



ENSURING REGULATORY COMPETITIVENESS

Annual Report
Fiscal 2025–2026



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What is Regulatory Burden?

Regulatory burden refers to the time and monetary costs required for businesses to comply with legislation, regulations, policies, procedures, or practices. It can also include the time spent on paperwork and inspections, or government services and internal processes that, when changed, have a business impact. Regulatory burden includes expenditures, fees, and time spent on compliance, including finding information, applying for, and receiving permission from government to operate (permits, licences, and certifications). Taxation, minimum wage, and government spending are excluded.

What Is Red Tape?

Understanding that regulation in some form will always be necessary, *Ensuring Regulatory Competitiveness* aims to ensure that regulations do not become excessive or unnecessarily burdensome. Red tape refers to the excessive burden imposed by regulations and processes which can impact the cost of doing business. These challenges can make it difficult for businesses to comply with requirements or to access programs and services.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MINISTER

As Minister responsible for Opportunities NB (ONB) and for Economic Development and Small Business, I am pleased to share this year's *Ensuring Regulatory Competitiveness* annual report.

Supporting the growth, innovation, and long-term competitiveness of businesses across New Brunswick is a key priority for our government. We have taken important steps to reduce regulatory burden, address interprovincial trade barriers, and improve the business environment, yet we recognize we have only begun laying the foundation for the work required to achieve our goals. This report reflects both the progress made and the areas where continued effort is required.

This past fiscal year, we saw tangible results. Through tools like ONB's Business Navigator service and the Business Impact Assessment process, we achieved reductions in burden, easing the path forward for New Brunswick businesses. Introduced last year, ONB's *Red Tape Feedback Form* lets businesses share their regulatory challenges directly with government. That feedback strengthens our ability to support businesses by ensuring we can hear and investigate their concerns.

Efforts to reduce regulatory burden are strongest when they are consistent, measurable and transparent, and we are working to improve on all these fronts. With support from GNB's Government Reform and Modernization initiative and the New Brunswick Growth Office, we are strengthening coordination across government to reduce barriers, improve processes, and measure results.

In a global context marked by market disruptions and evolving trade pressures, it is more important than ever that we remain focused on creating the conditions for businesses to succeed. Reducing barriers and seeking input from businesses helps foster an environment that promotes economic collaboration and resilience.

I want to thank ONB for its professionalism and resolve in leading this critical work. With innovative tools, partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to listening, ONB continues to deliver meaningful outcomes. Together with our partners in government and the business community, I am optimistic about our shared efforts to strengthen New Brunswick's economic competitiveness.



Honourable Luke Randall
Minister responsible for Opportunities NB
Minister responsible for Economic
Development and Small Business



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

ONB remains steadfast in its commitment to reducing barriers for businesses in New Brunswick by fostering strong connections with the business community and collaborating with government partners. Through the *Ensuring Regulatory Competitiveness* initiative, we continue to advance a modern and effective regulatory environment that supports business growth, innovation, and economic success.

This past year, ONB took steps to further minimize regulatory burden and create efficiencies by helping businesses navigate challenges and identifying opportunities for improvement. ONB's efforts continue to be instrumental in driving measurable outcomes, and we are proud of the work we have done to help streamline the province's regulatory landscape.

New Brunswick's success is a testament to the agility and collaboration between public- and private-sector leaders. These partnerships are central to what we do at ONB, and they empower us to make progress toward our vision of a more competitive and opportunity-rich province.

We look forward to continuing this important work and driving results that make New Brunswick a supportive and dynamic place for businesses to grow and succeed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Traci Simmons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'S' at the end.

Traci Simmons
Chief Executive Officer
Opportunities NB



ENSURING REGULATORY COMPETITIVENESS

Complying with government regulations can present a significant form of regulatory burden. Reducing regulatory burden returns both time and money to the business owner.

