



Presentation for Law Amendments for Bill 111

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture is the voice of agriculture in Nova Scotia. Since 1895, we have represented the interests of Nova Scotia's agricultural community. Today, our members account for over 95% of all agricultural production in Nova Scotia. With an organizational structure that includes representation from 13 county and regional federations, 27 recognized agricultural commodity groups, the Federation brings together over 2400 individual farm businesses representing all aspects of primary agriculture.

As a commodity under the Federation of Agriculture, Nova Scotia Mink Producers Association sits at the NSFA Council of Leaders which sets the policy direction for our organization. Mink Farmers are also direct members of the Federation as registered farms. Mink farmers are without a doubt, an important part of our Industry.

Based on the 2010 census the total farm gate sales for agriculture in Nova Scotia were \$594 million. This equates to an economic impact of \$3 billion per year.

Mink farming has a farm gate value in excess of \$140 million per year; all of this is money coming into the province as new money. The economic impact of mink production is significant to Nova Scotia, particularly the south western part of the province where most fur farming activity is located.

We believe that mink farming in Nova Scotia brings a significant benefit to our soil. Mink manure is a valuable resource for crop and grain farmers. We are seeing positive increases in grain, crop and soybean production. However, one of the limiting factors in increasing production for grains and oilseeds is the price of fertilizers or finding sources of natural fertilizers or manure. With a decline in the number of beef farms, small dairy farms, and the elimination of the pork industry, there is very little manure available to provide the proper nutrients. This has resulted in farmers relying on chemical fertilizer to grow their



crops. Availability of mink manure will make it possible for farmers to revitalize the agriculture lands in a natural sustainable way.

The Federation of Agriculture supported the Fur Act when it was developed. We believe it provides a balance between fur farming activity and the environment. The Fur Act and regulations were developed by the province of Nova Scotia to ensure that future mink developments meet this rigorous standard and that existing facilities are brought up to standard.

As a Federation, we believe that the change in Section 35 (2) to reduce the grace period from 3 years to six months for existing farm improvements is unnecessary. We strongly feel the Act should leave the three year grandfathered clause in place for existing mink operations regardless of whether or not they make upgrades. Giving only six months for compliance does not meet the production and re-tooling needs of the farm community.

We believe that all farmers including mink farmers strive to be good stewards of the land. We live in the community; our farms are family businesses and we share the desire for a healthy environment for our families and community members.

The Federation believes that the regulations and proposed amendments of Bill 111 will protect both the environment and property owners. We believe the amendments brought forth in Bill 111 have the intent to make the Act more palatable. Our only request is for the removal of the changes made in Section 35 (2) that the operator shall meet the requirements of the Act within six months if they increase the size of their operation. Our Federation feels the same environmental stewardship and protection of public interests exists by meeting compliance within the standard three years regardless of upgrades and changes to an existing operation.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring you the view of the farm community with regard to these amendments.