



Fore Immediate Release  
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## **Unifor’s call for “shovels in the ground today” is an act of desperation: FONS**

Pictou, NS: Friends of the Northumberland Strait (FONS) sees Unifor’s call for “shovels in the ground today” as an act of desperation.

"It was shocking to hear the union ask that numerous laws of Nova Scotia and Canada be broken, to make up for Northern Pulp not being anywhere near to having an environmentally acceptable plan for their effluent," says Jill Graham-Scanlan, president of FONS. "There is no reason to assume that Northern Pulp’s plan will ever meet environmental regulations or ever get approved."

Graham-Scanlan feels Unifor is very loose with their claims. "They call an effluent treatment plant a water treatment centre, and claim that what comes out at the end is clean water. Exactly the same thing was said to Pictou Landing First Nation in 1967 - and we know how that turned out."

The fact is, even treated pulp effluent that meets regulations is harming fish and fish habitat at 77% of Canadian pulp mills, according to a federal government study.

Allan MacCarthy of the Northumberland Fishermen’s Association (NFA) agrees that Unifor is too casual about environmental risks. "Mr. Dias states this is not an environment versus jobs argument. His solution is to skip all environmental assessment, get the shovels in the ground, and go straight to Nova Scotia’s next environmental disaster," says MacCarthy, who has fished out of Caribou Harbour for 40 years. MacCarthy points out, "Mr. Dias admits a fish mortality study can’t be completed on schedule. But according to his environmental expertise, this should have no significant effect on the fishery. I can’t say I see the sense in that."

Both groups are critical of Unifor’s support for an extension to the Boat Harbour Act. "Make no mistake, Unifor wants an extension to the Boat Harbour Act, while avoiding using the words," says Graham-Scanlan. "That would be a continuation of what is recognized as environmental racism."

She points out that Unifor does not seem to understand that treated effluent has been going into Boat Harbour Basin since the early 70's, resulting in the environmental disaster that is costing the province hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up. "What Unifor is proposing is the same old, same old that got us where we are today. The only change would be that the effluent treatment system would be on the mill site. And you cannot clean up Boat Harbour while 60-80 million litres of treated effluent continue to pour into it every day."

Graham-Scanlan and MacCarthy both point out that the Unifor funded economic impact study exaggerates the impact of a Northern Pulp closure and underestimates the importance of the fishery industry to Nova Scotia. "Unifor's consultant claims 90% of the forestry industry will crash if Northern Pulp closes - but their own figures show potential job loss of 2700 in an 11,500 person industry -- less than 25%," says Graham-Scanlan.

"On the other hand, Unifor showed they either don't understand the fisheries sector - or they don't care," adds MacCarthy. "More than 18,000 people are employed in the fishing industry across the province. Seafood accounts for more than 25% of Nova Scotia's export value, while pulp accounts for only 4.5% according to Industry Canada figures. Gardner Pinfold did not mention that fact."

"Unifor wants the province and the Federal government to disregard laws made to protect the environment, people's health, and the community of Pictou Landing First Nation and just let Northern Pulp move ahead. We are more determined than ever that there will be no pipe in the Northumberland Strait, and that Boat Harbour will close on 31 January, 2020," MacCarthy says.