The Government of New Brunswick (GNB) is continuously working to create a more competitive regulatory environment that supports economic growth and innovation. The *Ensuring Regulatory Competitiveness* initiative, led by ONB, aims to reduce regulatory burden in New Brunswick. It applies the principles of the *Premiers' Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation*, focused on ensuring that regulation is the lightest touch possible on businesses while still achieving the regulation's objective.

This report showcases the projects completed under the *Ensuring Regulatory Competitiveness* initiative in the 2025–2026 fiscal year. This year, a decrease in regulatory burden was observed under the business impact assessment process ([see page 11](#)), CFIB's regulatory count has been incorporated ([see page 7](#)), and ONB's Business Navigator service continued to make an impact ([see page 13](#)).

THE PREMIERS' CHARTER OF GOVERNING PRINCIPLES FOR REGULATION: A SUMMARY

Experience demonstrates that unnecessary or outdated regulations can hinder economic growth and unduly burden businesses, governments, and the public. New Brunswick and other leading jurisdictions recognize this challenge and guide regulators through an established set of principles.

The Premiers' Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation helps ensure good regulatory governance, along with the full business impact assessment process that is to be completed as part of policy development. Departments that identify a necessary policy outcome have a responsibility to demonstrate that the regulation is required, justified, and represents the lightest touch possible on businesses.

The *Ensuring Regulatory Competitiveness* initiative is focused on collaborating with departments and agencies on the use of the *Charter* to assist in the development of public policy proposals for government.

A summary of the *Charter* principles is as follows:

A. Statement of Fundamental Intent on Regulation

1. The Government will only regulate to achieve its policy objectives.
2. There is a general presumption that regulation should not impose costs and obligations on businesses, social enterprises, individuals, and community groups unless a robust and compelling case has been made.

B. Guidelines for Developing and Assessing Regulation

1. The policy need should be clearly articulated at the outset.
2. Regulation should be the only effective and necessary way to meet the policy need.
3. Regulation should be a tempered response.
4. Regulation should be accountable.
5. Regulation should be accessible and easy to comply with.
6. Regulation should consider economic impact.
7. Regulation is subject to good governance.

