



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Ecojustice: Environment minister in conflict of interest, Must step away from Northern Pulp assessment**

HALIFAX - The province's Minister of Environment has a conflict of interest in relation to Northern Pulp's proposed effluent treatment facility and should step away from an environmental assessment of the project, environmental law charity Ecojustice said in a [letter](#) sent yesterday on behalf of Friends of the Northumberland Strait.

The letter, which is addressed to Environment Minister Margaret Miller, states that Friends of the Northumberland Strait "respectfully requests that you recuse yourself from the [environmental assessment] and delegate your authority to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency."

Ecojustice lawyer James Gunvaldsen Klaassen and Jill Graham-Scanlan, President of Friends of the Northumberland Strait (FONS), issued the following statements upon filing the letter:

### **James Gunvaldsen Klaassen, Ecojustice lawyer, said:**

"The people who live and work in and around the Northumberland Strait – and the species and ecosystems that rely on this body of water – deserve a fair and impartial review of the Northern Pulp project.

"Unfortunately, the minister is not able to deliver that.

"As Ecojustice wrote on behalf of Friends of the Northumberland Strait, the minister has a clear financial interest in making sure the environmental assessment process is over and done with as quickly as possible. Our clients also say the minister's ongoing contracts with Northern Pulp give the impression that the minister is not able to make a fair decision about whether or not to approve the project.

"These conflicts of interest violate the public's right to a thorough and unbiased assessment. That is why we are calling on the minister to step away from the assessment process and make way for a federal environmental assessment."

### **Jill Graham-Scanlan, President, Friends of the Northumberland Strait, said:**

"The province's history with Northern Pulp is a tangled web, including an agreement carried forward from 1995 stating that 'Nova Scotia agrees to use its best efforts to assist Scott obtain [sic] all necessary permits, consents and approvals to permit the construction and operation of a replacement effluent treatment facility to replace the [Boat Harbour] Facility at the expiration of the term of the Lease.' This agreement has been acknowledged by the province as continuing in effect with Northern Pulp.

"With the future of the fishing and tourism industries in Nova Scotia and PEI at stake, we cannot afford any risk of bias or perceived bias in this Environmental Assessment."

**About:** *Ecojustice, Canada's largest environmental law charity, goes to court and uses the power of the law to defend nature, combat climate change, and fight for a healthy environment for all.*

The submission to the Minister without appendices or attachments can be accessed here: [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b61814\\_b6ef9c11a0df42248b4002fe6ad037c2.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b61814_b6ef9c11a0df42248b4002fe6ad037c2.pdf)