

# STANDING AT THE PRECIPICE

## THE STATE OF RURAL NOVA SCOTIA

**Ryan Gibson**

2016 Canadian Association of Geographers Conference



# Background

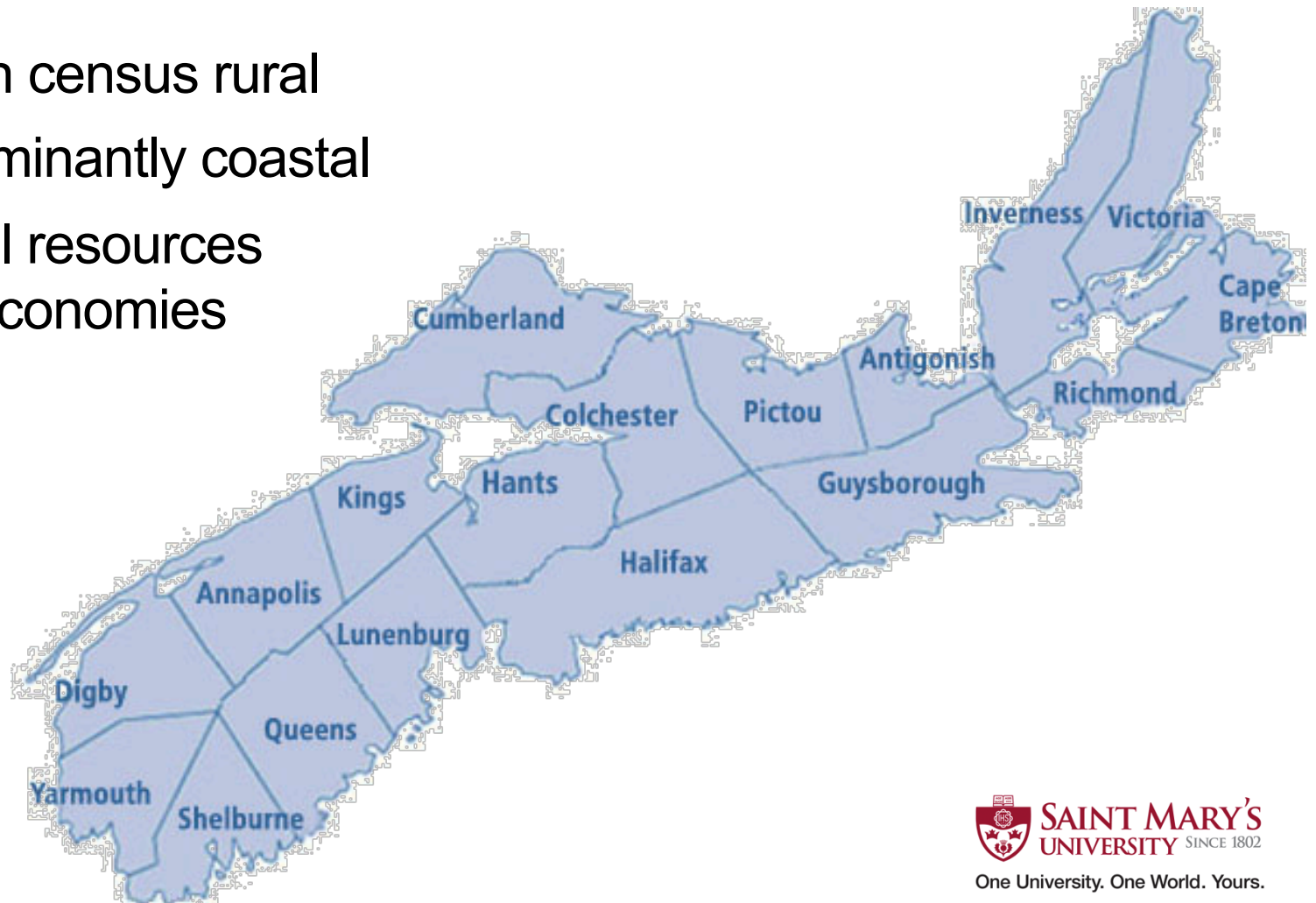
» Canadian Rural Revitalization  
Foundation's *call to action* – The State  
of Rural Canada



» Increasing attention on rural in Nova  
Scotia

# Rural Nova Scotia

- » 43% in census rural
- » predominantly coastal
- » natural resources based economies



# Context

- » provincial department responsible for rural development 'axed'
- » Local government restructuring
- » Ivany report
- » Increased media attention on rural 'challenges'

## Nova Scotia axes Economic and Rural Development, replaced by 'leaner' Business Department

Patricia MacInnis TC Media  
Published on April 09, 2015

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## Forced amalgamations, end of villages, binding reviews upshot of Nova Scotia municipal report?

