

DRAFT MINUTES FOR AQC MEETING

OCTOBER 11, 2018, 2pm

ACRD Board Room

Present: Larry Cross (Catalyst Paper)
Dave Jarrett (Community at large)
Earle Plain (MOE)
Anna Lewis (Chair)
Gary Swann (Agricultural Community member)
Judy Carlson (Community at large)
Patty Edwards (MLA's Office)
Keith Wyton (ACRD)
Chris Alemany (City of Port Alberni)
Stephanie Bruvall (Island Health)
Via phone: Karen Larsen (FNHA)
Via phone: Jade Yehia (Island Health)

Regrets: Representative from Fire dept.
Ashley Popovich (Catalyst Paper)
Mike Irg (ACRD staff)

Meeting called to order at 2:06

1. **WELCOME**

- acknowledgement of traditional territories
- roundtable of introductions

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- additions:
Earle regarding update of AQ in Port Alberni Valley
Keith regarding concerns of Catalyst Sale to Paper Excellence

Chris Alemany moved to adopt agenda with additions. Dave Jarrett seconded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 12th, 2017

All in favor

3. **PRESENTATION: Genevieve Huneault of Social Roots Consulting: A Protocol for Collective Action: Steps towards an Airshed Management Plan for the Alberni Valley**

The purpose of engaging with both the community “at large” and target stakeholder groups was to:

- hold space where participants could speak to air quality concerns
- discuss potential solutions for action
- address areas for improvement on an individual and collective level
- inform the development of the TOR and input into airshed management plan

The project included 4 phases:

- 1) Scoping, Exploring, Preparation
- 2) Initial Outreach (identifying where we are currently at)
- 3) Deeper Dive (community voices included)
- 4) Synthesis (what did we learn)

The community and stakeholder engagement sessions were poorly attended despite a large outreach via email invitations, social media, posters, and radio ads. Low attendance could correlate to time of year; air quality tends to fall off people's radars in the spring. Attendance did not impact the quality of data and discussion that occurred, but it becomes relatively difficult to collate information to adequately represent the community.

Three main themes emerged out of the stakeholder sessions:

- 1) Encouraging and promoting the implementation of enforcement, bylaws, and provincial legislation.
 - There needs to be an increased pressure on the regions governing bodies to enforce and instill regulations and bylaws that meet the practical needs and practices of rural burning, and waste management.
 - Wood stove burning practices are not yet met with compliance and enforcement measures; bylaws should be reviewed and addressed to fit community health needs.
- 2) Education, research, and awareness
 - A need for educational campaigns and information sharing was prevalent during discussions. A gap in current air quality research and public awareness was acknowledged among participants.
 - An interest in creating messaging around current and daily air quality was brought up, although that information is available on the BC Provincial website it does not seem to be getting disseminated to residents and in a form that fosters a clear understanding (scientific versus layman).
- 3) Alternative options
 - Stakeholders and council members were interested in continuing to have meetings involving 'decision makers' to encourage alternative methods for disposing agricultural/rural waste.
 - A few suggestions that were noted were the conception of a composting site (both residential and industrial), and having an accessible wood chipping facility or operation available.

Coffee house sessions were not a deep dive into air quality issues but rather attracted people primarily looking for information. People want to know how to access information and then be able to synthesize and understand the information presented. Questions such as "How to access real time information in the Alberni Valley"? and then further understanding the impact of that information. There were speculations around potential air pollution sources.

Recommendations for next steps:

1. Increase the community outreach
2. Liaise with organizations that can support educational campaigns
3. Encourage a diverse representation of people to sit on the AQC.

Discussion that emerged after the presentation ranged from questions varying from succession planning within the AQC to how to represent and reach the different demographics in the community. How to keep the messaging simple. I.e. What is air quality? How does it impact my life? How am I contributing? What changes can I make? There needs to be a targeted outreach to the community and consistency in communications plan to build momentum. If social media is how most people are accessing information how can we best utilize and be effective?

4. UPDATES

- **VIU: Regional Mapping Project**

Anna

VIU completed their summer sampling in July/August that included one full day per week over five weeks and three overnights. The route plan was followed as prescribed last spring (with the addition of a short excursion out Cherry Ck road) and included stops at the Port Authority, Harbour Quay, Catalyst, Victoria Quay, Sewage lagoons and Landfill. They are still working up the data so too early to draw conclusions. They were able to observe a couple of VOC point sources at relatively low concentrations. There are a few days where they also observed the high PM from fires.

They are planning to conduct the winter sampling runs in Dec/Jan and would like to review the route plan with the AQC before then. They are happy to come out and discuss preliminary results and share what they have been up to with AQC and others in the community as appropriate.

