



## PRESS RELEASE

**February 24, 2015.**

**For immediate release.**

***St. John's, NL - February 24, 2015 - ThinkNL releases first recommendations to the Premier and Minister of Finance. Please see attached correspondence.***

More information on ThinkNL can be found at [ThinkNL.ca](http://ThinkNL.ca) or twitter through [@ThinkNLnow](https://twitter.com/ThinkNLnow).

### **Contact:**

Mae Butt, (709) 754-8536, [mbutt@thinknl.ca](mailto:mbutt@thinknl.ca)

### **About ThinkNL:**

ThinkNL challenges socio-political issues with bold, factual and unbiased options to inspire positive change in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was launched on January 29, 2015 by St. John's businessman, Charlie Oliver.

Challenging socio-political issues  
with bold, factual and unbiased  
options to inspire positive change in  
Newfoundland and Labrador



Memorandum to: Premier Paul Davis  
Date: February 24, 2015.  
Copies to: Mr. Dwight Ball, Ms. Lorraine Michael, Minister Ross Wiseman  
From: ThinkNL (Charlie Oliver)

ThinkNL is pleased to forward our first, initial recommendations generated through our web site and in dialogue with concerned Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. These and future suggestions are presented without political bias and are focused upon the goal of improving our overall fiscal and social balance. They are meant to be options leading to positive, fiscal evaluation and, hopefully, change.

This communication has a deliberate focus on our elected members. As the Province is challenged with a declining and aging population and growing social costs, inevitably there will be some necessary belt tightening. What better way to lead than to do so by way of example. As a result, these somewhat smaller but symbolic steps; hopefully, will find support from all MHA's and, thus, emphasize the need for reasonable constraint. These recommendations are truly 'low hanging fruit' that can easily and immediately be actioned. We acknowledge that these can indeed provide savings but in so doing represent only the thin edge of the wedge needed to move us to the balance between our current fiscal reality and the current and growing obligations of our social programs.

The initial 3 recommendations for consideration are:

- 15-1-FIN As quickly as possible, change the Pension structure for all MHA's from Defined Benefit (DB) to Defined Contribution (DC). This may require a hybrid structure for those already qualified and/or grandfathering but from the date agreed upon, all future pension benefits to our elected members should be through a DC format.
- 15-2-FIN Not unlike Alberta as it struggles with its fiscal challenges, consider across the board salary reductions for all elected members.
- 15-3-FIN Revisit, update and monitor the expense categories for all MHA's, Government and Crown Corporation employees. Strict travel rules limiting use of business class, meal allowances and other travel expenditures should reflect those as being reasonable in the normal course of business. This sounds and is small in the overall picture; however; it provides the optics of a Government focused on wise fiscal management.

In the vein of transparency we have chosen to post any and all recommendations that we make to our web site [www.thinknl.ca](http://www.thinknl.ca).

We look forward to the continued submission of recommendations for consideration over the coming weeks and months. We have received many suggestions to date. Combining these with our own deliberate evaluation of the various departments and Government operating protocols, we shall continue to present these in a non-partisan, constructive format.