 26, Nova Scotia Community College Waterfront Campus, 80 Macdonald Place.  
Bilingual representatives will be available in Digby, Wolfville and Dartmouth.

**Halifax:** Wednesday, Rodd Farm, 415 Main St.  
**May 11, Digby fire-3 First Ave.**  
**May 12, Acadia University, Athletic Complex,**

PAGE 12

THE INVERNESS ORAN

16 DECEMBER 2009

## The State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report released

-by John Gillis

A new report by the Nova Scotia government provides an overview of the condition of Nova Scotia's vast coastline.

The report looks at a baseline to determine future trends describing physical, ecological, and socio-economic characteristics of the coast.

The province intends to use this report and the feedback it generates to create a blueprint called the Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy.

"We are fortunate in Inverness County to have a relatively undeveloped coastline, but we should be proactive and implement sustainable practices before we jeopardize the health of our natural resources.

Ensuring a healthy coastline requires the commitment of all residents and a wide variety of groups and all levels of government," says Margaret MacDonald of the Mabou Harbour Coastal Management Plan

Committee (MHCMP). She reviewed the report after its release this week.

Six priority coastal issues are explored in detail in the report: coastal development; working waterfronts, public coastal access, sea-level rise and storm events, coastal water quality, sensitive coastal ecosystems.

**Coastal Development**

"The municipalities through the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* (are allowed) to develop planning strategies and bylaws to regulate land use. In spite of this, only about 45 per cent of provincial land has comprehensive municipal plans or land-use bylaws in place. Another factor affecting control over development is that approximately 86 per cent of the coastline is privately owned," the report states.

**Working waterfronts:** the province categorizes working waterfronts in the province into three types: A)

Canada Port Authority ports (there is one in Halifax); B) Local and regional ports of which there are 25 and C) Small craft harbours (of which there are 247 listed).

"Over a period of 15 years, the federal government divested many of these facilities, either by selling them or by handing over their management," the report notes.

**Public coastal access:** contrary to the belief of many, this report claims that "there's currently no federal or provincial legislation that ensures universal access to the coast. Laws deal mainly with preventing trespassing, regulating economic activities, restricting the use of vehicles, and building infrastructure such as wharves and ramps."

Consequently, "these laws can all contribute to restricting public access," the report concludes.

**Sea-level rise and storm events:** This report projects a level of sea-level from 70-140 centimeters along Nova Scotia's coastline

for the next century due to climate change and global warming. It projects more intense tropical storms in the Northern Hemisphere. Hurricane Juan caused a total of \$130 million in losses in Nova Scotia earlier this decade.

**Coastal water quality:** There are many issues which could impact water quality in the coming years including inadequate septic systems and more algae blooms.

"Monitoring shows that coastal waters off parts of Cumberland, Pictou, Antigonish, Inverness, Colchester, Kings, Annapolis, and Digby counties may be at an increased risk for algal blooms," the report indicates.

**Sensitive coastal ecosystems:** The report recognizes that much more work needs to be done in this and other areas, but it has worked to understand and describe the coast more accurately by breaking it down into 13 coastal

ecosystem categories.

"All of six priority issues are extremely relevant to issues that we are facing in the Mabou Harbour Watershed and Inverness County as a whole. One issue that the MHCMP has been discussing at meetings is the issue of coastal development and land use planning. As we look to pursue economic interests we must also keep in mind sustainable development and maintain the ecological integrity of coastal areas. In addition, this region is experiencing a shift in demographics. This may have an effect on land-use patterns. Moore people may look to develop and sub-divide coastal properties for vacation properties which, if not planned properly, will stress coastal ecosystems. This is an issue that can be addressed at the community and municipal level," Margaret MacDonald added.

MacDonald says water quality and monitoring and tracking potential sources of pollution are other priorities for the local group.

"It is unnerving to read that only 8.2 percent of the total land mass of Nova Scotia is provincially or federally owned, and only a small portion of this is coastal area. The large portion of private ownership could have a negative impact on water quality, coastal access, and development," MacDonald added.

Jeff Lee of the Mabou Development Association says the report identifies a number of topics, some of which have already been the subject of planning and discussion locally in recent years.

"It really ties into a lot of the work we've been doing. If we can take a proactive approach I believe we'll be much better off," said Lee.

For more detailed information on anything presented in this summary report, please refer to the full report on our website at [www.gov.ns.ca/coast](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coast).

important that Nova Scotia's meetings and public input, she said.

"It is a part of the effort to produce a strategy by the end of 2010 issues like water quality and dwindling resources, said Justin Huston, a member of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

"It is too early to say the coastal strategy will be a success, but we are hopeful that it will be. I can't really say this stage, we are hearing what the public level of government is the best way forward this range of

Mr. Huston said, the report on the

state of Nova Scotia's coast and identified six major issues: coastal development; sea levels and storm events; public coastal access; working waterfronts; sensitive coastal ecosystems and habitats; and coastal water quality.

"I think we have to really focus on what we want to change and how we are going to change it."

Besides the consultations, the province is encouraging online and written public submissions on coastline issues. It will also carry out a province-wide phone survey on the coastline in the coming months. Information can be found at [www.gov.ns.ca/coast](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coast).

"From the information we gather from the public and the information that is in the state of the coast report, we will be using that to start to draft the strategy," Huston said.

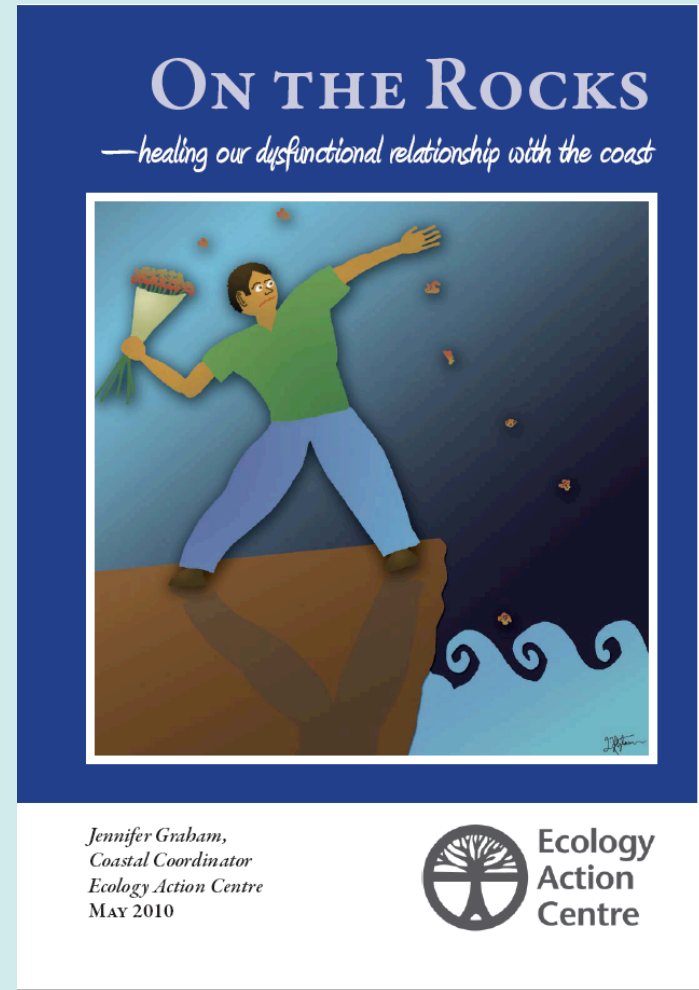
([cmellor@herald.ca](mailto:cmellor@herald.ca))