Greg Bennett

Published on October 16, 2014

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**HALIFAX** - A draft provincial-municipal fiscal review report released this week is recommending some big changes for Nova Scotia's municipal units.

Included in the report are recommendations that could potentially see forced amalgamations of some units.



Kentville Mayor  
Corkum

5 budget  
d budget tabled April 9, Nova Scotia Finance

**NOW OR NEVER:**  
AN URGENT CALL TO  
**ACTION**  
**NOVA SCOTIANS**

**one**  
NOVA SCOTIA  
SHAPING OUR NEW  
ECONOMY TOGETHER  
oneNS.ca

## Rural Reckoning: Find value in our place

Rural folks don't need to start turning lemonade into lemons just yet, says Mark Austin

By Mark Austin, for CBC News Posted: Sep 30, 2015 6:30 PM AT | Last Updated: Sep 30, 2015 6:30 PM AT



Mark Austin thinks there's too much focus on austerity. (Courtesy Mark Austin)



Possible solutions to our  
demographic challenges  
21:16

140 shares

There's a reckoning wreckin' rural Nova Scotia, I reckon. Depletion of population and livelihoods can do us in, but not nearly as efficiently as will a narrative of inevitable decline.

Failure of regenerative imagination in the guise of austerity, scarcity's faithful sidekick, has some folks clamouring to turn lemonade back into lemons.

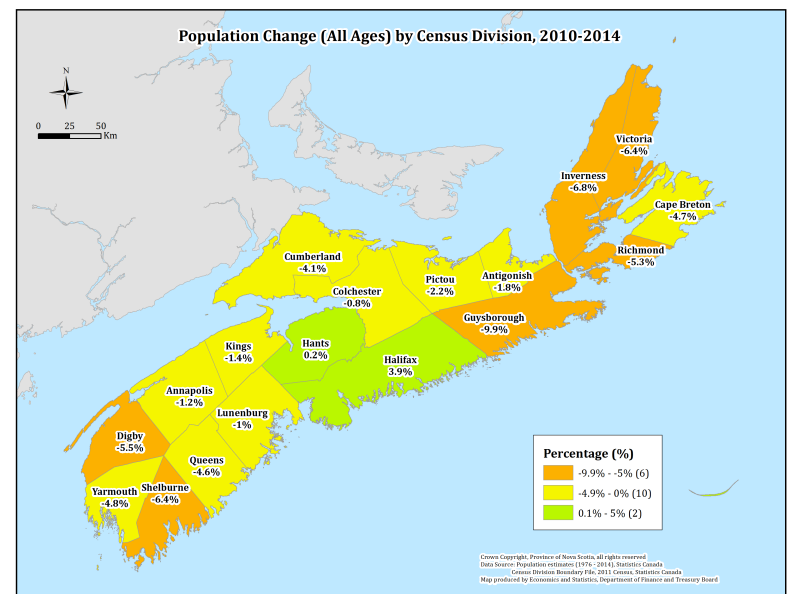
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# Demographics

- » rural to urban shift
- » out-migration of young/aging
- » overall decline



# Governance

## » Towns Task Force (2010)

- local government needs to have long-term sustainability,
- supports for regional service delivery,
- enhanced collaboration among local governments, and
- enhanced economic development strategies

# Governance

- » Financial Conditions Index
  - » assesses financial 'health' of communities.
  - » many rural communities = financial challenges

# Economy

- » “stagnant, dying, and on the verge of decline”
- » focus on natural resource commodities
- » spatial economic pattern:
  - » rural coastal economies are generally in decline
  - » rural inland economies are stable or low growth

# Economy

- » vibrant social economy in rural Nova Scotia
  - » role of cooperatives
  - » enhanced attention on social enterprise

# Infrastructure and Services

- » infrastructural deficits
  - » transportation services
- » concerns about service provision
  - » high speed internet
  - » health care
  - » schools

# Indigenous Transformations

- » 34,000 people of First Nation, Métis, or Inuit descent (2.7% of NS population)
- » 13 Mi'kmaw communities
  - » younger
  - » larger families



# Standing at the Precipice




# Recommendations

- » Job Creation Strategies
- » Mechanisms to Encourage and Support Local/  
Regional Collaboration
- » Place-Based Approaches

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