



Media Release

December 20, 2019

We applaud your decision, Premier McNeil: Friends of the Northumberland Strait and Ecojustice

Pictou, Nova Scotia: “We are overjoyed that Premier McNeil, on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia, has stood by the promise to close Boat Harbour on January 31, 2020,” says Jill Graham-Scanlan, President of Friends of the Northumberland Strait (FONS). “We recognize the many losses PLFN has suffered for over 50 years that can never be recovered, and we rejoice with PLFN that this long injustice will end. We look forward to seeing the polluted waters of Boat Harbour restored to become A’s’e’k again, a place of peace, healing and plenty.”

“Premier McNeil made a courageous decision,” says James Gunvaldsen Klaassen of Ecojustice. “He did the right thing for Pictou Landing First Nation, for the vulnerable environment of the Northumberland Strait and those who make their living from it. It was promising to hear that the Premier is committed to cushioning the blow for mill and forestry workers during the transition of the forestry industry and moving more quickly to implementing the Lahey report.”

“While we rejoice at this decision, our sympathy is with those who face job loss and unknown changes in their industry,” says Graham-Scanlan. “We agree that the responsibility for these losses rests with Northern Pulp. From the beginning, the company has delayed, they have refused to consider any other option than a pipe in the Strait, and they have not shown that their proposed new facility can meet environmental standards.”

“We don’t buy Northern Pulp’s claim that they did not know what was needed,” says Gunvaldsen Klaassen. “Their task from day one was to provide solid scientific evidence that the project would not cause environmental harm. They didn’t do so, despite having two chances to do this - and the Minister gave them a third chance on Tuesday. The instructions

for the Terms of Reference for the Focus Report were very clear, and Northern Pulp did not provide all the required information.”

Graham-Scanlan says that she is pleased that Premier McNeil announced a transition plan, with funding and staffing, to move towards a diversified forestry industry that is not dependent on one major player. “We look forward to a win-win transition of the forest industry in a way that will benefit local businesses, communities and the environment for many years to come. We look forward to working with our neighbours towards a thriving Pictou County built on a healthy and sustainable environment,” Graham-Scanlan adds.