**A variety of mechanisms were used to receive input from the public and stakeholders**

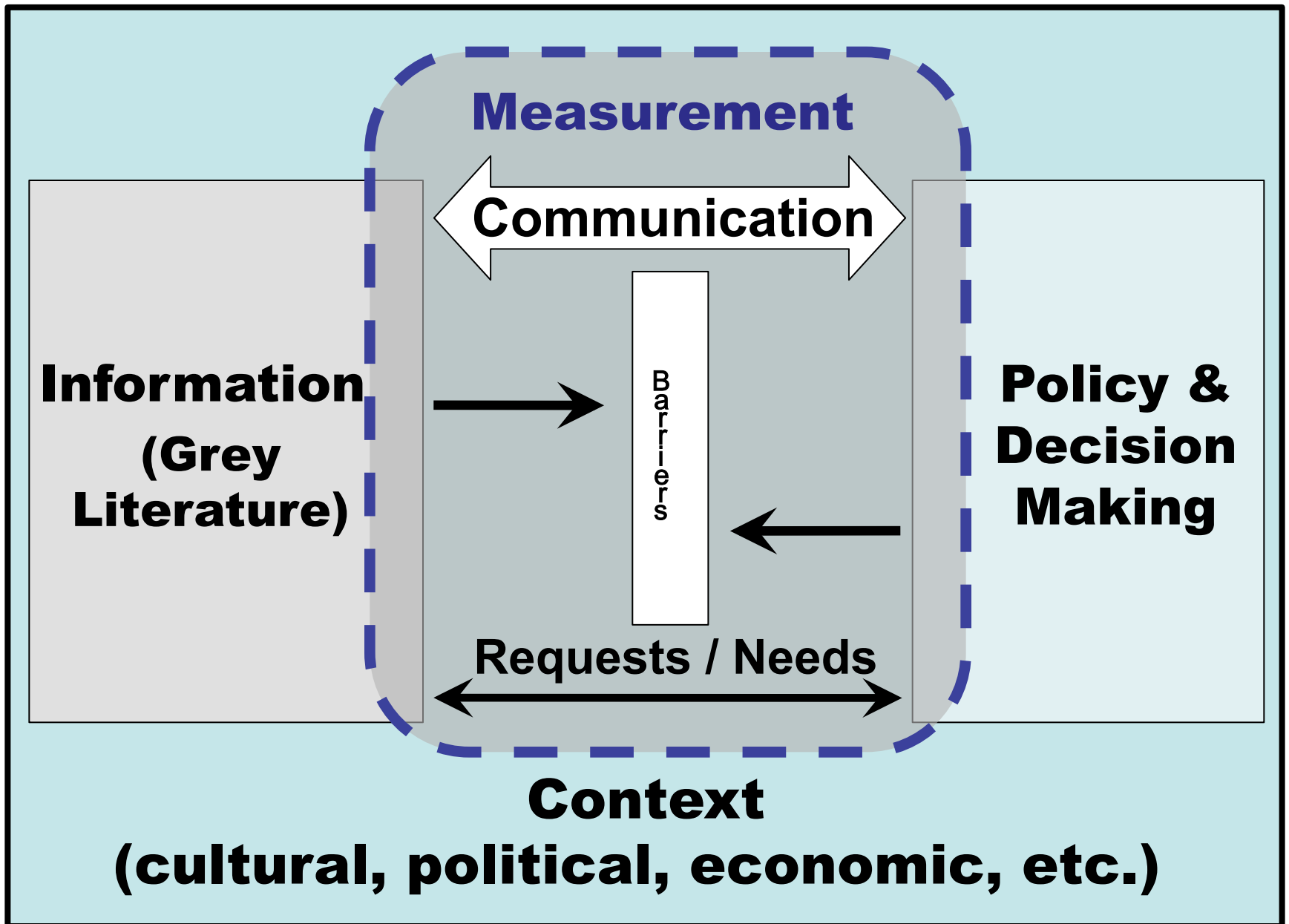
- 



# Public Responses and Submissions from NGOs and Advocacy Groups



***Submission from  
Ecology Action Centre***



# Stakeholder Groups

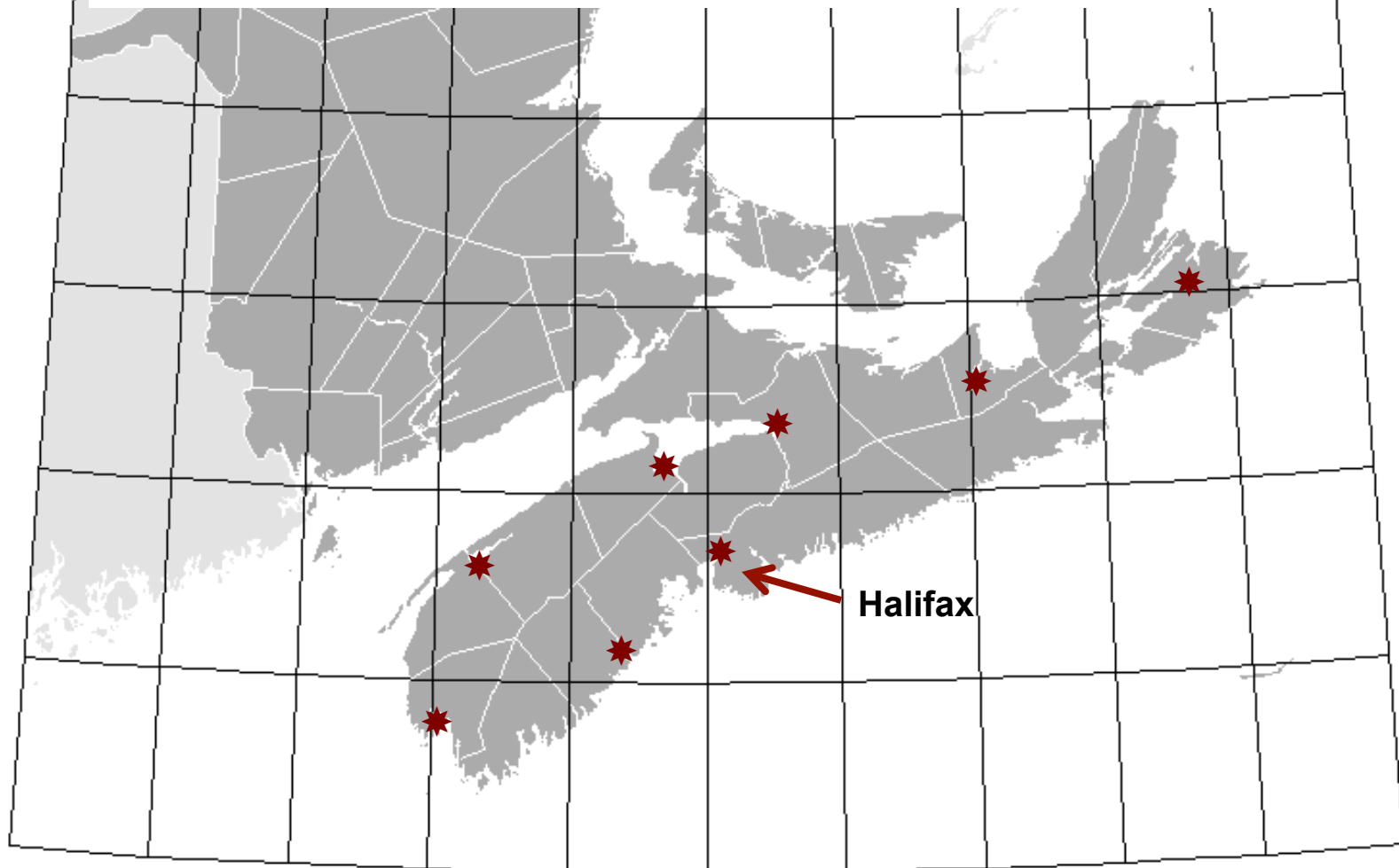
Government	Non-Governmental Organizations	Academic Institutions	Industry
Government Agencies (National & Provincial)  Regional Development Agencies  Intergovernmental Organizations	Community Organizations  Coastal Protection Groups  Wildlife Conservation Groups	Universities and Research Institutes  Libraries (University, Public)	Energy (oil & gas, coal, renewable energy)  Manufacturing  Tourism  Professional Associations