They are interested in community engagement and happy to work with the AQC on rolling this out. As presented initially the idea is that the Vancouver Island University will do two stakeholder meetings to go over findings from summer sampling and then winter sampling as well as one community engagement piece in February/March 2019. Erik will be asked to attend our December meeting and present on preliminary findings.

Earle: VIU is currently running nephelometer in conjunction with MOE in Nanaimo to confirm accuracy.

- **Update from UBCM**

Chris

Port Alberni city councilors met with Minister Honorable George Haymen to express support for the new OBSCR regulations and obtaining an update. The Ministry is gathering more information but planning on implementing in January.

The conversation organically delved into a request for first nations funding for capacity building to participate on the AQC. The province is currently assessing need. Questions have arisen around is the issue capacity? Is funding needed?

Anna: There is an open invitation for both First Nations to participate on the AQC. The Tseshaht have stated that until the AQC has adopted a terms of reference (TOR) to guide the AQC they will not be at the table.

Karen Larsen: Could help facilitate a discussion with Tseshaht once the TOR is developed. Until this is done funding is premature. Emphasis should be on developing protocol.

Keith: Spoke to the issue of capacity. The AQC is not an adequate forum to satisfy an expectation of government to government relationships. The AQC's mandate is to act as a community liaison and forum for community groups to collaborate around air quality issues.

- **Woodstove Exchange**

Anna

The ACRD has facilitated 7 of a possible 36 exchanges. The breakdown of exchanges is: 3 of 27 vouchers completed at the \$250 level (plus 2 outstanding vouchers) and 4 of 9 vouchers completed at the \$400 level.

Anna personned a table in conjunction with the ACRD Emergency Response Coordinator and the volunteer fire departments and displayed banners/pamphlets/other appropriate material to promote the woodstove exchange for the duration of the annual Fall Fair. This was an excellent way to connect with a broad cross section of the population, urban and rural alike, and speak to open burning bylaws, woodstoves, impacts of smoke on human health, etc.

There is news to report from the province regarding this upcoming woodstove exchange regarding extra funding to spent on "Red Zone" communities (those exceeding or recently exceeding the national PM standards). In applications proposed by red zone communities they have been asked to consider the following:

1. Extra \$100 incentive for clean appliances (gas, pellet, heat pump) in Red zone communities
2. This year they will pilot a general wood stove replacement in those Red zone communities that want to try it. The way this will work is that there will still be the general wood stove exchange identical to now changing out uncertified wood stoves for new wood stoves (\$250 incentive) or new gas or pellet stoves or heat pumps (\$500 = 400 +100 incentive). There will be a supplemental program where people can change any wood appliance more than 5 years old, even certified ones for either a gas, pellet appliance or a heat pump and get a \$500 = 400 +100 incentive. If this proves successful, the province will roll it out provincewide the following year
3. Funding for additional educational initiatives. This includes: Door to door visits, Additional workshops, production of materials, Radio advertisements or anything else would work best in your specific community.

What was asked for in this upcoming woodstove exchange proposal: 40 exchanges. 20 for straight woodstove exchanges and 20 at the higher rate (\$500) for switching out 5-year-old stoves or older to cleaner energy. I also requested additional funds for advertising campaigns (radio ads, impress article with Blackpress) and development of materials.

Discussion emerged around the low number of exchanges. The drive to exchange stoves could potentially be attributed to no enforcement or effective policy. There is no strategy at the municipal level to implement new regulatory bylaw.

- **Status of ACRD bylaw development**

Anna

Mike Irg is ACRD staff person tasked with developing bylaws and this has not fallen off the radar and will be given priority after the cannabis bylaws and election is complete. Earle is meeting with Mike to discuss further on November 15th and solidify language of bylaw. The idea is to draft something based off of the model bylaws and/or other jurisdictions on the Island. He has

been sent appropriate links to what other communities are doing within the province, open burning resources, smoke management framework, etc.

Mike Irg and Earle Plaine will be meeting in November to solidify language of bylaw. There is currently no timeframe as of yet in terms of bringing forward to the board; probably will not occur until after the new year once the new OBSCR regulations are rolled out which is estimated to be in early January.

Jade requested that the AQC have the opportunity to review bylaw prior to being presented to the board.

- **Nov. 7-9 PNWIS conference**

Anna

PNWIS stands for Pacific Northwest (BC, Yukon and VI chapters) Air & Waste Management Association as is to be held at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo, BC Canada on November 7-9, 2018. Anna is planning on attending in some sort of capacity.

