

Janis M Holmes - To Committee considering Bill 50

From: Nadia Bobak <NBobak@eastlink.ca>
To: <holmesjm@gov.ns.ca>
Date: 2009-11-04 11:56 AM
Subject: To Committee considering Bill 50

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To the committee considering Bill 50:

I am shocked as a life long supporter and member of the NDP that Mr. Belliveau is making motions to open up a protected wilderness area to commercial industry on Hay Island. Firstly, hunting seals on Hay Island is unnecessary because there are many small islands dotted around Nova Scotia's coast where sealers hunt grey seals every year. They do not need to kill them in protected space. I realize Mr. Belliveau is a former fisherman and it appears as if he is trying to throw his new weight around and win the hearts of his old colleagues.

I am deeply concerned about the impact this decision will have on our seafood and tourism industry when people see the NDP opening a protected wilderness area, which belongs to all Nova Scotians, to commercial industry for votes. I am also concerned about the NDP alienating their long time supporters with a destructive move that tells those who are watching that the NDP cares more about industry than keeping protected wilderness areas protected.

The Canadian seafood boycott is currently running successfully in the US and Europe will be expanded to include NS seafood. Right now, Newfoundland seafood is boycotted because of the harp/hooded seal hunt, with over 5,500 businesses and 650, 000 individuals taking part. If Hay Island is opened for business, organizations have vowed to expand the seafood boycott to include NS and those considering the boycott or presently boycotting Newfoundland seafood will quickly eschew NS seafood when they see images of grey seal pups being killed on protected land with the permission and blessing of the Nova Scotia government. It is unfair that people not involved in the sealing industry should suffer as a result of the government pandering to the fishing industry.

The following is a letter I wrote, which was published Monday in the Chronicle Herald:

While announcing changes to the Protected Wilderness Areas Act to allow access to protected Hay Island to kill grey seals, the environment minister could not explain why the changes were necessary (Oct. 28 article). He told media there is no good reason to kill grey seals, but no good reason not to.

Peter Labor, acting manager of protected areas, admits this is not about killing seals to protect the biodiversity of the area, but is simply "about providing opportunity for the DFO-licensed seal harvest to occur on Hay Island."

Why, then, is a seal harvest on Hay Island necessary? DFO says there is no science to indicate killing seals will

bring back the fish. There are no markets for grey seal products and no buyers could be found last year. So why kill grey seals on Hay Island?

This sets a dangerous precedent, giving the minister the power to allow commercial industry to rape and pillage our protected areas.

Please, I urge you to reconsider the bill which will give Mr. Belliveau the authority to open a protected area to commercial industry.

Thank you,

Nadia Bobak