# Sources of Data for the Study

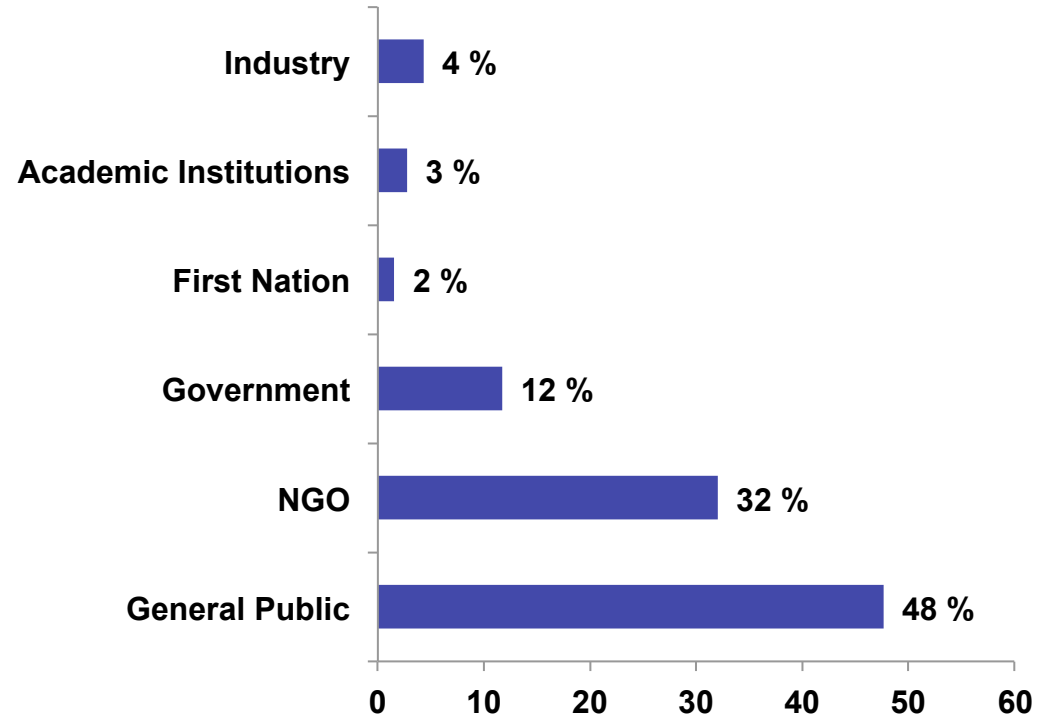


Surveys	Evidence of Alerting Systems
Open Houses (Direct observations & questionnaire)	Web Link Searches
Telephone Survey	Citation Searches
Multi-stakeholder Workshop - Questionnaire	Evidence of Availability in Libraries
Multi-stakeholder Interviews	News Media Reports
Additional Surveys	Web Site Access to the <i>Report</i> Documents

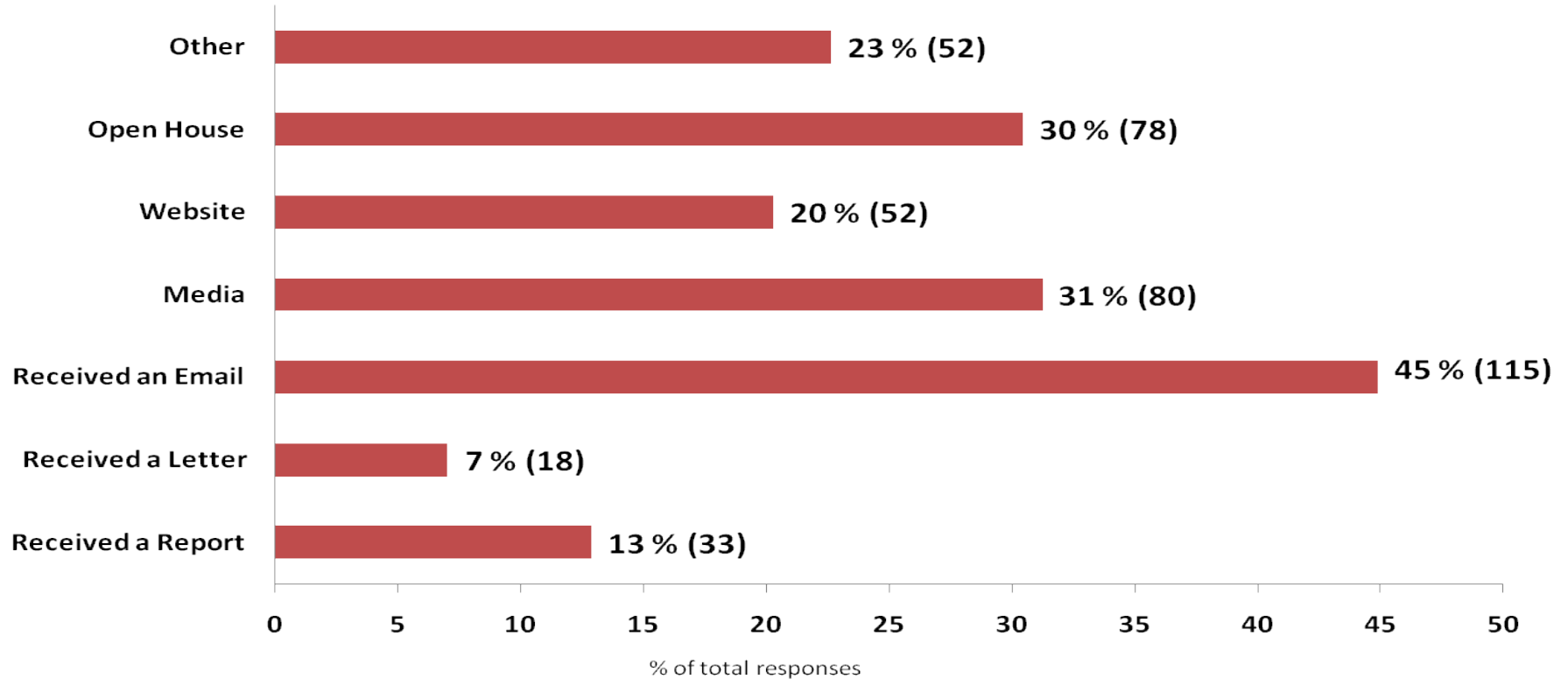
## Sites of Public Consultations Throughout the Province of Nova Scotia



