



# THE BEACON



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*Where Tomorrow's Public  
Policy Begins Today*

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## **Part One: Hands Off! No need for regulatory hand-holding on the “new media” cyber-road.**

From iPhones to WiFi, the CRTC is looking to hold your hand along the “new media” cyber-road. This Commentary explains why it’s time for some de-regulation in Canada’s communications industry.

***Hands Off! Why government-free new media works***, based on a submission to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), makes the case for rethinking the way Canada regulates broadcasting, and the specific case to back off from restricting the new media.

It cuts through the bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo and addresses the big issue of whether we should increase government control over broadcasting content.

Late in 2008, the CRTC issued a notice inviting consultation on Canadian broadcasting in new media. AIMS’ submission, prepared by Director of Research Ian Munro, makes clear that by focusing too much on the bureaucratic jargon in the notice of consultation, we’re in danger of missing the opportunity to truly embrace the potential offered by new media.

Munro writes, “We do not see how Canadian consumers benefit from state-imposed restrictions on the types of broadcasting content that they may access and therefore we recommend that the process of dismantling the CanCon framework begin. This would include rewriting the objectives of the *Broadcasting Act* so that our current

legislation reflects the realities of 2008, rather than 1958 or 1978."

To read the complete Commentary, [click here](#).

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### **Part Two: Open Door: New Brunswick heeds AIMS' research & takes first step to make schools accountable.**

Parents and students in New Brunswick have a new tool to help improve public education. The provincial government has followed AIMS' recommendations and released a school by school report card of student results. AIMS' education research has repeatedly shown that public reporting of provincial and international tests at the school level helps improve student results.

In [this op-ed](#) that appeared in the New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal, AIMS Senior Policy Analyst Bobby O'Keefe called it a first step. He says the next is to push for local control and choice so the school community can use the information to improve student achievement.

A few days later, [this editorial](#) in the same newspaper cited AIMS' research was cited as proof that publishing school results on standardized testing and teacher assigned grades improves student results. And it encourages parents to use the information to ask the tough questions.

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### **Part Three: A Less Taxing Road to Recovery: Now is the time.**

New Brunswick generated national attention this summer when its tax reform discussion paper proposed lower income taxes for business and individuals. Even with the added proposal to increase consumption taxes, residents and business in other provinces were looking to New Brunswick to set the standard for real tax relief. In its submission to New Brunswick's bi-party committee reviewing the discussion paper, AIMS said the province should go further.

As the global economic crisis deepens, NB Premier Shawn Graham says his government may have to back away from significant tax reform. AIMS Executive Vice President Charles Cirtwill says this is actually the best time for tax reform. To read more, [click here](#).

***A Fork in the Road . . . on the Road to Growth*** is based on AIMS submission to the NB legislative committee. It explains that shifting the tax burden from income taxes to consumption taxes will provide a boost for investment and job creation. Options include a two-percentage-point hike in the provincial share of the Harmonized Sales Tax and a British Columbia-style tax on carbon emissions. The Commentary also proposes replacing the four existing personal income tax brackets with a flat tax of 10 per cent.

To read *A Fork in the Road*, [click here](#).

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## Part Four: The high cost of gasoline price regulation: It's money out of our pockets

Gas price regulation costs money and we're the ones paying. That's the conclusion of a report commissioned by the Nova Scotia government. So when the same government announced it will continue gas price regulation, AIMS Senior Policy Analyst Bobby O'Keefe had to ask why. The resulting op-ed appeared in newspapers across the province.

Click on title to read [Remind me again how gas regulation is "working"?](#)

Follow [this link](#) to read more AIMS' material on gasoline price regulation.

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## Part Five: Making headlines: From education to regulation to equalization.

**Charles Cirtwill: Alternative Strategies for Post Secondary Education** - This posting on The Clever Canuck blog explains that AIMS Executive Vice President Charles Cirtwill is on the right track when he talked about reforms within Canada's post-secondary education system.

**Serious economic challenges may delay tax reform: N.B. premier** - The New Brunswick government is hinting it will delay its tax reform initiative because of the global meltdown. Called for comment, AIMS President Brian Lee Crowley explained that the reform is needed. He says at the very least the government should begin phasing in the tax cuts.

**A legacy for generation Z** - This editorial in the Calgary Herald uses AIMS' work on non-renewable resource revenues to make its point. AIMS has repeatedly published material that tells governments revenues from non-renewable resources (such as oil & gas) should not be squandered on day to day operations.

**Christmas retail rush begins: Metro retail industry still booming despite uncertain economy** - Christmas shopping may be keeping the stores full in Moncton, but AIMS Director of Research Ian Munro points out people may also be adjusting their spending given these troubled economic times.

**Equalization: End the nightmare** - The dream of equalization, of comparable services for all Canadians, has turned into the nightmare of entrenched disparity and dependence. In this op-ed, AIMS Executive Vice President Charles Cirtwill explains how equalization perpetuates the very inequities it is intended to diminish.

**Don't wait for minister, official says: Gateway Red tape, not infrastructure, blocks trade corridor, think-tank says** - The news media turned to AIMS for comment on a go forward plan for the Atlantic Gateway in light of Ottawa's recent promise to set spending priorities.

**Province's equalization payments increase** - As New Brunswick prepares to receive more equalization money from Ottawa than it projected earlier in the year, AIMS Executive Vice President Charles Cirtwill suggest the provincial government

should spend the 'extra' money wisely.

**Class dismissed** - This column by Halifax writer and journalism professor Stephen Kimber, questions whether parents and students are being short-changed in the recent review of Nova Scotia school governance. His comments mirror AIMS' recent Commentary "Yes, Minister" which urges a full discussion of all the options.

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### Part Six: Policy wonk wanted: AIMS seeks Director of Research

It will likely be one of the most frustrating, but rewarding jobs of your career, in arguably one of the most beautiful and affordable cities in the country. AIMS, based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, is looking for a Director of Research, as well as researchers & policy analysts.

This is your opportunity to make a difference, to be heard, to question the bland, standard and everyday. Follow **this link** to the job postings on the AIMS website to see whether you have what it takes to meet the AIMS' challenge.

**Click here** to learn more.

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