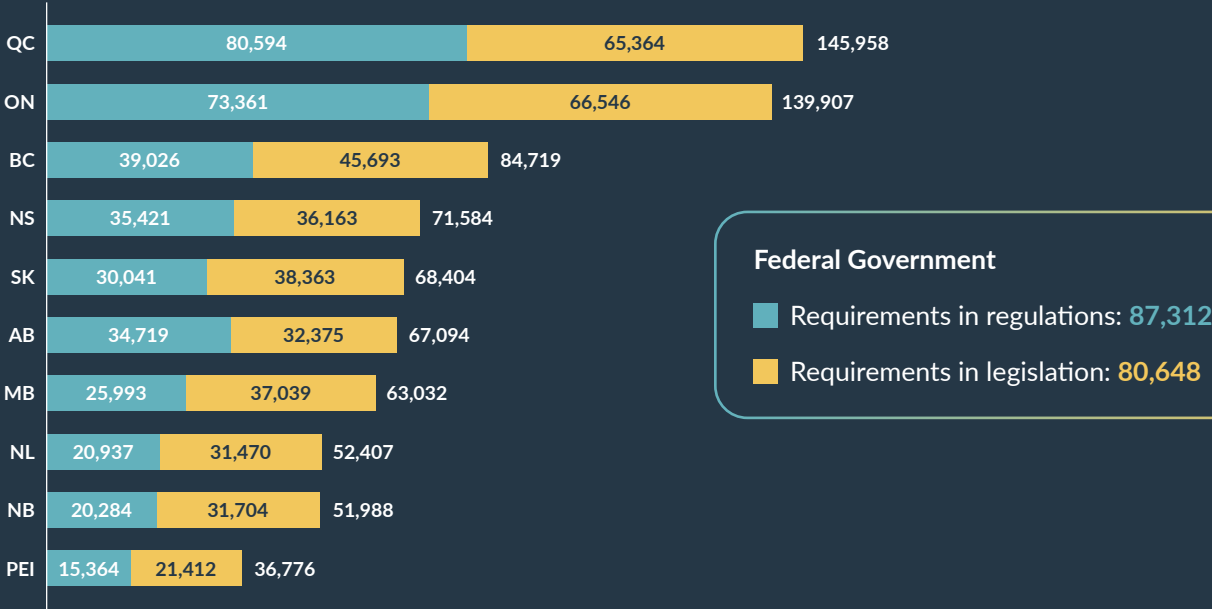
REGULATORY COUNT

ONB has committed to highlighting the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's (CFIB) annual regulatory requirement count in the ONB Regulatory Burden annual report. CFIB is a non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of small and medium-sized businesses on tax policy, laws, and regulation.

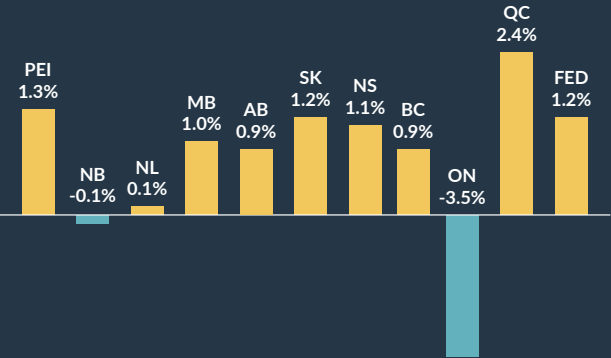
CFIB has produced a document titled *Counting Constraints: A Comprehensive Count of Canada's Regulatory Requirements* for 2024 and, most recently, 2025. To quantify the regulatory burden across Canada, CFIB estimates the number of regulatory requirements and restrictions found in the legislation and regulations of each jurisdiction.

As of 2025, New Brunswick ranks behind PEI as the province with the second-lowest count of regulatory requirements, with 51,988 requirements as defined by CFIB. This amount does not account for population size; CFIB notes that New Brunswick had 7.3 regulations per capita as of 2025. When measuring change in regulatory requirements, New Brunswick and Ontario were the only provinces to note a decrease, with CFIB noting a reduction of 0.1% in New Brunswick and of 3.5% in Ontario.

Total 2025 regulatory requirements in Canada



Year-over-year percentage change in regulatory requirements, 2024–2025



Source: Counting Constraints: A Comprehensive Count of Canada's Regulatory Requirements (2025 edition), available on CFIB's research and economic analysis page. Figures have been adapted for presentation.



CAPTURING BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES: RED TAPE FEEDBACK FORM

While regulation and some levels of regulatory burden are necessary for achieving policy objectives and to help with smooth societal function, excessive regulation or red tape can create challenges and increased costs for New Brunswick businesses.