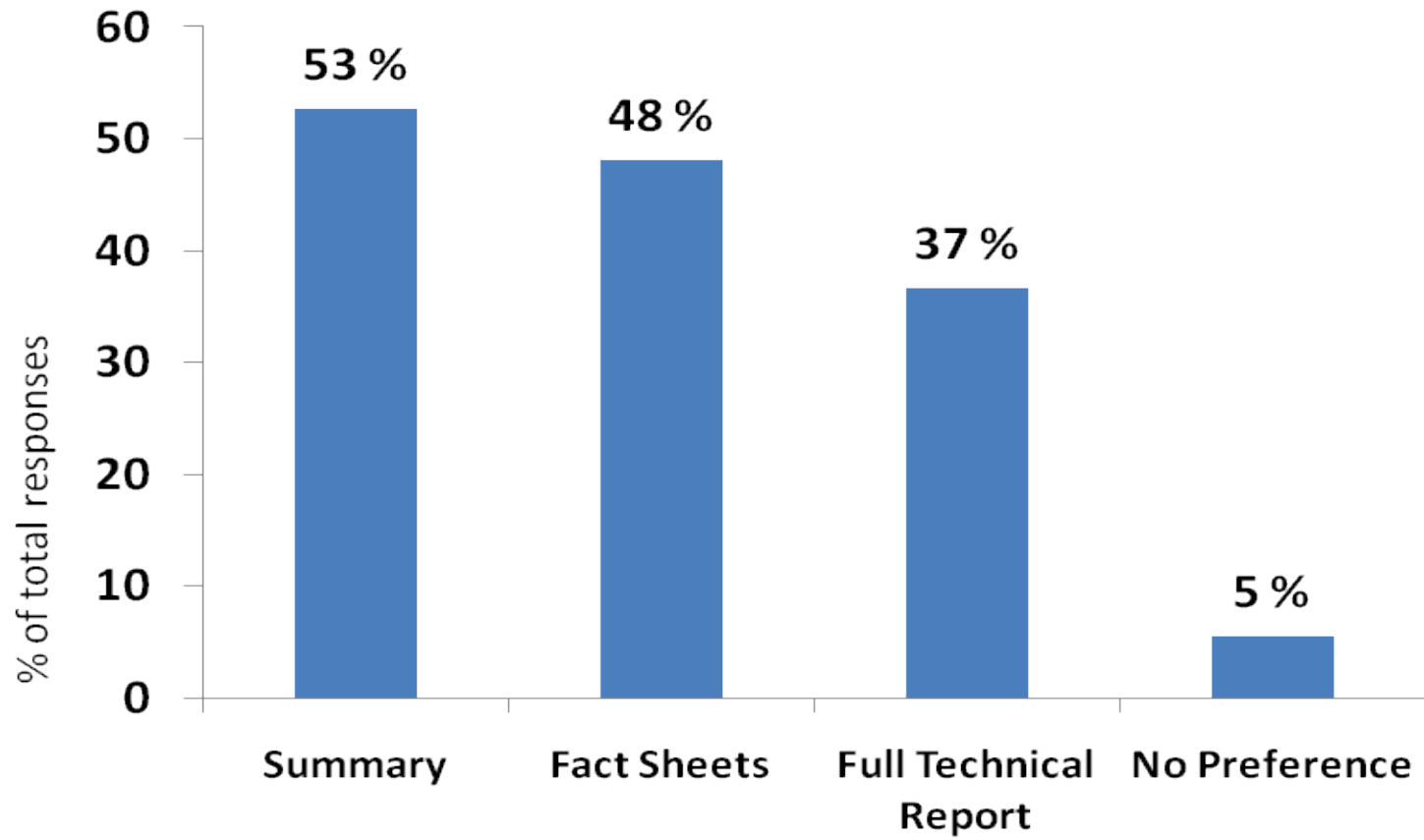
# Attendance at Open Houses



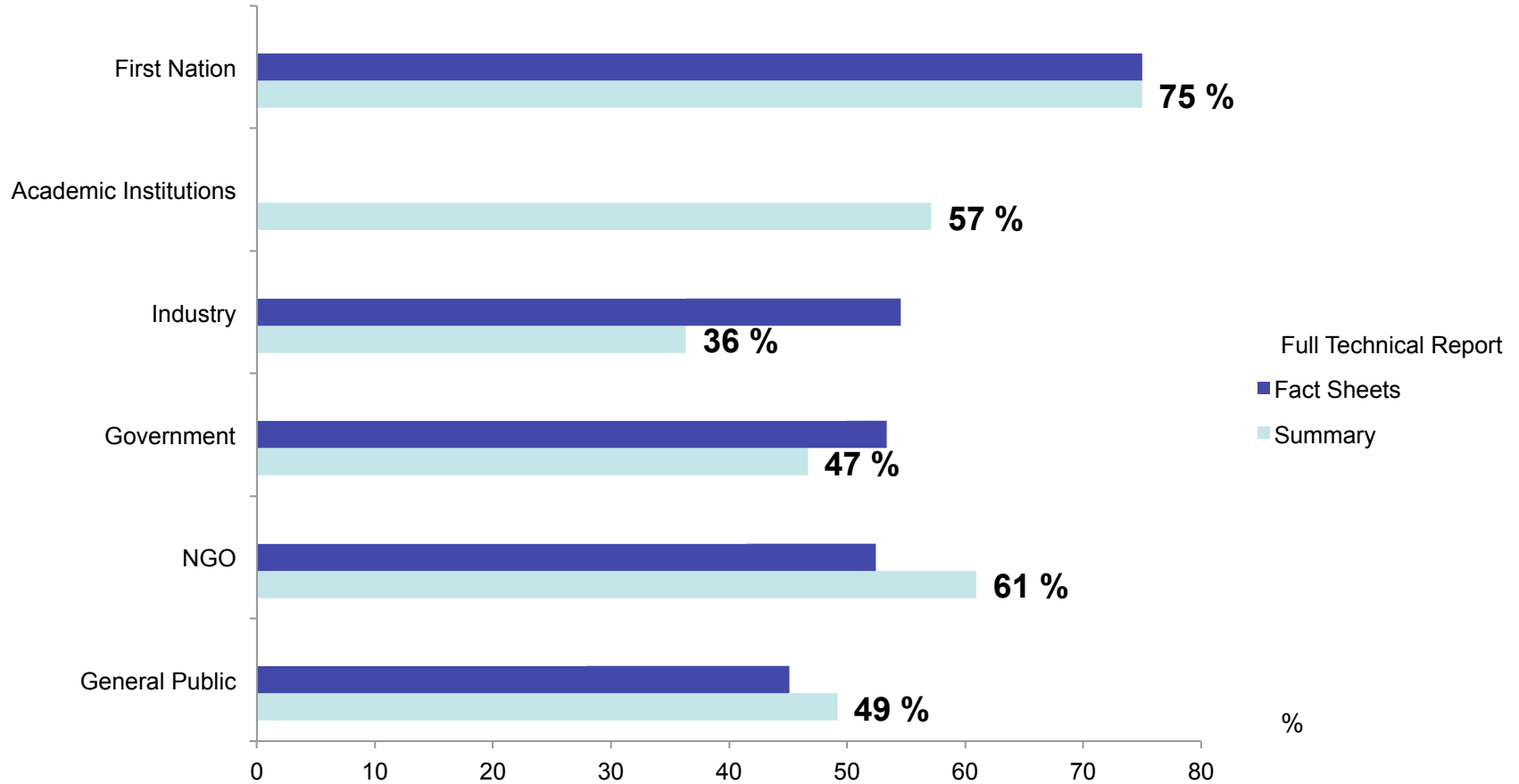
# Open Houses — Awareness Methods