On Tuesday, Nov. 6th there is a professional development day which is an introduction to Air Quality Modelling Course. This one-day introductory course is designed for permitting staff, regulators, engineers, and managers with ambient air quality management responsibilities. The course will consist of technical lectures with relevant examples. Topics covered will include air quality issues, fundamentals of meteorology, air quality model types and selection.

The goal is for those attending to have a better understanding of the key meteorological processes that impact air quality; be able to select the appropriate model(s) to address specific air quality issues; be able to assess necessary input data and critically review air quality modelling studies

More information can be found at the following link: <http://www.pnwis.org/pnwis-annual-conference/>

4. AQC Terms of Reference

Anna

The draft TOR put together by Social Roots Consulting will be distributed via email to the members of the AQC. Homework was assigned. Anna requested council members review and provide input so a final draft for be completed for adoption.

5. Update of Air Quality in Port Alberni

Earle

See Appendix A for graphs.

The period of record shown in the graph is 2010-18. The impact of wildfires is very obvious. The wildfires in the north island are cross referenced in the 2018 period. In 2017, Port Alberni saw 18 days of exceedances (13 of those due to wildfire impacts). The magnitude is quite high but to keep in perspective Port Alberni did not have the same number of impacted days as Nanaimo and Victoria.

Wildfire adjusted value comes down almost a microgram per cubic meter. There has been a lot of burning in Cherry Creek area that has smoked out the valley and impacted exceedances. Anna

spoke with farmer responsible for fires due to agricultural land clearing and he currently has 20 piles left which he plans to burn prior to Jan and new OBSCUR laws.

The biggest difference in open burning smoke control regulations is the 3 different zones communities will fall into. In a high smoke sensitivity zone, you can currently burn for 72 hours; under new regulations this will be reduced to 36 hours.

6. Sale of Catalyst to Paper Excellence

Keith

See Appendix B for article distributed and links to other relevant articles.

Keith referred to minutes of AQC dated May 2013 in which discussion was first initiated around the potential reduction of the industrial emissions permit that Catalyst held. At that point in time it was decided to not pursue. This was prior to Port Alberni being listed as a red zone community.

With the recent purchase of Catalyst by Paper Excellence it would be timely to reopen this conversation. Papers were distributed by Keith regarding new owners of Catalyst and Pictou County which is currently undergoing some opposition.

When compliance issues arise, it is a cumbersome process of reducing pollution permit. The capacity to absorb pollution within our airshed (now a red zone community) is at a critical threshold. It needs to be noted that Catalyst has achieved a level of emissions which is exemplary in the community. Catalyst has been purchased by a company that has a very checkered track record with regards to community health and pollution. In Pictou County, NS, they were out of compliance 5X last year. Want to ensure that new owners don't increase operations to meet threshold of current industrial emissions permit.

Discussion around the potentially change in ownership potentially being marked by a change in direction. If Catalyst has been consistently well under permitted levels for the past decade this gap should be closed to ensure pollution does not increase. Old permits do not come up for renewal automatically when a company is sold. The Ministry could do an internal amendment but not often done.

Keith Wyton moved the motion that:

“The AQC writes a letter to the MOECC to consider reducing Catalyst industrial emission permit level to a more suitable maximum to reflect the current threshold of the Alberni airshed.”

Gary Swann seconded.

Anna to draft and send out prior to next AQC meeting.

7. Air Emissions Inventory

Earle/Anna

The province has allocated \$20,000 of the \$30,000 air emissions inventory to occur. The AQS needs to confirm that it can fund the remaining \$10,000. Anna will request that the AQS meets to discuss and gives the province confirmation of funding, so the process can officially begin.

8. Plan H Grant

Anna

The AQS via the ACRD was successful in a \$5000 grant application although still no public announcement as transfer agreement is still in process. The primary activities outlined in the grant were to build formal capacity to develop an airshed management plan which incorporates the needs and views of the community and to convene a community to enhance community awareness around the linkages between air quality and human health.

