

## Atlantic Canada Economics Association



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### Atlantic Canada Economics Association Raises Questions on Bill 100

WOLFVILLE – The Atlantic Canada Economics Association (ACEA), which represents 60 economists working together on Atlantic Canada’s economic issues, voiced its concerns Wednesday about Nova Scotia’s *Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act*, better known as Bill 100. The ACEA voted unanimously at its Annual General Meeting on October 25, 2015, to publicly address the *Act’s* serious implications for academic freedom, generally, and for economists in particular.

The ACEA believes that suspension of collective bargaining agreements will prevent academics from having meaningfully contributing to reasonable discussions about how to most effectively achieve the *Act’s* objectives. Universities are most effective in meeting the needs of the province and the students when all parts of the institution — students, faculty, administration and the Board of Governors — work together and with a common purpose. The ACEA fears that the *Act* creates, *de facto*, a university system managed by a few people within the provincial government and that, in result, Nova Scotia universities will no longer be accountable to their students, faculty, and Boards of Governors.

The ACEA is further concerned that the threat to academic freedom—arising from the *Act’s* provisions requiring academic research be solely directed toward commercialization and business needs—will prevent Nova Scotia’s academics from doing their job: a job which includes, among other activities, supporting local governments, charitable and not-for-profit organizations, artistic endeavours, the general public and either governing or opposition parties at both the federal and provincial levels.

The *Act’s focus on the* commercialization of research, moreover, is disconcerting because commercialization arrangements often require non-disclosure and secrecy. Non-disclosure and secrecy, of course, would make research anything but transparent. Thus, taken together as well as separately, these provisions in the *Act* are of particular concern to the ACEA, as they stand to prevent its members from performing the Association’s mission, which is: **the production and dissemination of policy-relevant research focused on Atlantic Canada.**

We encourage the Government of Nova Scotia to repeal or amend the *Act* to enable Nova Scotia’s university system to continue to provide world-class post secondary education and research for the benefit of Nova Scotians, all Canadians, international students and citizens of the world.

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