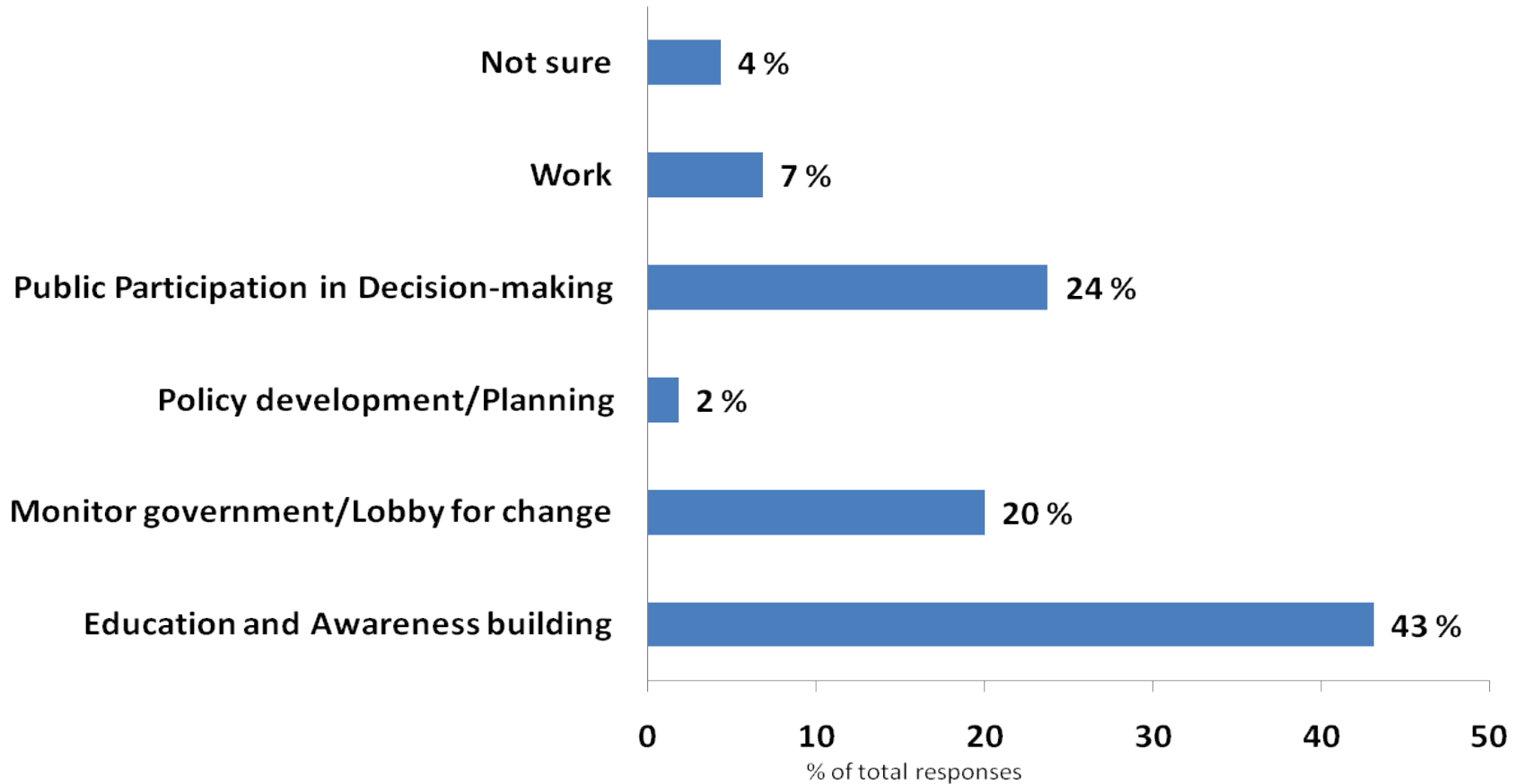
# Open Houses — Preferred Version



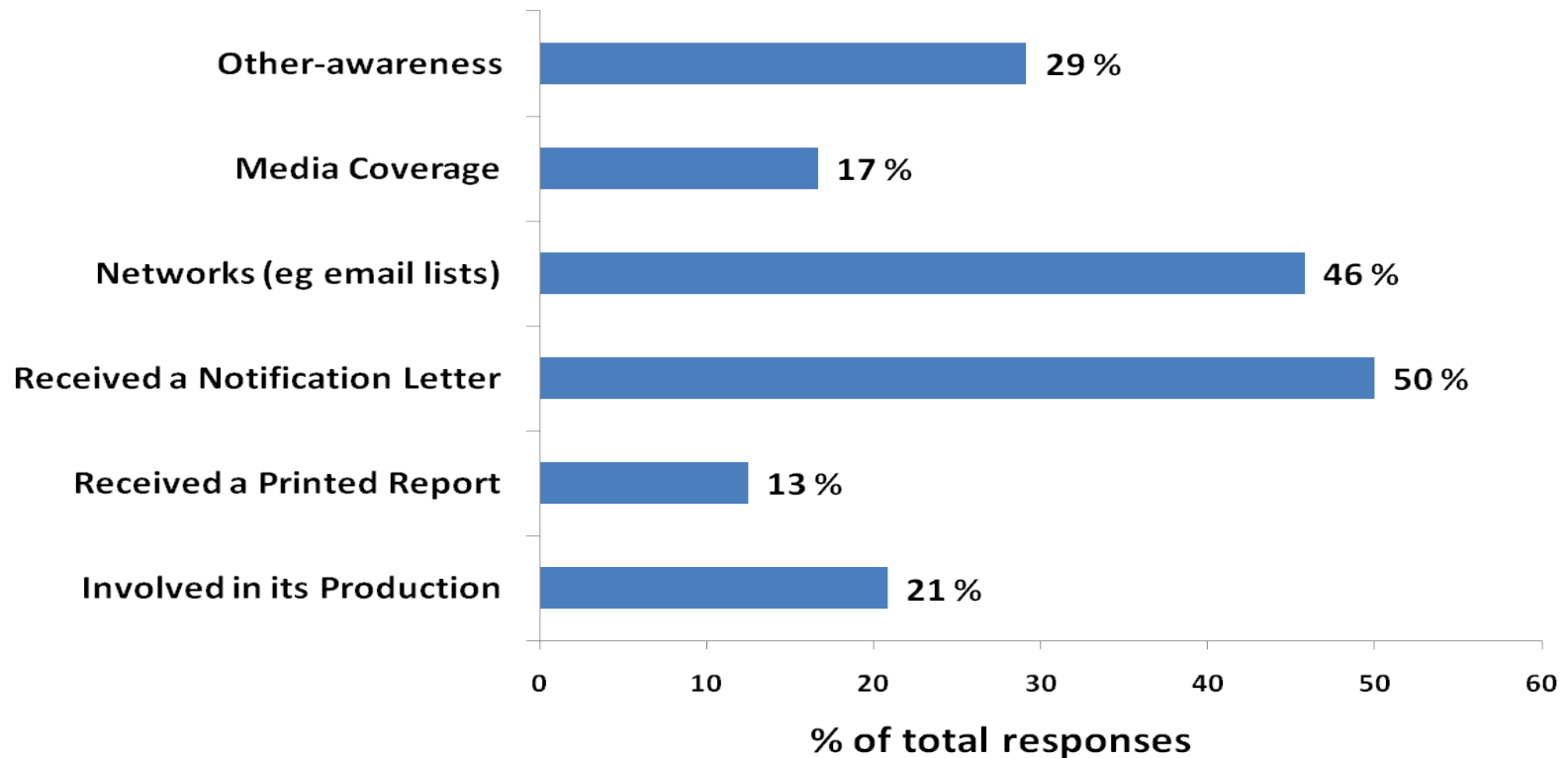
# Preferred Version by Stakeholder Group (Open Houses)