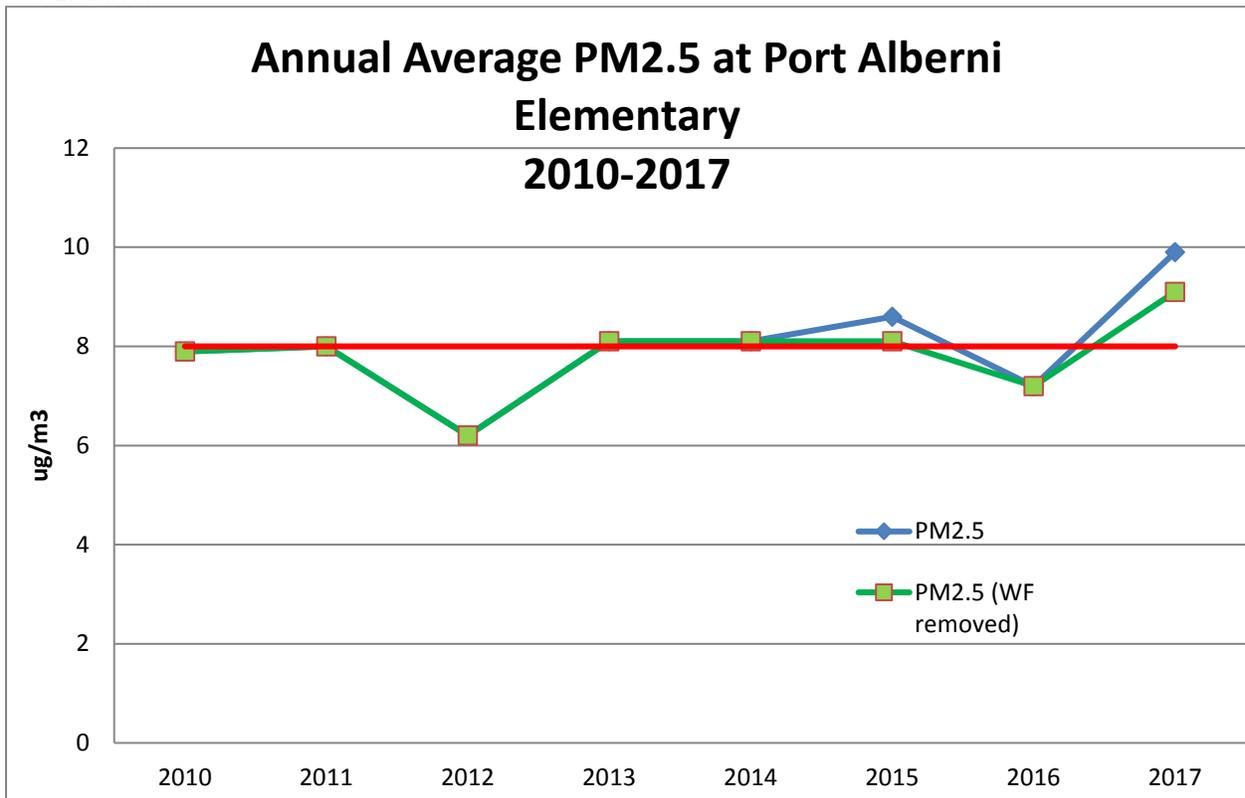
Earle: Suggested that Dr. Michael Brauer and Sarah Henderson (BC Lung Association) be brought in to present.

9. Next Meeting and presentation

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 1st 2-4pm at the ACRD boardroom. Jade Yehia is going to present on Health Data and where to find it.

Meeting adjourned at 4:08pm.

