

Hello,

My name is Kate Grant. I am 34 years old and I would like to tell you why I think putting a pipe into the strait would be a tragedy.

When I was growing up, I spent a lot of time at my Dad's house in Caribou; the white house on the hill beside the old Fougere's Restaurant with a clear view of Caribou Harbour, the end of Caribou Island, and on to Prince Edward Island. We would walk down to the ferry and watch the cars come in, take a swim, or hop ice cakes that were on the small beach right there. When I wasn't spending time with my Dad, I was at my Mom's house on the Pictou waterfront in what is currently the Pictou Puffin Bed and Breakfast back when it was called the W.H. Davies House. From the perch on my windowsill in my third floor bedroom I had a stunning view of quite a bit of Pictou Harbour, spanning all the way from Pictou Landing, to the causeway and the rolling hills beyond, and directly in the heart of the scenery, sticking out like a tiny industrial city that never sleeps, was the Mill.

At our family-run Bed and Breakfast, we would often have people show up to our home only to be revolted so much by the cloud and smell emanating from The Mill that they would get ill and have to leave the town. This happened a notable number of times – where else do people leave because the air is suffocating them? I have included an excerpt from The Lonely Planet and their view on the town of Pictou: “Many people stop in Pictou for a side trip or as a stopover via the ferry from Prince Edward Island, but it's also an enjoyable base for exploring Northumberland Strait. Water St, the main street, is lined with interesting shops and beautiful old stone buildings. Unfortunately, the views are blighted by a giant, smoking pulp mill on the opposite side of the estuary; the mill has long been slated for closure due to environmental concerns.” (<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/canada/nova-scotia/pictou>)

I personally have learned a ton about the planet and culture, made many friends and have some really neat experiences because of this unique opportunity where people from all over the world would come to my house. It enabled me the opportunity to travel to French Polynesia where sustainable aquaculture in the form of Black Pearls was a big deal and now the norm because you have to be able to SUSTAIN, not pillage and destroy. I have seen what sustainability can do, that it is possible. What unique opportunities did the Mill afford me? Stinky air that caused people to leave and my house to stink, cancer and premature deaths, a polluted harbour not fit for even sticking your toes in (including the 4 tonnes of mercury they spilled onto the bottom below the plant, oops right?). Which life experiences would you choose? With tourism and culture come people who want to partake in outdoor leisure activities. Pictou is a bedroom town, there are not very many jobs there but with tourism able to thrive, that could completely change! People will come to the town from miles away to tap into that beauty (as with Chester and Lunenburg and that whole shore! Even Tatamagouche is up and coming and they all have one thing in common – NO MILL.)

I also spent a lot of time working my first real jobs at The Customs House Inn as a teenager and was a “fly on the wall” when a group of marine biologists were doing tests on the shellfish in the harbour – I have included a reference link to the page of Dr. Sylvie St. Jean's findings (in a nutshell) and it directly notes The Mill's toxins as being one of 2 causes of leukaemia the shellfish acquired. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/33547288_Detecting_p53_family_proteins_in_haemocytic_leukemia_cells_of_Mytilus_edulis_from_Pictou_Harbour_Nova_Scotia_Canada

My whole life has been spent in and around the water, most notably the waters around Caribou and Pictou Islands and they are very special marine places, places that don't exist in quantity or quality on Earth right now. Every summer was spent at Caribou Park Beach, Pictou Island, and boating in the strait with friends. My husband and I even got married on the beach at the very end of Caribou Island and then had our honeymoon at a friends' cottage on that beach. By the lighthouse, at low tide you can walk seemingly almost to Caribou Wharf across the small harbour, finding creatures like hundreds of rainbow starfish, skates, huge snails, clams , giant quahogs, I have even found weird

worms with hundreds of legs and a rainbow iridescence TWICE on Caribou shores(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polychaete>). There are seals that hang out on the reef at the end of the island and Canada Geese and seagulls and sometimes even eagles! When you walk out to the end of the reef at low tide, you are completely surrounded by water with no way back except the way you came and a shelf that drops off before your eyes into the abyss of the strait, knowing only mere feet away could be a massive whale.

