



March 8, 2018

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Honourable Stephen McNeil
Office of the Premier
7th Floor, One Government Place
1700 Granville Street, P.O. Box 726
Halifax, NS B3J 2T3

Dear Premier McNeil:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) we are writing to express our concerns regarding the situation in Pictou Country involving Northern Pulp and the subsequent closure of Boat Harbour by 2020.



The proposed replacement treatment plant which will include a pipeline to move the treated effluent directly into the Northumberland Strait is causing extreme concern among many Nova Scotians and industry stakeholders. TIANS fully supports the concerns of the fisheries sector and other stakeholders and urges government to demonstrate leadership on this important issue by ensuring rigorous environmental testing and enhanced accountability is in place.

Tourism is a 2.7 Billion dollar industry in Nova Scotia and Pictou County has tremendous potential to increase its share of tourism activity. The adventure tourism and recreation sector is one of the fastest growing in tourism, and aboriginal tourism development is on the rise as people seek out authentic, nature based experiences. Tourism can transform rural economies but a healthy environment is critical to that happening.

For years tourism operators in the region have expressed concerns from visitors over the toxic smells in the community and how this has affected their length of stay. For too long, media attention around these stories and the resulting health concerns have damaged the reputation and brand of Pictou as a tourism destination. Property values have declined and it has become increasingly difficult to attract new investment.

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There are growing concerns that the current environmental assessment process underway is not sufficient for a project of this scope, with the potential ramifications. The report card on past environmental performance of this pulp mill has been poor and the current cost for cleanup of Boat Harbour is estimated to exceed \$133 million; with resulting environmental damage that may never be reversed.

There have been calls for an independent "full class 2 environmental assessment" of the proposed plan as a minimum benchmark. While TIANS is not aware of all options, we do support a more rigorous assessment process that will instill public confidence and ensure that other sectors' interests are protected for the overall well-being of Nova Scotia's environment and economy.

Sincerely,


Judy Saunders
TIANS Chair


Darlene Grant Fiander
TIANS President

- cc The Honourable Iain Rankin, Environment
The Honourable Margaret Miller, Natural Resources
The Honourable Geoff MacLellan, Business (Tourism)
Friends of the Northumberland Strait
Tourism Nova Scotia Board
TIANS Board