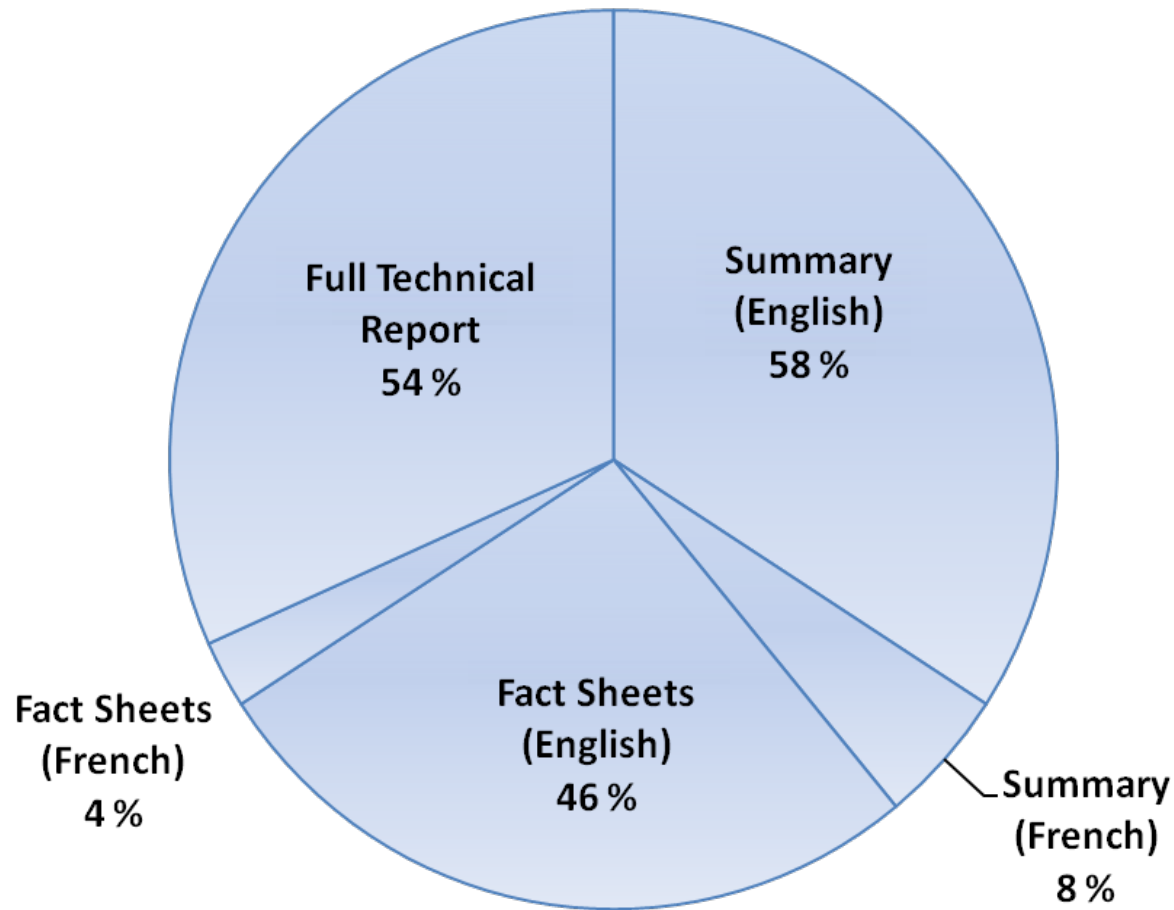
# Planned Use of the Report (Open Houses)



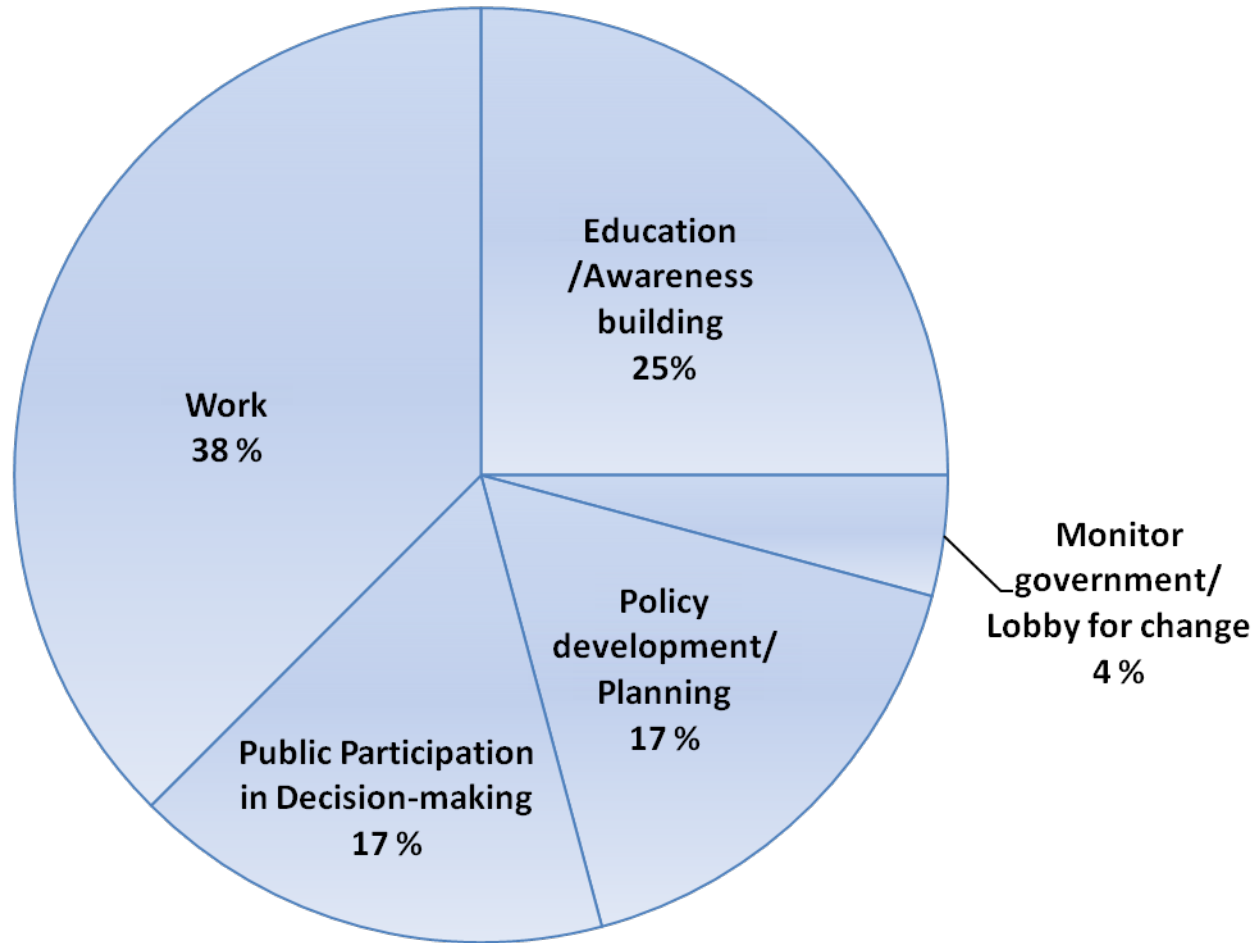
# Multi-Stakeholder Meeting: Awareness Methods