Summer days on Pictou Island were spent snorkelling and diving in clean, clear water with an almost white sand bottom. A tiny gem in the middle of the strait, it is home to some very interesting marine life including hundreds of seals and rumoured great white sharks, among others, thousands of sand dollars and starfish, whales, porpoises, and seals that circle the boat for hours chasing the shoals of herring that pass underneath, sharing with diving ganets and other seabirds. Summer nights on Pictou Island were often spent trekking through spooky old trails in the middle of the night to go swimming at John Dan's cove, and one lucky night, in 2009, we encountered bioluminescent algae which I had only ever encountered in French Polynesia and did not think it was possible, nor had I ever seen it in all my years in the water around here. (I have included a video of someone kayaking in the Northwest Arm in Halifax experiencing the same thing as we did for proof that it can and does happen in N.S.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9U1JSGNzNZ8>)

Back to the great white sharks. In recent years, a group called Ocearch from Cape Cod has been coming to Nova Scotia on their shark tracking expeditions, following previously tagged sharks up the coast to what they have learned may be a breeding ground for these magnificent creatures and also tagging newfound sharks in the area. It is the first time they have been able to track these sharks to a potential breeding ground and is the first insight we have into how these sharks reproduce – it has not been known until now where and how great white's populate. (I have included a newspaper article from this year's expedition for just a brief overview of what they do <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/sharks-ocearch-nova-scotia-expedition-1.5293273>) It is no surprise though, as back in 1983 fishermen pulled the second largest great white shark that had ever been recorded from tangled fishing gear just off of Rustico, P.E.I. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/great-white-shark-from-1983-attracts-new-attention-1.2712914>). Is it really that far-fetched to extrapolate that if there are sharks that migrate vast distances that are hanging out in the water off of Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island, that they might also be in the Northumberland Strait? And if these sharks are protected and they have for the first time made ground-breaking discoveries on the animal, shouldn't the water they literally reproduce in, stay protected as well?

In speaking about reproduction with this ecosystem, the effluent coming out of that pipe will kill everything in this delicate, shallow ecosystem. My Dad was a pilot back in the 1980's and he told me when they would fly over the strait, there would be a visible black tentacle of pollution that stuck out 100 km into the water from the shore of Boat Harbour. Chemistry is chemistry, and I have been told that Caribou Harbour is a nursery for shellfish, already fragile and in need of protection, and not to add extra stressors to it. I have also heard that it doesn't even need pollutants to kill off whatever vulnerable flora and fauna are in there, even warm fresh water is enough to completely wipe out saltwater species.

Once the balance of nature has shifted, it is incredibly difficult to get it back to the same state it was in before it was destroyed. The impact is severe and long lasting. For the sake of capitalism, another area that is depended upon by so many humans for both leisure and to put food on their tables, will be ruined and Pictou will then be COMPLETELY surrounded by sludge and wastewater. There will be nowhere to escape. Boat Harbour and Pictou Harbour will take a lifetime, if not more, to bounce back. If you put a pipe into the strait, you are taking away the last bit of outdoor recreation for nature lovers and people who generally know that being outside, and not indoors watching t.v. or being on a computer all the time, are how you stay healthy. It is incredibly hard to breathe with that Pulp Mill still going. The residents of Pictou and Pictou Landing will still suffer the ill health effects caused by the emissions from the Mill.

Another point is that right there in Caribou Harbour dock the Ferries that take people from our province onto another. The very last thing that those people are going to encounter leaving our beautiful province is the sight, and stench as far as they can see and smell and absolutely no marine life as they exit onto the next journey through our Country. How disgusting. How shameful. What happened to being an ambassador, a good host?

There are 2 types of humans coming out of this whole scene – there are humans who seemingly want money and don't leave their house for anything outdoor recreation wise and live to work – at a dirty old Mill polluting and causing direct harm to others. The other type of human, are the ones who enjoy other human interaction – travellers, people who crave culture, who enjoy learning about real life and how life is done other places, how enjoyable life can be and who understand that human interaction – not bleached TOILET PAPER, is going to “make the world a better place”. And isn't that phrase important right now? In a time where pristine nature is so rare, and climate change is so glaring? Isn't it time to be fair to the people who have complained enough is enough? Letting tourism, fishing and

pleasant human interaction free of air pollutants and water pollutants have a chance is only FAIR at this point. How is it fair to RUIN someone else's livelihood to take for your own? They have taken from so many people all these years – in the form of literal shortening of life spans, now they want to keep it going and destroy the only thing Pictou has left other than dirty business?

