



# Agricultural Land Protection Policy in Nova Scotia

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# Overview

- Current policy tools
- Review of available information on agricultural land loss
- Policy issues currently being studied

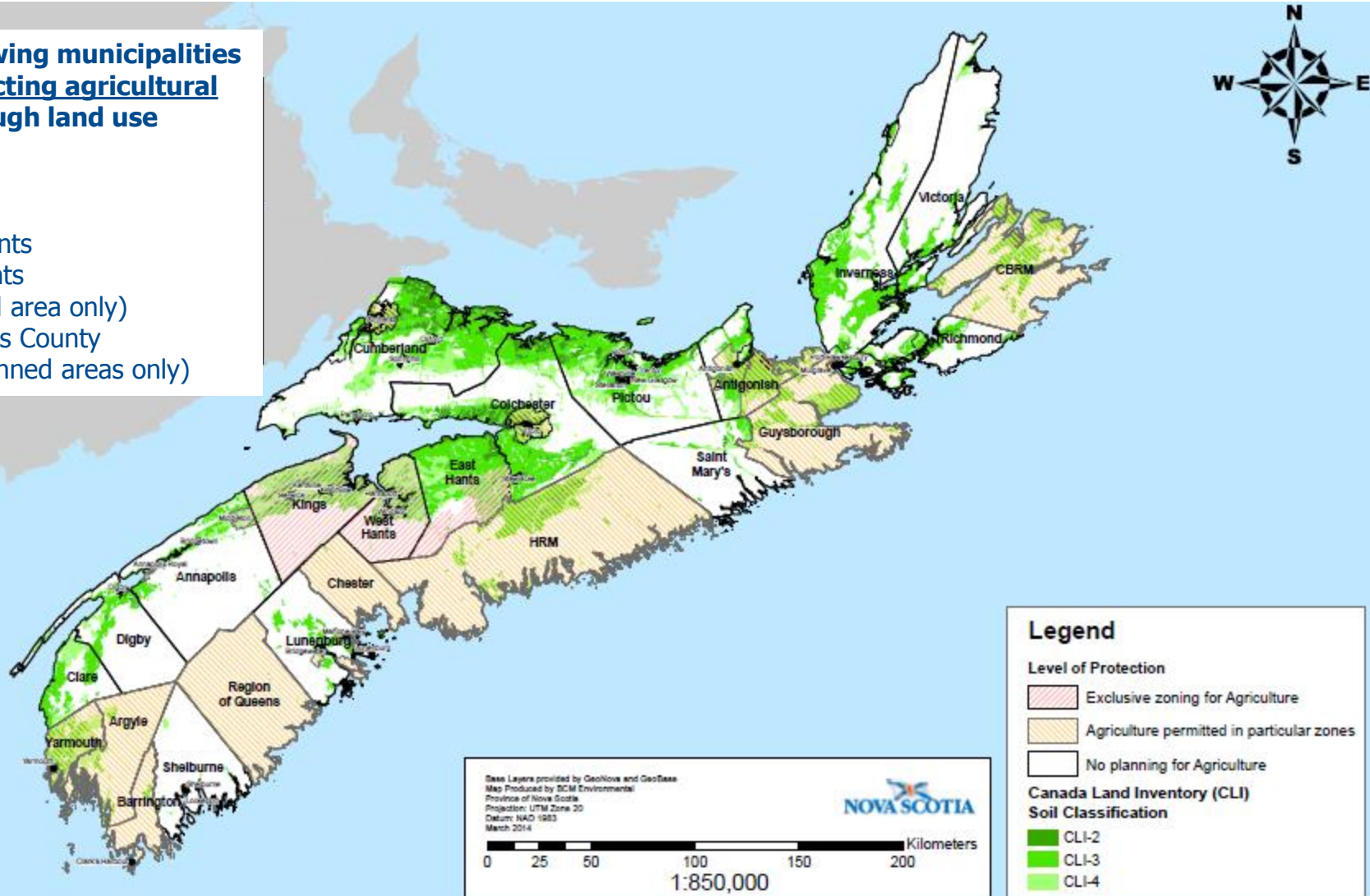
# Current Policy Tools

- Statement of Provincial Interest (SPI) Regarding Agricultural Land
- Agricultural land tax exemption and change in use tax
- Community Easements Act – Allows agricultural conservation easements
- Agricultural Marshlands Conservation Act – Protects Dykeland
- Various Municipal policies

# Current Municipal Planning for

The following municipalities are **protecting agricultural land** through land use planning:

- Kings
- West Hants
- East Hants (planned area only)
- Annapolis County (two planned areas only)



# Data and findings

- Accurate and detailed information on agricultural land remains a key issue.
- Background analysis done using Property Valuation Services Corp (PVSC) data.
  - Determine area of land formerly classed as farmland (resource farm) and the new classification (e.g. taxable residential, taxable commercial, resource forest etc.)

# Data and findings (1978 to present)

- Former farm properties no longer classed as resource farm:
  - Properties “lost”=14,922
  - Area “lost”= 56,152 hectares (42% of 2011 Census crop area, 14% of total farm area)
- Former farm properties now classed as residential or commercial use:
  - Properties “lost”= 8,355
  - Area “lost”= 7,261 hectares (5% of 2011 Census crop area, 2% of total farm area)

# Data and findings (1978 to present)

County (if more than 5k hectares of farmland)	Farmland (PVSC)	Former farmland “lost” to residential or commercial		Farmland next to “lost” farmland	
		Hectares	% of total	Hectares	% of total
<b>Total (NS)</b>	<b>238,917</b>	<b>7,066</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>53,500</b>	<b>22%</b>
Colchester	34,038	1,581	5%	13,751	40%
Antigonish	14,003	744	5%	4,938	35%
Halifax	8,357	217	3%	2,247	27%
Hants	23,333	648	3%	5,486	24%
Pictou	18,479	736	4%	3,611	20%
Kings	34,052	821	2%	6,248	18%
Cumberland	44,403	624	1%	7,789	18%
Lunenburg	11,587	416	4%	1,858	16%
Inverness	14,136	371	3%	1,999	14%
Annapolis	15,980	306	2%	2,164	14%

# Policy Ideas being reviewed

- Review of 60 recommendations/options from 3 reports
  - Williams Report (2010)
  - Policy Framework Document by Dept of Ag (2012)
  - Land Trusts Report (2016)
- Focus of the work is Legislative tools for protection of Agricultural Land



# Policy Issues currently being studied

- Better Data – Need better tracking of loss of Ag Land
- Municipal or Provincial Responsibility – Planning
  - Strengthening of SPI
  - Additional Municipalities Adopting Planning Docs
  - Regional Planning (Provincial Land Use Framework)
- NS Land Trusts – Banking Land, Easements
- Tax Tools: Funding Initiatives with Change of Use Tax, and tightening tax exemption for only active (registered) farms

Questions?