



**East Coast Prison Justice Society**

1741 Brunswick Street, Suite 120

Halifax, NS B3J 3X8

Contact: [eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com](mailto:eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com)

<https://www.eastcoastprisonjustice.ca/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**East Coast Prison Justice Society Condemns Nova Scotia Budget Cuts**

Halifax, Nova Scotia - March 9, 2026

East Coast Prison Justice Society stands with the [thousands-strong coalition of individuals and community organizations](#) across the province speaking out in resistance to Nova Scotia's devastating budget cuts. We join [Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq \(the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs\)](#), the [African Nova Scotian community](#), and [disability justice advocates](#) in rejecting a budget that deepens colonial, racist, and ableist systems of inequality.

These cuts will fall hardest - and most calculatedly - on those most structurally vulnerable to poverty, homelessness, institutionalization, and incarceration.

Persons of African Descent, Indigenous persons, and persons with disabilities—including those seeking to age in place and [those finally moving into community after decades of institutionalization](#)—will be disproportionately affected. So too will the many thousands of people in this province living in poverty, for whom basic supports such as bus passes and dental care (now facing cuts) are essential to daily survival.

When governments cut the social conditions that make stability possible—income supports, housing, health care, transportation, and community services—they deepen the very inequalities that push people into contact with the criminal legal system. Austerity does not reduce state spending; it shifts the cost into policing, courts, and jails.

The cuts will also significantly undermine access to justice. The government plans to reduce the provincial workforce by 5%—approximately 1,000 jobs—each year over the next three years. The Department of Justice is expected to be among the hardest hit, [with 83 justice-related positions projected to be eliminated in the first year alone.](#)

The budget [specifically targets Black and Indigenous programming](#), alongside several justice-related programs that support legal access and systemic reform. The Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq (IB&M) Initiative at the Schulich School of Law—established following the Marshall Inquiry to increase African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq representation in the legal profession—will see its provincial funding reduced by approximately 20%. Funding has also been cut to the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, which provides essential public legal education and information services. At the same time, the province has reduced funding for restorative justice initiatives, weakening investments in community-based responses to harm that reduce reliance on courts and incarceration.



**East Coast Prison Justice Society**

1741 Brunswick Street, Suite 120

Halifax, NS B3J 3X8

Contact: [eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com](mailto:eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com)

<https://www.eastcoastprisonjustice.ca/>

As these cuts are proposed, the province has doubled down on its full-throated commitment to an economic strategy centered on resource extraction, including [fracking-based natural gas development and uranium mining](#). Funding for [environmental sustainability initiatives has been majorly reduced](#), while government priorities shift toward [favouring extraction over necessary ecological protections](#). These choices will intensify the environmental and health impacts already disproportionately borne by land-based First Nations communities and African Nova Scotian communities, as well as persons with disabilities.

These cuts are as short-sighted as they are cruel. They will generate far greater costs than they reduce, in both the short and long term -- Costs paid through our human rights, worsening health outcomes, increased poverty, and growing pressures on already strained justice, disability support, and health care systems. When government austerity measures strip away social support and access to justice is weakened, the predictable result is a deeper entrenchment of mass incarceration.

The government may believe Nova Scotia's justice-seeking and arts communities are too fragmented to fight back. We intend to prove otherwise.

We invite you to join us and others from Nova Scotia's justice-seeking and arts communities this Tuesday, March 10th at noon at the provincial legislature to speak out against these unjust cuts. Stand with us in support of a caring and just economy—and a budget that reflects the world we want to build.

Sheila Wildeman, ECPJS Board Co-Chair

Sonya Klein, ECPJS Coordinator

Press contact: [eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com](mailto:eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com)