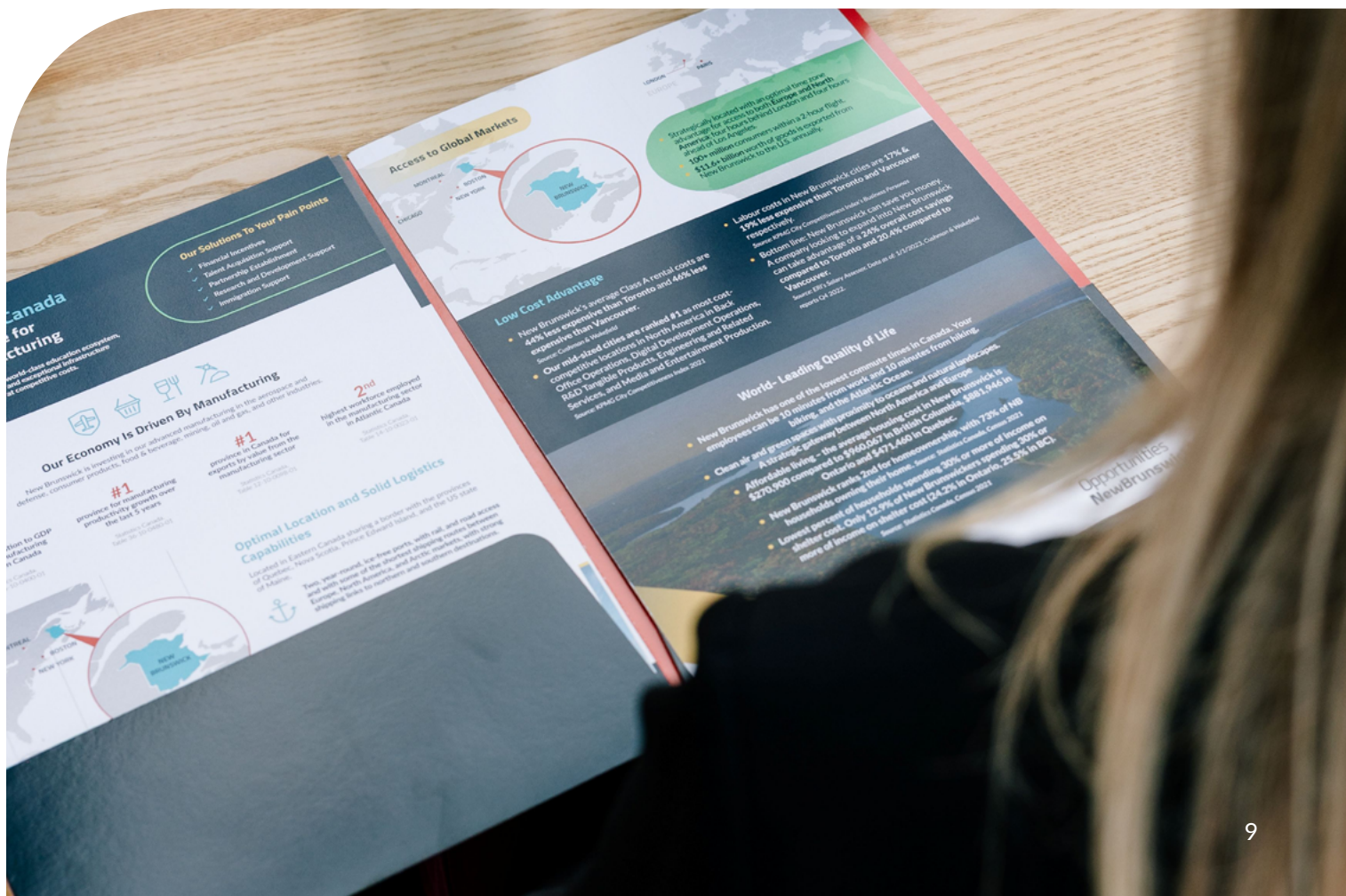
The businesses affected by these regulations are often able to identify red tape but have no formal way to report it to the relevant regulators. As a result, in early 2025 ONB launched the [Red Tape Feedback Form](#) which provides a platform for businesses to relay their experiences and concerns regarding any regulatory burden directly to the government.

Every submission provided through the *Red Tape Feedback Form* is reviewed by ONB. Submissions and issues are investigated in collaboration with the appropriate government department or agency.

Businesses can use the *Red Tape Feedback Form* to report interprovincial trade barriers that have hindered their ability to work, move goods, make investments, or provide services across provincial or territorial boundaries in Canada.

Direct input from businesses on red tape is invaluable in ONB's ongoing efforts to ensure a competitive regulatory environment for businesses in New Brunswick. Businesses can submit feedback on excessive regulation or red tape through the following [webpage](#).

There were 14 submissions to the *Red Tape Feedback Form* in 2025–2026.



RESULTS OVERVIEW

GNB has committed to reducing regulatory burden on business by \$20 million over five years (2022–2027). The two primary programs that measure reductions in regulatory burden across government are the Business Navigator service and the Business Impact Assessment (BIA) Tool. Over the past fiscal year, these two initiatives measured a \$5,974,655 net decrease in burden.

