

Bill #50

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From: "vandorpe@yorku.ca" <vandorpe@yorku.ca>
To: <matwhynott@nsndp.ca>
CC: Sterling Belliveau <min_env@gov.ns.ca>, Darrell Dexter <premier@gov.ns.c...>
Date: 30 October 2009 05:32 PM
Subject: Please act now to safeguard the Wilderness Areas Protection Act

Mr Mat Whynott MLA
Hammonds Plains-Upper Sackville
Nova Scotia House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax
Nova Scotia B3J2Y3

Dear Mr Whynott,

Hi Mat!

I don't know if you remember me, but I helped out with your campaign during the June 2009 election. I am currently attending York University in Ontario (majoring in Environmental Studies), but I have been keeping up with what is going on in Nova Scotia. I hope everything is going well for you!

I am writing to you today as I would really like you to consider opposing Bill 50. As an environmentalist, I believe that human intervention in the grey seal population is unnecessary. To my knowledge, there has been no evidence presented that the culling of grey seals on Hay Island will aid in the restoration of fish species. If there is evidence of this, I will reconsider my position on the issue. However, at this point in time I believe it is detrimental not only to the natural ecosystem, but to the image of Nova Scotia as well. To say the way in which the seals are culled is awful would be an understatement.

Unfortunately, the seal hunt is actually a topic that has already been mentioned in my Environmental Studies classes at York University. I have to say, it makes me a bit ashamed to say that I come from the Maritimes. It is extremely frowned upon and there was actually a very long article included on the topic in my ENVS 1200 course reader. I think it is safe to say that it has had a very bad effect on the reputation of Nova Scotians and the rest of the Maritimes.

I hope you will consider opposing Bill 50 and that you continue to represent the wishes of your constituents! :)

"As your constituent, I am asking you to oppose Bill 50, which would amend the Wilderness Areas Protection Act to allow the slaughter of grey seals on Hay Island (part of the protected Scaterie Island Wilderness Area off Cape Breton).

Protected spaces in Nova Scotia belong to all Nova Scotians and should not be turned over to industry at the whim of the government. This move to amend the Act is a betrayal of all Nova Scotians. I will be watching to see how you vote on Bill 50, and will take this into account during the next election.

Humane Society International/Canada documented the cruel clubbing of baby seals for their fur on Hay Island in 2008. Hunters herded seal pups, mothers and newborn seals into groups, clubbed moulted pups with wooden bats, and then used box cutters to slice open the seals. The shocking images were broadcast around the world, sparking a flood of angry letters of protest.

Just as shocking as the cruelty of this slaughter is the reckless manner in which it is being pursued. Grey

seals have been subjected to extreme overhunting in the past two centuries and, by 1949, were thought to have been wiped out (extirpated) in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. While the population has slowly begun to recover, fishing-industry lobby groups have repeatedly pressured for a cull of grey seals -- despite any evidence to suggest such a move is necessary.

Clearly, the Nova Scotia government is now attempting to pander to the fishing industry by rewriting the law. This unscrupulous move will severely damage the reputation of our province at a time when tourist dollars are so important to our economy.

Moreover, a boycott of Canadian seafood products -- that will continue until the seal hunt is ended in Canada -- has already attracted the support of 5,500 establishments and 650,000 individuals. With the Nova Scotia government apparently sanctioning the indiscriminate slaughter of baby seals in a provincial park, I suspect many companies will specifically choose to avoid Nova Scotia seafood. Moreover, one can only wonder how many fewer tourists will choose to visit Cape Breton once they have learned about the cruelty happening on Hay Island each February.

For the sake of the seals and for Nova Scotia, please vote against Bill 50, safeguard the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, and ensure that grey seals on Hay Island are protected from commercial seal hunting as they legally should be."

Take care!

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cc:
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