# Multi-Stakeholder Meeting: Preferred Versions



# Planned Use of the Report (Multi-Stakeholder Meeting)



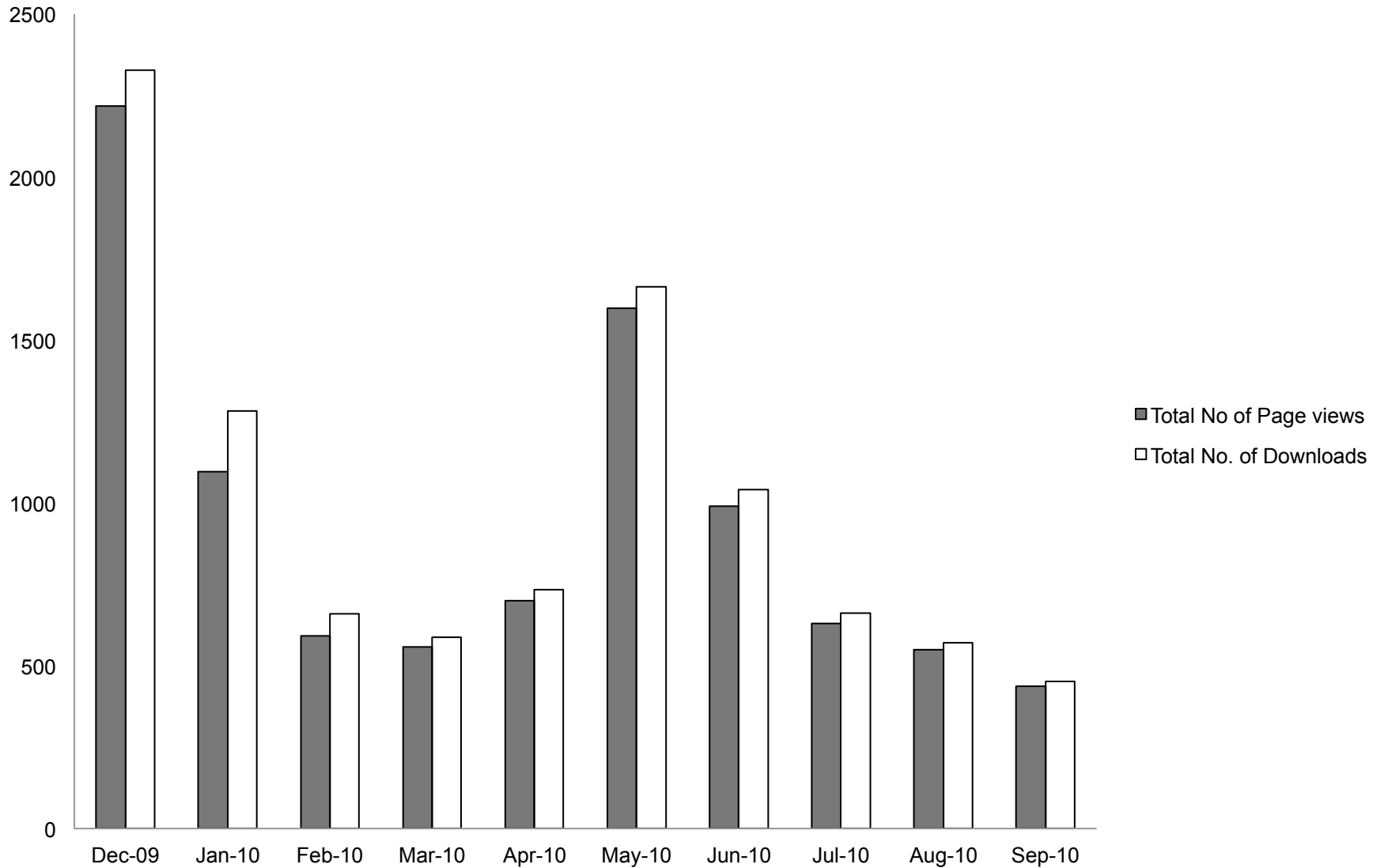
# Province-Wide Telephone Survey

**To gain public views about Nova Scotia's coasts a random sample of 600 residents were surveyed:**



- ✗ 41 (6.8%) were aware of the *Report*
- ✗ Use of the report and preferred versions views were similar to findings from the open houses and the multi-stakeholder meeting

# Web Site Statistics



# Awareness – Interviewer Responses

Stakeholder Group	Prior awareness of <i>Report</i>	Aware of <i>Report</i> after release
Academic Institutions	1	1
First Nation		1
Government	2	2
Industry	2	
NGO	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

# Our Coast

Live. Work. Play. Protect.

 **SEARCH**

HOME

STATE OF THE COAST  
REPORT

PRIORITY COASTAL  
ISSUES

- › Coastal Development
- › Working Waterfronts
- › Public Access
- › Sea-level Rise and Storm Events
- › Coastal Water Quality
- › Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems

SHARE YOUR VIEWS

FURTHER  
INFORMATION

› Links

CONTACT US

## Coastal Management in Nova Scotia

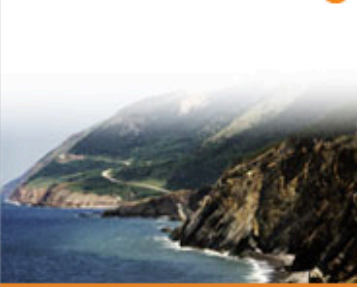
The Government of Nova Scotia has made coastal management a priority with the release of its **State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report**. This Report provides baseline information on our coastal areas and resources, which we will use to develop a **Coastal Strategy**. The Strategy will outline how we will take action to address the coastal issues that matter most to Nova Scotians.