Fiscal Year	BIA Net Savings	Business Navigator Savings	Total Savings
2022–2023	\$35,384,377	\$777,238	\$36,161,615
2023–2024	\$19,090,051	\$993,243	\$20,083,294
2024–2025	-\$1,735,064	\$1,087,014	-\$648,050
2025–2026	\$4,878,967	\$1,095,688	\$5,974,655

Four-year total savings:	\$61,571,514
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BUSINESS IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: YEAR IN REVIEW

Every time a GNB department or agency proposes to change an act or regulation that may affect the regulatory burden experienced by New Brunswick businesses, a BIA must be completed. The BIA is a tool that requires the department to answer several questions that check the proposed regulatory change against the principles of the *Premiers' Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation* and quantifies the financial impact of the proposal on New Brunswick businesses.

In the 2025–2026 fiscal year, four regulatory changes were implemented* involving BIAs. There were eight full BIAs completed in 2025–2026, and ten additional reviews were conducted and ruled out of scope. The following is a summary of the assessments completed by each department or agency in this reporting period. The net impact reflects the sum of the total decreases in regulatory burden less the total increases.

**BIAs are completed during the regulation development process. ONB only tracks the regulatory burden calculated under a BIA in this report once the regulatory changes have been implemented and are "in force". This would mean the associated bill has been approved by Legislature or the regulation has been approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and the regulatory changes are enforceable.*



Department

Natural Resources and Energy Development

Net Impact

\$5,411,300 burden decrease

Description

The department made amendments to the *Motor Vehicle Act* so that the Minister may issue special annual permits to operate oversize logging truck configurations on specified segments of Crown forest roads as defined in the *Crown Lands and Forests Act*. These changes enable businesses to use oversized vehicles, unlocking significant operational cost savings.

Department

Justice and Public Safety

Net Impact

Burden decrease could not be quantified

Description

The department adopted the 2020 editions of the *National Building Code of Canada*, *National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings*, *National Fire Code*, and *National Plumbing Code*. This adoption allows for modern construction practices in the province. Adoption of the 2020 codes is likely to improve labour mobility and will allow New Brunswick to remain competitive with other provincial and territorial jurisdictions across Canada who have already adopted or are in the process of adopting the 2020 version of the codes.

Department

Post-secondary Education, Training, and Labour

Net Impact

\$532,333 burden increase

Description

The department introduced changes to the regulation of private career colleges. It includes new requirements regarding program and instructor approvals, student record retention, reporting, greater transparency in student contracts, the provision of ongoing security, and fee structures.



BUSINESS NAVIGATORS: YEAR IN REVIEW

ONB's business navigators provide tailored one-on-one support for entrepreneurs and business owners navigating the various regulatory challenges associated with starting, owning, and operating a business.

The team uses its established network of public and private sector partners to help business owners access the information they need. Navigators focus their support on topics like business registration, inspection requirements, permits, licences, and more. Leveraging a case management approach, the business navigators work with business owners to advance solutions specific to their needs, regardless of where they are in their entrepreneurial journey.

In the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the business navigators:

- responded to **1,107** inquiries from New Brunswick businesses. This includes 781 cases and 326 “quick hits”;
- reduced regulatory burden by **\$1,095,688** for local businesses; and
- had a **97.5%** client satisfaction rate.

ONB's responsive, friendly, and helpful business navigators operate during regular ONB hours — 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, and can be reached by phone at **1-833-799-7966** or by email at nav@navnb.ca.

CONNECT WITH US

General Inquiries:

Phone: 506-453-5471

Toll Free: 1-855-746-4662
(North America)

Fax: 506-444-4277

Email: info@ONBCanada.ca

Business Navigator Service:

Phone: 1-833-799-7966

Email: nav@navnb.ca

ONBCanada.ca