APPENDIX A



PM2.5 Concentrations Port Alberni Elementary School

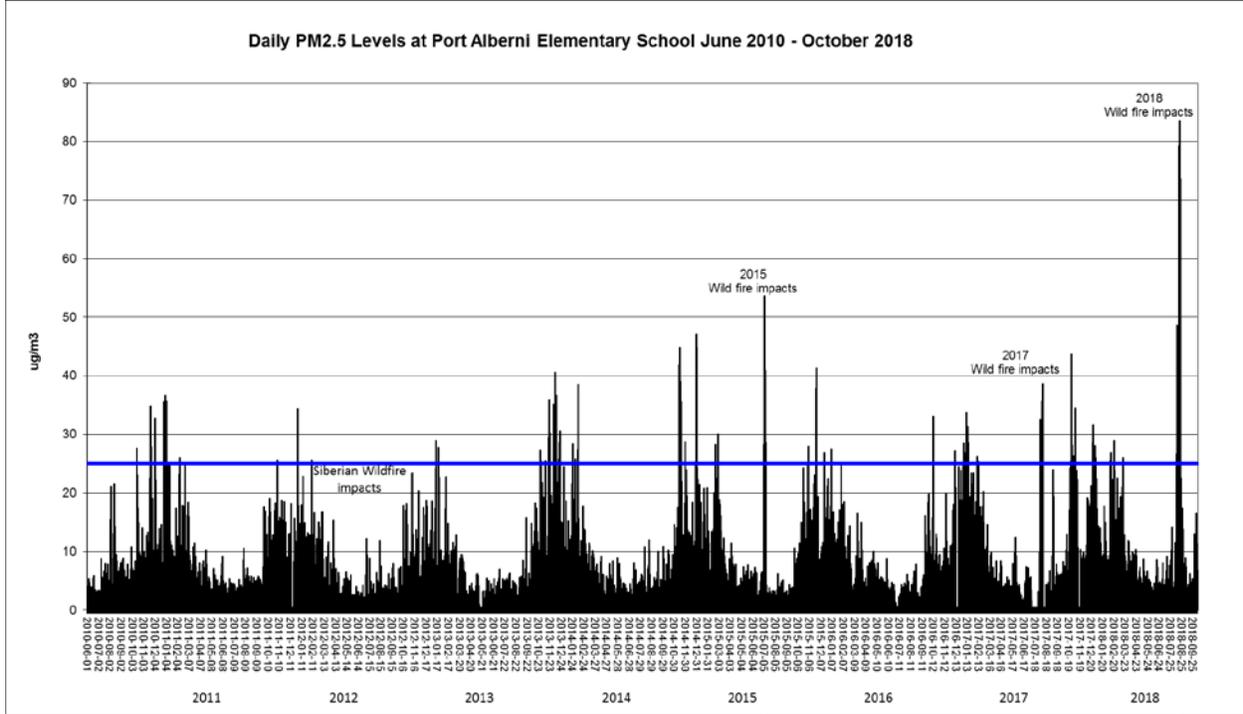
Year	Annual Average ug/m ³	Annual Average WF smoke removed	Annual 98 th %ile of daily ug/m ³	Annual 98 th %ile of daily ug/m ³ WF smoke removed	# of Daily values > 25 ug/m ³	% of time > 25 ug/m ³
2011	8.0	8.0	24.8	24.9	6	1.7
2012	6.2	6.2	17.9	17.9	1	0.3
2013	8.1	8.1	30.6	30.6	20	5.7
2014	8.1	8.1	34.7	34.8	15	4.1
2015	8.6	8.1	29.7	27.9	9	2.5
2016	7.2	7.2	22.3	22.3	3	0.9
2017	9.9	9.1	32.3	29.3	18	5.7

Provincial Air Quality Objectives for PM2.5:

- 8 ug/m³ – Annual
- 6 ug/m³ – Annual Planning Goal
- 25 ug/m³ – 98th percentile 24-hour value annually

Highlighted cells - wildfire smoke impacts removed

APPENDIX A CONT.



Uproar in Nova Scotia over plan to dump pulp effluent into Northumberland Strait

By [Joan Baxter](#) in [Analysis](#), [Energy](#), [Politics](#) | July 25th 2018

Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion may be hot in the media spotlight right now, but on the East Coast, another industrial storm is brewing.

Nova Scotia's Northern Pulp mill has proposed a 10-kilometre pipeline to transport [up to 85 million litres](#) of warm pulp effluent every day directly into the Northumberland Strait — a beautiful part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and a lucrative fishing ground.

Public protest over this pulp pipe proposal has spawned the #NOPIPE movement, which has sown division among communities in Pictou County. #nspoli #novascotia

The idea of dumping treated waste from the Northern Pulp's mill in Pictou Country directly into such a rich ecosystem — without giving it an additional month to settle, as it currently does in a lagoon before it is slowly released into the Strait — has many First Nations, fishers, citizens and local communities up in arms.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau turned his back on them as he declined to commit to a federal environmental assessment of the pipeline proposal, [justifying his decision](#) as respect for "provincial jurisdiction." In other words, the prime minister is satisfied that the Nova Scotia government can handle the assessment.

But with the province being responsible, through an indemnity agreement, for part of the project's design and cost — critics are worried that the pipeline won't receive a thorough, unbiased assessment. To boot, they add, the Northern Pulp mill's foreign corporate owners have troubling ties to illegal deforestation abroad.

Sowing division in Pictou County

The pipeline in question is for Northern Pulp's 51-year-old bleached kraft pulp mill in Pictou County on the north shore of Nova Scotia. If approved, it would be almost a metre in diameter and 10 kilometres long, carrying millions of litres of effluent and releasing it through six dispersal pipes into the Northumberland Strait.

The Northumberland Strait separates Prince Edward Island from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in the Gulf of St. Lawrence; an extremely rich and sensitive fishing ground, on which thousands of people across the Maritimes depend for fisheries and tourism.

Critics of the project [fear](#) it would pollute coastal waters, harm crucial fish habitat and [marine life](#), and put those vital industries [at risk](#). As a result, the plan has sparked widespread opposition

and public protest, spawning the hashtag, “#NOPIPE.” It has been condemned by fishermen, tourism operators and First Nations groups, [sowing division](#) in traditionally tight-knit communities in its wake.

