



FRIENDS OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND STRAIT

[friendsofthenorthumberlandstrait.ca](http://friendsofthenorthumberlandstrait.ca) | [info@friendsofthenorthumberland.ca](mailto:info@friendsofthenorthumberland.ca)

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## **FONS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT BOAT HARBOUR CLOSURE**

Pictou, NS: Billboards depicting the grim reality of Boat Harbour and calling on Premier McNeil and all Nova Scotia MLAs to keep the promise to close Boat Harbour on 31 January 2020 are greeting motorists in locations throughout Halifax Regional Municipality.

The billboards were launched last week as part of a campaign organized by Friends of the Northumberland Strait and endorsed by Pictou Landing First Nation. The campaign aims to raise public awareness, educate people on the history of Boat Harbour, and show Nova Scotia politicians that there is broad public support to Honour the Boat Harbour closure date.

“Pictou Landing First Nation has born the burden of Boat Harbour alone for over 50 years,” says FONS president, Jill Graham-Scanlan. “But as one of our province’s worst cases of environmental racism, it is a burden that all Nova Scotians need to share.” The group hopes the billboards’ strong images and words encourage people to learn more.

As part of the campaign, FONS is asking Nova Scotians to take one minute to send a letter supporting the closure of Boat Harbour on schedule to Premier McNeil and all Nova Scotia MLA’s through their website, [friendsofthenorthumberlandstrait.ca](http://friendsofthenorthumberlandstrait.ca). The website also provides information on the history leading to the Boat Harbour Act.

Graham-Scanlan says that over 1200 letters have been sent by concerned citizens since the campaign launched two weeks ago. Two new documentaries, Ellen Page’s *There’s Something in the Water* and CBC’s *The Mill*, are drawing attention to the impact of Boat Harbour on the Pictou Landing First Nation community. Both films are showing this week at the Atlantic Film Festival,

*Honour Boat Harbour Closure* lawn signs produced by FONS are also sprouting up throughout Pictou County and beyond. “We’ve had a hard time keeping them in stock and

are on our third print run," says Graham-Scanlan. "We've had requests from Cape Breton to the South Shore for the signs."

As the Legislature readies to reconvene, FONS hopes that the Premier and MLA's take notice of the wide support for closure of Boat Harbour on schedule. "We know pressure from certain sectors of the forest industry is mounting to break the Boat Harbour Act, and that an exaggerated picture of what life without Northern Pulp would be like is being presented," says Graham-Scanlan. "With government policies to ease the transition, we believe there is a good future for forestry even with Boat Harbour closing on schedule."

Graham-Scanlan says her group believes that Northern Pulp is responsible for the decisions they have made, which has left the company far from having a viable plan for effluent disposal and being able to meet the Boat Harbour deadline. "Pictou Landing First Nation is not to blame and Premier McNeil is not to blame. Three government parties unanimously agreed to the Boat Harbour Act in 2015. It was the right thing to do then and it is the right thing to do now," Graham-Scanlan says.

In addition to five billboards focusing on Boat Harbour, two billboards carry a "No Pipe" message, and focus on the importance of fisheries to the Nova Scotia economy. Fishers from Nova Scotia, PEI, New Brunswick and Pictou Landing First Nation depend on a healthy fishery for their livelihoods, and are working together to oppose Northern Pulp's plan to discharge pulp effluent into the Northumberland Strait.

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**Attachments:**

1. Images of Halifax billboards
2. Image of lawn sign