

May 29 2018

To: Minister McKenna, Environment and Climate Change Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Re: Request for Designation for CEAA Federal Assessment - Northern Pulp Effluent Treatment Facility

Minister McKenna,

I write to you today on behalf of the Council of Canadians and our nearly 100 000 members across Canada who work together for justice in our communities and our country. We have almost 70 community chapters where hardworking and dedicated Canadians are working to ensure that our water is protected from pollution and corporate ownership, our healthcare system meets the needs of Canadians, our energy sector is moving swiftly away from fossil fuels, our international trade deals prioritize people over corporations, and our democracy is vibrant and meaningful.

Today I am writing to support the request from fishermen's organizations from Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Pictou Landing First Nation to have Northern Pulp's Effluent Treatment Project designated for Federal Environmental Assessment under Section 14 of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) 2012.

The legacy of broken promises surrounding the Northern Pulp mill in Abercrombie, Nova Scotia is one of Nova Scotia's biggest disgraces. For more than 50 years this mill has changed hands between companies looking to make the biggest profit for the smallest investment in Nova Scotia's economy, communities, and environment. All the while, our provincial government has allowed the mill's owners to run roughshod over our resources and our democracy. Currently the toxic effluent from the mill is dumped into Boat Harbour, which is in the middle of Pictou Landing First Nation. For decades this Mi'kmaq community has lived with the presence of toxic chemicals in their backyard, and both the mill owners and the Government of Nova Scotia have failed to address this clear instance of environmental racism and continued mistreatment of Indigenous peoples.

The company has consistently misled Mi'kmaq and the broader Nova Scotia public about the operations and clean-up efforts at the mill, and exerts undue power over decision makers in the provincial government.

As you likely know, the Government of Nova Scotia signed an indemnity agreement with the mill owners in 1995 in which the Province agreed to pay the costs of remediating Boat Harbour. Since then, the Province has done very little to improve the quality of Boat Harbour, and Nova Scotians recognize this as an attempt to avoid the costs associated with the clean up. This, paired with the overall inability of Nova Scotia Environment to adequately enforce

environmental laws and regulations as demonstrated by the [Auditor General](#), has resulted in a widespread mistrust and lack of faith in the Government of Nova Scotia's ability to adequately represent the people of Nova Scotia in decisions around the mill.

Now, as a result of the communities no longer accepting that the effluent must be dumped into Boat Harbour, the mill owner has proposed piping the mill effluent directly into the Northumberland Strait. This is extremely unwise, as the Strait is an economically and culturally critical fishing ground for Mi'kmaq and non-Indigenous fishers, which contributes extremely significantly to the economy of the area and Nova Scotia as a whole. This is not a solution to the Abercrombie mill pollution problem – this is just another example of the mill owners trying to skirt their responsibilities and pass the buck to the people of Nova Scotia, PEI, New Brunswick, and the Mi'kmaq of the Agg Piktuk district.

The result of the legacy of government and industry failure is that there is no faith that this company will operate within the guidelines set out by the Government of Nova Scotia, and that those guidelines will not be suitable to begin with. There is also no faith that the upcoming provincial environmental assessment looking at the proposal to pipe effluent directly into the Northumberland Strait will have an outcome that is in the true interests of the people, particularly the fishers, of Nova Scotia and beyond.

This effluent pipe would not only impact Nova Scotia but also people and resources in PEI and New Brunswick. This decision should not be left solely to the Government of Nova Scotia.

We ask instead that Environment and Climate Change Canada take on this environment assessment as is permitted under Section 14 of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) 2012. I anticipate that a federal assessment will find that dumping pulp mill effluent laden with chlorine, furans, and dioxins directly into a prime fishing ground in the Northumberland Strait will have adverse environmental impacts and will not be permitted to go forward.

Sincerely,

Robin Tress
Council of Canadians