

Bill # 50

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Gordon D Hebb - Fwd: Text for the Law Amendment Committee on Bill 50

From: Legc Office
To: Hebb, Gordon
Date: 04 November 2009 1:58 PM
Subject: Fwd: Text for the Law Amendment Committee on Bill 50
Attachments: Text for the Law Amendment Committee on Bill 50

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please find out below a copy of the text I will be presenting tonight to the Law Amendment Committee.
Thank you,
Olivier Berreville

Dear Committee Members:

I would like to express my concerns to the committee regarding the proposed amendment of Section 24 of the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. Section 2 in this amendment stipulates that the Minister has the power to authorize the killing of seals on Hay Island, which is a protected area part of Scaterie Island off Cape Breton.

The Acting Manager of Protected Areas, Peter Labor, admitted during the press conference announcing the proposed amendments on Tuesday, October 27, 2009, that the killing of seals on Hay Island is not meant to protect the biodiversity of the area but simply "about providing opportunity for the DFO-licensed seal harvest to occur on Hay Island." Further, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans admits there is no evidence killing seals will help bring back fish populations that collapsed in previous years. In fact, evidence suggests instead that ecosystems are complex and fragile, and that the removal of top predators, such as seals, could lead to drastic shifts in ecosystems, caused for example by large increases in smaller "mesopredators" that are causing major ecological disruptions. These kinds of drastic shifts, which ultimately alter the function of ecosystems, have already been documented in other places. Therefore, I suggest that there is no reason to allow the killing of seals on the protected area of Hay Island; on the contrary, there are strong reasons to not intervene and modify the present ecological balance of species.

Additionally, I question how our Protected Wilderness Areas can be considered to be protected when the Nova Scotia government aims to allow commercial industry to enter those areas and pillage the flora and fauna. Nova Scotia's protected areas belong to all Nova Scotians, not commercial industry lobbyists. Government should not have the right to hand it over to industry and government should not be allowed to change the law to enable them to do so.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Olivier Berreville
PhD candidate, Biology

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