The project also comes with a form of ultimatum for government regulators:

“No pipe equals no mill,” is how Kathy Cloutier, director of communications for Paper Excellence, the mill's parent company, put it to me in an email.

Paper Excellence [acquired](#) the Northern Pulp mill in 2011, and owns [four other mills](#) in Canada — three in British Columbia and one in Saskatchewan, as well as two in France. While the company has headquarters in Canada, its larger holding company of Paper Excellence B.V. [operates as a subsidiary](#) of Asia Pulp and Paper Group, and is based in the Netherlands.

Paper Excellence is the fifth largest foreign corporation that has owned the mill in Pictou since it opened in 1967, and has ties to a shocking history of ripping up endangered forests in Southeast Asia.



Northern Pulp's mill in Pictou County, N.S., which produces northern bleached softwood Kraft pulp, is seen in August of 2014. Photo by Gerry Farrell

A dismal overseas record

Paper Excellence is [part of the corporate empire](#) of the billionaire Widjaja family of Indonesia, which also owns Sinar Mas Group. Sinar Mas despite its denial, [has ties](#) to devastating fires and deforestation in Southeast Asia under its international trade name, Asia Pulp and Paper (APP), and the dubious distinction of being responsible for Asia's [worst corporate default](#) — US\$ 13.9 billion in 2001 after a 20-per-cent plunge in global paper prices over three months.

APP pledged to clean up its act, following [boycotts](#) in 2012 of its paper products by several prominent corporate brands, as a result of its role in illegal logging in Indonesia. It adopted a “forest conservation policy,” developed with support from [Greenpeace International](#) to help it accomplish this, but in May 2018, after evidence emerged that APP was still responsible for destroying forests in Indonesia — Greenpeace [ended all engagement](#) with APP and Sinar Mas Group.

None of this appears to have dampened relations between the Nova Scotia government, however, and the owners of the Northern Pulp mill. As has been the pattern for the past half-century, the province seems intent on doing the mill’s bidding.

How Nova Scotia was captured by a pulp mill

In 2017, Nova Scotia’s Department of Environment determined that the pipe warranted a “smaller in scale” [Class I environmental assessment](#), which takes just 50 days and leaves the final approval decision to the minister of environment. Critics say the pipe should undergo a more thorough [Class II](#) assessment, which takes 275 days and involves an environmental assessment panel.

Among those calling for the Class II assessment are [Karla MacFarlane](#), interim leader of the Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative Party, and [Tim Houston](#), who represents Pictou East in the legislature and is vying for the leadership of the PC party in the October convention.

Before the decision to proceed with a Class I assessment had been made however, Nova Scotia's Department of Environment had concerns about the pipe plan. According to [internal emails](#) obtained through freedom of information legislation by Linda Pannozzo for *The Halifax Examiner*, officials were worried that the mill’s plan to treat effluent on-site in a new activated sludge system, and then pump it through a pipe into the Strait, had the “potential for eutrophication,” meaning excess nutrients could lead to oxygen depletion.

Then, the consultants working on the pipe proposal, KSH Solutions Inc, reminded Department of Environment officials that there was a “fixed completion date” for the project, and any delays stemming from public consultations were “of concern.” The new system had to be operating by July 2019, so that by January 2020, the mill’s effluent would no longer flow into, and settle in Boat Harbour, as it has done since 1967.

Boat Harbour is Nova Scotia's largest environmental contaminated site and an egregious example of environmental racism.



An effluent aeration pond close to Boat Harbour in Nova Scotia is pictured on July 20, 2016.
Photo by Joan Baxter

Threats of expropriation

In the 1960s, when the PC government of then-premier Robert Stanfield was pushing to get the pulp mill built, it engaged two government officials to convince the Pictou Landing First Nation to sign over Boat Harbour, their precious tidal estuary, to the government for mill effluent.

In his book, *We Were Not the Savages*, Mi'kmaq scholar Daniel Paul describes the way these officials obtained control of Boat Harbour as "full of deceit and maliciousness." The officials

took the chief and a councillor from Pictou Landing First Nation to a non-functioning domestic sewage facility in New Brunswick in 1965, and told them the water in their estuary would be just as clear and clean as the fresh, spring-fed brook at the site. They were also told, he wrote, that if they didn't sign an agreement allowing the government to use Boat Harbour for the mill's effluent, it would be expropriated.

Deceived and under pressure, the chief and councillor agreed, signing away the tidal estuary that had provided their First Nation community with much of their food for countless generations. Boat Harbour immediately became a [toxic wasteland](#).