And let's at least be honest with ourselves that NP has NOT been honest with us over the years. If Joan Baxter's book "The Mill" has taught me anything, it is that the Mill has done more shady dealings behind closed doors to purposefully take advantage of, and leave in the dark, the citizens who are impacted the most negatively by keeping the Mill operating (856 references of information, in fact). The other glaring aspect is that the whole way along, including the original Environmental Report sent to be assessed, they seemed to leave out very specific points; points that were thankfully picked up by the Environment Minister and she asked them to divulge this information – information that they should have already known from years of operating, information that should have been presented the first time around but seems like it was conveniently left out. Information such as the exact chemicals and amounts that would be released into the strait, information on how it affects sealife and human life . My question is why? The impression I get is one of two: Are they hiding something? Or are they really ignorant enough to think that information was not pertinent? Why did they reject putting air quality meters directly in the town of Pictou as requested by the residents? Why do they want to avoid some areas and not others when conducting their "scientific studies"? Why are the same people who study the impact on behalf of the company, the same people who would benefit from said pipe? Conflict of Interests have abounded.

This situation is by no means funny, but there are many movies and tv shows based on good vs evil; good being nature and evil being corporations that pollute. I have included the introduction of a tv show I used to watch called the Oblongs and this is sort of art imitating life; the people who have money and live up on the hill all stay healthy and completely aware of what's happening. Meanwhile, the people at the bottom of the hill, where all the factory "foam" ends up, all live in a filthy area of town and each family member has their own very obvious health issue that has arisen directly from being poisoned by corporate greed. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7SEqMIQy6w>) Fern Gully is another really great example.

I am also wondering how many of these Mill workers eat seafood that has come directly from the place they want to pollute? My husband is a cook who has been a chef at such places as the Pictou Lodge where the menu has a lot of locally sourced seafood. As a cook, he has commented that the diversity of seafood that comes from the Northumberland Strait is unparalleled. Over the years, my own family has spent many days taking a drive out to Logan's fishmart or to Caribou Wharf to ask the fishermen for the freshest catches anywhere. Would it be fair to ask these mill workers to give us their diets and see how much they actually depend on our strait for food and fun without even knowing it? Do they enjoy going to restaurants like the Pictou Lodge (I think they do as The Pictou Lodge actually cancelled their Christmas Party reservations in lieu of the obvious conflict of interest) to eat? Do they go and enjoy the Pictou Lobster Carnival? Do they take advantage of all the things the rest of us are fighting so hard to keep? How many of them have boats and leisure craft that they take to the strait in summer, walk the beaches for fun digging fresh clams as you go, birdwatching, enjoying the view from the lighthouse on the end of Caribou Island? All of these things would be ruined.

I am going to wrap this up by saying PLEASE do not allow a pipe into the Strait. I have tried to paint a picture of how much life has been enjoyed from this exact area and how taking it away will be so hurtful. We now know that the "standards" set forth for capitalism are not congruent with current knowledge of sustainability in this particular area anyway, and Northern Pulp seems to be confused as to why this information would ever be pertinent. They also said they would do "the studies" and they have included thousands of pages for a response that I'm sure, if they had nothing to hide and was done properly and to the fullest scientific extent, would only take a few minutes to put together in a way that was compact and straightforward for everyone. Instead, they seem to be doing what they have done the whole way along for 50 years, purposefully misleading people with fluff and filler words, not going out and obtaining information for the purpose of not divulging it, and pressuring PLFN continuously (even after a 5 year deadline and the Boat Harbour Act). Please, on behalf of my one year old daughter, who is named Pearl for our love of the oceans and all things in it, and ourselves and all of our future friends and family, please don't let them pollute Caribou Harbour or Pictou anymore, and destroy the beauty and livelihoods of so many.

Thank you for taking the time to read what we had to share.

Sincerely,

Kate, Colin, and Pearl Grant