**Updates – [Report on Coastal Consultation now available, consultation on draft Coastal Strategy planned for 2011.](#)** Le document « Qu'avons-nous entendu? » peut être consulté au <http://gov.ns.ca/coast/2010consultationreport.htm>

### The State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report

Learn more about Nova Scotia's coast and the issues that the Coastal Strategy will address.

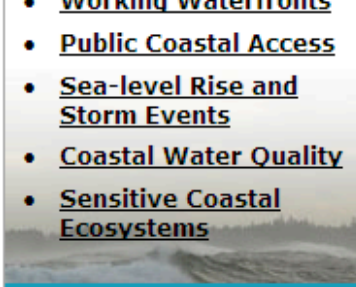
TAKE ME THERE ➔



### Priority Coastal Issues

The government is focusing its coastal management efforts on six issues:

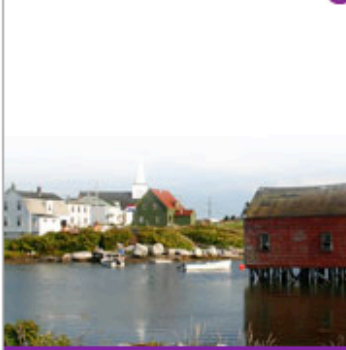
- [Coastal Development](#)
- [Working Waterfronts](#)
- [Public Coastal Access](#)
- [Sea-level Rise and Storm Events](#)
- [Coastal Water Quality](#)
- [Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems](#)



### What We Heard

2010 Report on Nova Scotia's Coastal Consultation

TAKE ME THERE ➔



# Our Coast

Live. Work. Play. Protect.

 **SEARCH**

HOME

STATE OF THE COAST  
REPORT

PRIORITY COASTAL  
ISSUES

- › Coastal Development
- › Working Waterfronts
- › Public Access
- › Sea-level Rise and Storm Events
- › Coastal Water Quality
- › Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems

SHARE YOUR VIEWS

FURTHER  
INFORMATION

- › Links

CONTACT US



## What we Heard: 2010 Report on Nova Scotia's Coastal Consultation

From May 1st to July 18th, 2010, Nova Scotians were invited to comment on the [State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report](#) and to provide input on their priorities and ideas for the future Coastal Strategy.

The consultation process included a variety of mechanisms for gathering input from the public and stakeholders including:

- online and written submissions
- regional open houses
- municipal workshops
- a phone survey
- a multi-stakeholder workshop
- sector-based meetings

Over the course of these consultations we heard from over 1,200 people, many of whom represented coastal organizations, businesses, and communities.

Feedback has been compiled into an overview report called *What We Heard*, which is now publically available. In addition, separate reports from the phone survey, multi-stakeholder workshop, and individual open houses are also available. Reports available here:

- [What we Heard: Nova Scotia's 2010 Coastal Consultation \(En Francais\)](#)
- [Phone survey report](#)
- [Multi-stakeholder workshop report](#)
- Open house reports:
  - [Bridgewater](#)
  - [Yarmouth](#)

# Key Findings

## **Several communication methods are needed to reach diverse audiences**

- ⌘ All the methods can be used, more or less simultaneously.
- ⌘ Some methods may involve direct communication, others indirect, i.e., information was transferred through networks

## **Several versions of the report are needed**

- ⌘ Print and digital; print continues to have a role
- ⌘ Different types (technical report, summary document, fact sheets)

# Key Findings (2)

## Each version of the report has specific uses for specific audiences

∅ Education and advocacy are the primary expectations of use

∅ Individuals likely to use the *Report* are directly related to those with prior awareness and known interest in coastal issues.

*“I’m seeing people refer to it fairly often I’d say, of course, I tend to be in the circles of people that are doing that” (A2).*

# Key Findings (3)

## **Influence of the report will require additional measurement**

Ø “I've seen more positive discussions that actually something is finally getting going, getting started...” (G4).

Ø “...true usefulness of it is going to be found after the strategy work has been delivered because really this is ...the starting point for that and you can't really judge how good your starting point is until you kind of get to the end.” (N2)

Ø . “...bringing all these departments to look at the report...we felt like we had some relationship there...” (G2).

# Acknowledgements

***Support for this study has been provided by:***

Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

School of Information Management, Dalhousie University

*Images credits:* P.G. Wells, S.S. Soomai, NS Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

***More Information:*** [www.eiui.ca](http://www.eiui.ca)





Our Coast  
Live. Work. Play. Protect.

Please do not remove

Our Coast  
Live. Work. Play. Protect.

### Survey on the State of Nova Scotia's Coast

What is your connection to the coast? Please check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Live
<input type="checkbox"/> Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Rank the issues below by importance to you. (For example, 1 being your top priority, 2 being second, etc.)

Issue	1	2	3	4	5
Coastal Water Quality					
Coastal Development					

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Why are you holding these open houses?**  
We want to learn Nova Scotia's ideas for addressing the important issues facing our coast. Government has committed to develop a Coastal Strategy for tackling priority coastal issues: Coastal Development, Working Waterfronts, Public Coastal Access, Coastal Water Quality, Level Rise and Storm Events, Sensitive Coastal Ecosystems.

**What else are you doing to gather public input?**  
People can provide online and written feedback ([gov.ns.ca/coast](http://gov.ns.ca/coast)). We are conducting a wide phone survey to ask citizens about their views and priorities. As well, we'll be in multi-stakeholder workshop to bring different sectors together around the table to discuss of our coast and the direction the Coastal Strategy should take.

**How long is the public consultation period?**  
Public consultation will run from May 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**What about Municipalities? First Nations? The Federal government?**  
We recognize that Municipal, First Nations and Federal governments have unique interests and mandates when it comes to the coast, and we respect that. We'll be in direct with these governments throughout the process. Our goal is to ensure that all of our governments can continue to work together to address the pressing issues of our coast.

**Will I be able to learn what other people are saying?**  
Yes, we will be drafting a "What We Heard" document summarizing the input gathered from various consultations. This document will be available online in early fall, 2010.

**After public consultation, what comes next?**  
Using the public input, along with information gathered in the State of Nova Scotia we will begin drafting the Coastal Strategy.

**Who will draft the strategy and when will it be finished?**  
The Coastal Strategy will be drafted by the Provincial Oceans Network which representatives from 15 Government of Nova Scotia departments and agencies have a draft Coastal Strategy for Cabinet by the end of 2010.

**Why is the State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report important?**  
Before we start developing a Coastal Strategy that directs where we're going, we need to know where we are today. The 2009 Report provides a common source of information on our coast. The Report provides baseline information on our coast and detailed information on coastal issues. The Report is actually three different products: a large simplified summary report, and fact sheets for each coastal issue.

**How can I get more information?**  
Visit our website: [gov.ns.ca/coast](http://gov.ns.ca/coast), or write: Coastal Coordinator, NS Fisheries and Aquaculture, PO Box 2223, Halifax, NS B3J 3C4.