

A submission to the Law Amendments Committee
Concerning the proposed
Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

Positive aspects of the proposed act:

I join with others in supporting the clear statement of specific goals and timelines. The decision to embed these goals and timelines in the legislation itself, rather than in regulations, is a worthwhile change from the previously proposed legislation.

Negative aspects of the proposed act:

Like others I am disappointed that Bill 57 extends the implementation period for the Lahey reforms for more than another year. This step will mean that it will be five years before the Lahey report is actually implemented. Five years in which a great deal of harm has been done to our forests and to biodiversity across the province.

Like the NDP I question the wisdom of carrying forward the emission reduction goals of the previous proposed legislation.

Some suggestions:

Statutory review – given the significance of this legislation and the unpredictability of climate change, a clause requiring periodic statutory reviews would be farsighted and make it easy to modify the legislation to take account of changing conditions in climate and their impact on the province; impacts such as the effects of sea-level rise, drought, changes in forest conditions, etc.

Benchmarks/targets for implementation of the Lahey reforms – The clauses in the EGCCRA dealing with the Lahey reforms are scanty, particularly in comparison to some of the other clauses that deal with different aspects of climate change reduction. This is surprising, considering the detail to be found in Lahey's discussion of the need for forest policy reform.

The four sub-clauses in Section 10 of the EGCCRA concentrate on protected areas, the implementation period for the Lahey reforms and the allocation of lands into the three elements of the 'Triad'. The sub-clauses could be expanded to identify other important steps leading to reform. Some examples of these clauses could include:

- Recognition that by encouraging the maintenance of intact forests we can significantly mitigate climate change. (This clause could also be included in Section 7)
- Revision of the *Forests Act* to comply with the amended purpose clause of the *Crown Lands Act*.
- Excluding High Production Forestry from Crown lands until such time as is needed for them to recover from the intense harvesting that has taken place on public lands since the acceptance by the previous government of the Lahey proposals.

- Measures encouraging industry and woodland owners to ensure that the need for biodiversity is recognized in their long-range planning for ecological forestry.
- Measures that would enable government to assist industry to retire high-capacity harvesting equipment and to encourage alternative employment opportunities in forest management, silviculture and wood-products manufacturing.
- Development of specific plans, with timelines, for the restoration of the Acadian forest.
- Explicitly prohibiting harvesting biomass for electricity production and for export. (This clause could also be included in Section 7)
- Development of specific plans, with timelines, for expansion of the existing community forest, the creation of new community forests and the expansion of forest areas managed by the Mi'kmaq.
- Updating environmental impact assessment processes to consider the cumulative impacts of developments that would potentially affect wetlands, rivers, lakes, or other aquatic environments.
- Recognizing and encouraging private ownership of forest land for conservation purposes.
- Provision for improved enforcement of ecological forestry policies.
- Provision, again with timelines, for reporting to the public progress on implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Pross

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