To entice Scott Paper to build the mill, the provincial government had already bestowed numerous expensive gifts on the American pulp and paper giant. Among them, as detailed in the [the 1965 Scott Maritimes Limited Agreement](#) and a report for the Nova Scotia cabinet in 1965, were: a causeway linking the Town of Pictou with the mill site on Abercrombie Point; a dam across a river to provide the mill with more than 100 million litres of fresh water daily; a 50-year lease on 230,000 acres of Crown land with rock-bottom stumpage rates; and a slew of generous tax breaks.

To top it off, on Sept. 30, 1970, the government of former Progressive Conservative premier G.I. Smith signed an unprecedented agreement with Scott Paper, in which the province agreed “at its cost,” to “own, operate and maintain the Effluent Treatment System and continue to accept in such system all effluent from the mill.”

Pouring millions into the mill

Over the years, successive provincial governments in Nova Scotia have lavished hundreds of millions of dollars on the mill in loans and grants. The federal government has also chipped in [millions of dollars](#) for environmental improvements.

Even that's not the end of the government largesse.

In 1995, the Liberal government of former premier John Savage signed an indemnity agreement "saving harmless" anyone who worked for the mill from all responsibility for environmental problems with its effluent. It also made the government — that is, the people of Nova Scotia — responsible for effluent and reconfigurations of the mill related to its treatment and disposal, forever.

As it stands, the effluent – an average of [80 million litres daily](#) – flows from the mill through a pipe under inner Pictou Harbour, then comes onshore at Pictou Landing. There it goes into settling ponds, then an aeration basin for a week before it flows into the 350-acre Boat Harbour lagoon. It is released through a dam into a small cove in the Northumberland Strait, following up to a month of further settling.

The new plan would remove that crucial last step: the effluent would be treated on-site in a new facility beside the mill and go directly into the Strait, without the settling of solids that currently happens in Boat Harbour.

In 2014, that effluent pipe ruptured, spilling 47 million litres of toxic effluent near sacred Mi'kmaq burial grounds. The people of Pictou Landing First Nation set up a blockade, joined by others concerned about the mill's air and water pollution over the years.

The mill was shut down while the pipe was replaced and the First Nation issued an ultimatum to the current Liberal government of Premier Stephen McNeil: legislate the closure of Boat Harbour.

One year later, McNeil's government, with the support of both opposition parties, passed the Boat Harbour Act, which stipulated that no effluent could flow into the lagoon after Jan. 31, 2020. After that, Boat Harbour would be remediated and restored to its former state.

For a time, there was optimism that the province would finally crack down on the mill for its poor environmental performance over the years.

Those hopes were dashed when, in late 2017, Northern Pulp announced its plan to pipe effluent directly into the Northumberland Strait, and the government decided to go with a Class I environmental assessment.

Appearing before the Public Accounts Committee of the Nova Scotia legislature in February, Deputy Environment Minister Frances Martin defended the Class I assessment as appropriate, claiming that, "while the effluent treatment plant will be a new plant and a new design, it is a modification to an existing undertaking and that is the pulp mill itself."

Northern Pulp, however, clearly states that it is designing and building a "new treatment facility."

This decision to go with the Class I assessment for the treatment facility became even more inexplicable when the Department of Environment announced that it was requiring the more extensive Class II assessment for the clean up of Boat Harbour.

Nova Scotia in a conflict of interest

Like Kinder Morgan's embattled Trans Mountain expansion, the proposed pulp pipe is pitting provincial governments of similar political stripes against each other – in this case, two provincial Liberal governments in Nova Scotia and P.E.I.

Prince Edward Island Premier Wade MacLaughlan wrote McNeil and federal Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna in January this year, demanding a "more comprehensive assessment" that involves his province.

In response, a spokesperson for the Nova Scotia government said that P.E.I. would have a chance to submit its comments once the proposal had been registered for a provincial environmental assessment. Given that such commenting is the right of every citizen, this response was a firm snub of one Liberal premier by another.

As a result of the government's indemnity agreement with the mill, Nova Scotia taxpayers appear to be on the hook not just for the new effluent and disposal facility, but also the reconfiguration of the mill to accommodate the change. To date, neither Northern Pulp nor the Nova Scotia government has divulged the cost of the new facility or who will be paying for it. However, [local media](#) cite a 2015 letter from Northern Pulp to the government saying that the cost might be in "excess of \$100 million."

Nova Scotians will also cover the costs of the Boat Harbour clean up, [estimated at](#) \$133 million and counting.

