

March 8, 2019

Attention Minister and To Whom it May Concern:

Re: Request to have Northern Pulp's Effluent Treatment Plan designated for an Environment Assessment Report

My name is Emelyne Marshall and I am a Pharmacist in Pictou County. I am writing to support the fisherman, the First Nation's Community of Pictou Landing but I'm also writing to support the health and well being of our community. I am writing to support the request to have Northern Pulp's Effluent Treatment Plan designated for an Environment Assessment Report.

When I graduated from university, I had this idea of what practising in a community pharmacy would look like. The first year of being a licensed pharmacist, completely shattered every idea I ever had regarding my role as a pharmacist. The health complaints people came to talk to me about were overwhelming due to the increasing demand for health services in our province. Since I started my career, I have also made every effort to make my way back to Pictou County; filling short-term positions and maternity leaves, in order to be able to move home. What did I discover when I finally landed back here? The people of Pictou County are chronically ill and the incidence of COPD, asthma and environmental allergies is astounding.

Pharmacists are widely recognized as the most accessible health care professionals and as such, our role extends far beyond counting pills. On a daily basis, I assess, make recommendations, prescribe, counsel and refer these patients that present to the pharmacy to other primary care providers. Common complaints range from "My sinuses are acting up" to "I need another puffer; my chest feels tight, I can't breathe". These complaints are often followed by "because the mill is blowing this way today". This is not exclusive to any one pharmacy in Pictou County. Typically, when talking to patients about COPD, asthma and environmental allergies, I would counsel on avoidance of triggers. This has become a laughable counselling point because my patients cannot avoid the community they live in or the jobs that they hold. Northern Pulp has already polluted our air and we have suffered health consequences as a result. We cannot allow Northern Pulp to destroy the Northumberland Strait as well.

Today, I continue my role as a pharmacist by advocating for my patients but step outside the traditional role to ask you to look at the bigger picture. One could argue that politics have created huge gaps in our health care system. The fifty years of corruption and politics behind the mill have been exposed. We have learned that political agendas and money have played a large role in the lack of accountability and destruction of our environment. Money should not be the primary motivation but if it were, I'd ask you to consider your tax dollars being spent on illnesses that could have been prevented. Consider the ramifications on an already burdened health care system. Health care is an area where we always demand the highest level of excellence. I ask you to do the same when it comes to our environment because it's also our health at stake. It's the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat and the water we swim in.

Consider this preventative maintenance and treatment.

Respectfully,

Emelyne Marshall PhC
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