

LEADER & CANDIDATE POLL ON NORTHERN PULP

Friends of the Northumberland Strait polled party leaders and candidates in the three Pictou ridings to find out where they stood on Northern Pulp’s new plan to discharge treated effluent into Pictou Harbour.

PARTY LEADERS & CANDIDATES WERE ASKED:

As you are hopefully aware, Northern Pulp’s new proposal involves discharging 45 million litres of treated bleached kraft pulp effluent daily into Pictou Harbour or into the East River close to where it empties into Pictou Harbour. The company says they have not yet determined the exact discharge point.

You are likely also aware that:

- Northern Pulp’s own consultants advised in 2017 that effluent discharged into Pictou Harbour would not flush adequately.
- Pictou Harbour is a shallow body of water, with average depths of 20 feet.
- The East River is a tidal river, with tidal waters reaching upriver past Trenton and New Glasgow to Blue Acres/Plymouth.
- The West River, which also empties into Pictou Harbour, is also a tidal river, with tidal waters reaching upriver to Durham.
- Northern Pulp’s project is proposed to run for 25 years.

Question #1: Do you support Northern Pulp’s proposal to discharge 45 million litres of treated bleach kraft effluent into Pictou Harbour every day?

The four party leaders were also asked:

On July 15, Graham Kissack, V.P. of Paper Excellence, made this statement in relation to Northern Pulp’s proposed new project. "It's still early days in terms of where we are in terms of establishing our funding and how we're going to get there," Kissack said. "We have tentative green lights from government leadership around the project, but these specifics are still being built out." [CTV News](#)

Question #2: Has your party given Northern Pulp or Paper Excellence a “tentative green light” in any way on their new proposal?

NS Liberal Party Policy Team, on behalf of Premier Rankin

Northern Pulp’s project proposal involves changes to the pulp mill itself, as well as the design and construction of a new effluent treatment plant. That is why a stringent Class II Environmental Assessment is required. The Class II assessment will mean a thorough review. An independent panel will be appointed to conduct the review. It could take up to two years for that work to be fully completed. Recommendations will be brought forward to government at that time.

We will wait to see the report and recommendation from the Class II Environmental Assessment. We have not given the ‘green light’ to the company. We believe very strongly in rigorous environmental management and stewardship. We will await the results of the environmental assessment work.

Nova Scotia NDP

Q#1: An NDP government will ensure the highest level of environmental scrutiny of any plan put forward by Northern Pulp to restart operations. The NDP has pushed for a federal assessment of Northern Pulp’s most recent effluent proposal that resulted in the closure of Boat Harbour, and will do so for any future proposals. An NDP government will enact an Environmental Bill of Rights that would give communities’ greater voice in decisions that impact the environment, as well as enable improvements to our environmental assessment regime.

The NDP is adamant that projects with an impact on the environment should only proceed with adequate community consultation and social license. This is the principle by which an NDP government will assess an effluent treatment plan from Northern Pulp.

An NDP government will also immediately convene a Green Jobs Task Force that will steward our province’s transformation to a green economy, creating thousands of jobs in sustainable sectors.

Q#2: No

Nova Scotia PC Party

No response.

Nova Scotia Green Party

No response.

Question: Do you support Northern Pulp's proposal to discharge 45 million litres of treated bleach kraft effluent into Pictou Harbour every day?

PICTOU WEST

Karla MacFarlane, PC

My answer is no.

Mary Woolridge-Elliott, Liberal

I agree that Northern Pulp is an important issue to the people of Pictou County and area. Northern Pulp formally withdrew its previous replacement effluent treatment project from the environmental assessment process on May 5, 2021. Northern Pulp is proposing changes to the pulp mill itself, as well as a new effluent treatment plant. The changes would make it a substantially different operation. This is why a CLASS II process is required. This is the strongest environmental assessment process and would take up to a year to complete, plus time to complete a report. In a CLASS II process, an environmental assessment panel is appointed to review the project and provide a report and recommendations to the Minister.

Northern Pulp had over five years to put environmental regulations in place but chose to add more profit to their bottom line at the expense of our community's health, which points to a lack of trust.

A CLASS II environmental assessment will have a full public consultation process so everyone will have a voice. I can honestly say that I see all sides to having the pulp mill either remain open or closed. For me to support the mill, it would have to meet the environmental regulations of CLASS II 100%, proving that it is safe for everyone. When we have all the facts, then we could make our decision, based on all the evidence that will be presented. We owe this to our families and neighbours. I will be following this issue and the CLASS II process very closely.

No response from candidates:

- Rick Parker, NDP
- Clare Brett, Green

PICTOU CENTRAL

Jim McKenna, Liberal

My position on Northern Pulp is that the Minister has determined that the Mill will have to undergo a Class II environmental assessment. The assessment will begin when Paper Excellence submits their proposal, and it could take up to two years to complete. The company's proposal must meet the test of the environmental assessment process, and must produce unbiased scientific evidence that indicates that their new treatment facility will not harm the environment and the fishery. They also have to build trust within the Town of Pictou, the local fishers, and Pictou Landing First Nations community in order to meet approval. Paper Excellence has work to do if they expect to meet these conditions. They also have to do it without any further government funds, as The Premier has indicated that there will be no more funds given to Paper Excellence.

I grew up in Pictou and my cottage is at the mouth of Pictou Harbour. I am concerned that the first proposal to use Pictou Harbour for effluent was determined by the company to not work, so I don't know how they determined that this revised plan for Pictou Harbour will work, but I wait to see their submission and the scientific evidence.

Laura Moore, Green

I do not support Northern Pulp's new proposal. As you noted in your document, Northern Pulp has already been told that effluent pumped into the harbour would not flush properly. This would put the health of the towns along the East and West rivers at risk. It would also risk the ecosystem of the Northumberland strait, which is crucial for both fishery and tourism.

I understand the economic impact that the mill closure has had on Pictou County, but I am confident that we can find ways to create new jobs in the area that will not put our environment at risk.

No response from candidates:

- Pat Dunn, PC
- Vernon Theriault, NDP

PICTOU EAST

Joy Polley, NDP

One year after the closure of the Boat Harbour facility I participated in a water ceremony with the people of Pictou Landing First Nation. Decisions made must be measured against how it will impact not only the next generation but the generations to come. We are at a pivotal point in history. Keeping areas of land and water in their current natural state helps prevent an increase of greenhouse gas emissions, making them an important part of mitigating climate change. I cannot support a plan that will introduce pollutants into our water.

No response from candidates:

- Tim Houston, PC
- Joe MacDonald, Liberal

IN NORTHERN PULP ELECTION NEWS:

"Nova Scotia's three main political party leaders might not agree on much, but there's one issue on which they share the same view: if the owners of the Northern Pulp mill in Pictou County get approval to reopen the beleaguered site, they should not count on financial assistance from the next provincial government."

[Read more at CBC News.](#)