In 2002, the government of former premier John Hamm passed an Order in Council extending the mill's lease for the use of Boat Harbour until 2030. Hamm now is chair of the board of Northern Pulp, and the mill manager, Bruce Chapman, has been reminding the province of this commitment, [saying](#) that Northern Pulp will expect to be compensated by the province for the loss of the use of Boat Harbour for 10 years.

Nova Scotia citizens may also have to compensate the mill for any [lost profits](#) if it has to be idled because of a delay in getting a new effluent system up and running.

This puts the provincial government in a conflict of interest, and the impossible position of trying to regulate and assess the new effluent system, while it is responsible for its costs and any losses incurred by its delay.

More than 50 years of protest

Since the pipe plan was made public in late last year, thousands of citizens have mobilized against it. They have also launched a [letter-writing campaign](#) and an [e-petition](#) to convince Ottawa to undertake a federal environmental assessment.

On July 6, a [land-and-sea rally](#) to protest the pipe plan, organized by the Friends of Northumberland Strait, several fishers' associations and unions, the Pictou Landing First Nation, the Pictou Lobster Carnival, tourism operators and environmental groups, drew thousands of people to the waterfront, many on foot and others in an impressive flotilla of fishing boats.

Protesters at the rally, including First Nation chiefs from three provinces, called for a federal environmental assessment.

A few days later, McKenna told reporters she would not rule out a federal assessment, but that the decision would have to wait until the final proposal had been submitted to the province.

The same day, then-minister of fisheries and oceans Dominic LeBlanc [told reporters](#) that the responsibility for the environmental assessment lay with the province of Nova Scotia. On Trudeau's July 17 visit to northern Nova Scotia, McNeil defended the province's environmental assessment process, and the prime minister echoed this sentiment.

It was a profound disappointment to those who, like [Chief Andrea Paul](#) of PictouLanding First Nation, had been counting on the federal government to do a thorough assessment of the pipe proposal.



A flotilla of civilian vessels takes part in the #NOPIPE land-and-sea rally against the Northern Pulp mill in Nova Scotia on July 6, 2018. Photo by Gerard J. Halfyard

Not giving up hope on Ottawa

In an email, a spokesperson for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) stated that even if a proposed project is not included in the list of activities that trigger federal assessments, it can be designated for one if the federal environment minister determines it “may cause adverse environmental effects or public concerns related to those effects.”

So far, neither the mill nor the province has been able to demonstrate that the proposed pipe will not cause “adverse environmental effects” to the precious fishing areas of the Strait, suggesting

that grounds for federal intervention do exist. Additionally, the [federal government](#) has “broad responsibilities for the stewardship and management” of all of Canada's oceans — including the Gulf of St. Lawrence — and by extension, the Northumberland Strait.

When Northern Pulp’s general manager and technical manager, together with the consultant engineer in charge of the project, [met with](#) P.E.I.’s Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries earlier this year, they were unable to answer basic questions about the potential effect of the effluent on lobsters and the Strait.

Earlier this month, Northern Pulp [admitted](#) that its proposal to lay the pipe along the bottom of Pictou Harbour and out into the Strait, which it had planned to submit to the province in the summer, would not work — something fishers had been saying all along.

Pictou Harbour, the company determined, was too shallow, a collapsed pier and shipwreck were in the way, and an alternate route and outfall for the pipe would have to be found, pushing the registration of the proposal back to the fall of 2018.

None of this reassures people worried about the proposed pipe. For the past 51 years, the provincial government has consistently failed to protect citizens and the environment from the harmful effects the mill has had on air, water, forests and human health.

Nova Scotia’s auditor general has strongly [criticized](#) the province’s environmental assessment process, saying that environmental “approvals are issued without consulting inspectors who know risks,” and describing the monitoring of projects as “poor.”

Citizens concerned about the pipe [point out](#) that the provincial government is a party to designing the treatment facility, and can hardly be considered an “unbiased judge” of the proposal.

This is why, despite Trudeau’s refusal to commit to federal involvement, many continue to sign petitions, write letters, and pin their hopes on the federal government to step in and undertake an environmental assessment.

Other attached links to news articles about Sinar Mas and companies they own, included for the record.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/northern-pulp-air-emission-tests-fails-again-1.4295686>

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=decc8c4d61&attid=0.3&permmsgid=msg-f:1614129264220192111&th=16668a0387683d6f&view=att&disp=inline>

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=decc8c4d61&attid=0.4&permmsgid=msg-f:1614129264220192111&th=16668a0387683d6f&view=att&disp=inline>

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=decc8c4d61&attid=0.5&permmsgid=msg-f:1614129264220192111&th=16668a0387683d6f&view=att&disp=inline>