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From: Karen Beazley [REDACTED]
Sent: March 6, 2025 8:23 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Cc: Premier; MLA Office; Claudia Chender
Subject: Submission to Public Bills Committee regarding Bill 6
Attachments: Bill 6 Submission to Public Bills Committee 06Mar2025 Beazley.pdf

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Dear Office of the Legislative Counsel,

Please find attached (pdf) my written submission to Law Amendments Committee (now Public Bills Committee) regarding Bill 6.

If you need anything further, please let me know.

All the best and thanks,

Karen Beazley
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] -

Karen F. Beazley, PhD

Professor Emerita | School for Resource and Environmental Studies | Faculty of Science

Adjunct | Faculty of Graduate Studies

Pronouns: her/she

Dalhousie University
6299 South Street | PO Box 15000 | Halifax, NS B3H 4R2 Canada
karen.beazley@dal.ca
dal.ca/ <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/management/sres.html>

Dalhousie sits on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq nation. We are all Treaty people.

We acknowledge the histories, contributions, and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years.

March 6, 2025

Office of the Legislative Counsel
Halifax NS B3J 2X1

Legc.office@novascotia.ca

Re: Submission respecting Bill 6

Hon. Members of the Public Bills Committee,

I am writing to express my concerns and urge you to recommend that Bill 6 be deeply amended. I am not a special interest group or a professional letter writer. I am a retired senior and a citizen of Nova Scotia.

I have grave concerns about many of the clauses in Bill 6, especially those repealing the ban on uranium mining, removing important provisions around hydraulic fracturing, and others intended to enable the fast-tracking of resource extraction and development. On balance, Bill 6 represents an irresponsible approach to governance as well as an outdated approach to land and resource management. Further, it's provisions discount and deny past, present and future public processes that contributed to the current laws (e.g., ban and other provisions) on uranium mining, hydraulic fracturing, and environmental requirements.

Many provisions in Bill 6 were not part of the Premier's or his party's election platforms. This government does not have a mandate from the people of Nova Scotia to make these wide sweeping changes. Despite the (pseudo-)super-majority of conservative seats, it was obtained with only about one quarter of the support from eligible voters, reflecting a flawed election system. Many who did vote conservative are shocked and disappointed by the fast introduction of Bill 6 with provisions that were not part of the election platform. To use the threat and reality of USA-applied tariffs is misguided at best and disingenuous at worst. I address this further, below.

Bill 6 is particularly problematic alongside the provisions in Bill 1. Together and separately, these bills and others, if implemented, would severely limit public information, community and expert engagement, and municipal powers and local input. Such impactful negative changes warrant serious public discussion.

Provisions in Bill 6 would negatively impact democracy itself by reversing the outcomes of past public processes and fast-tracking developments without adequate protections and attention to the concerns of citizens, municipalities and others. Such changes create the conditions for very real negative health implications for the people and the environment in Nova Scotia, as well as for the planet with respect to the existential crises in biodiversity and climate that threaten all of life on earth.

A letter to Premier Houston from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (February 19, 2025) outlines some of the serious negative health impacts associated with uranium exploration and mining and hydraulic fracturing of natural gas in N.S. These are backed by independent medical studies and real-world experience. This is more credible evidence than any opinions being offered by mining and other industry lobbyists. Scientific claims by industry lobbyists and industry scientists are suspect, given their deep self-interest. They are in a serious conflict of interest position. The damages that have occurred from listening to the tobacco industry's experts and scientists provides an important lesson. Listening to mining-industry spokespersons is no different.

Negative health impacts would also affect non-human animals and other living beings in the environment, likely more so due to their more direct and sustained exposure. Wildlife in this province are already in a perilous state. Further impacts on them and their habitats from uranium mining, fracking and other fast-tracked resource explorations, developments and extractions would only contribute to their further loss and decline.

Andrew Younger, the energy minister at the time that the provisions around hydraulic fracturing were legislated, confirms that extensive consultation and thought was engaged at that time. Importantly, he notes that the legislation “established a requirement for community consent in the areas it may proceed. That consent might come about in many ways like a council resolution. By repealing the provisions, it is removing the community consent requirement.... The issue of land use conflicts for a speculative resource over existing high value resources is a concern. And what the repeal in the bill [6] really does is remove the requirement for community involvement in what is arguably a community resource” (as published in Halifax Examiner Morning File by Tim Bousquet, Feb 21, 2025; emphasis added). Two points are important here: 1) Bill 6 would remove the requirement for community consent and involvement, which is an affront to democracy and municipal discretion; and 2) it would open the floodgates of land-use conflicts on an already well-used and well-loved limited land (and water) base. Both are problematic.

Further, Nova Scotia is too small in land mass, too permeated with ground and surface waterways, and too extensively populated by existing communities and valued land uses to safely and responsibly conduct uranium mining and hydraulic fracturing. This is the case in my own community, in Windsor-West Hants, where there are wide-spread rural communities and a proliferation of surface and ground waters in relatively unstable geology, including gypsum-karst. Exploration and mining for uranium or hydrologic fracturing here would be extremely risky. Further, hydrologic fracturing cannot be done without massive use and release of waste water and greenhouse gases, which would prevent our ability to meet provincial emission reduction targets and further exacerbate the climate crises.

The worrisome issues introduced by Bill 6 are exacerbated by the request in John Lohr’s letter to mayors and wardens that they provide letters or press releases expressing *carte-blanche* support for expedited resource extractions. This seems like an attempt to thwart any potential future municipal engagement in decision making or resistance to fast-tracked developments and extractions in their communities. This is highly suspect and problematic, especially in the context of Bills 1 and 24, which also limit municipal and community information, input and engagement. I have emailed my mayor and council, urging them to NOT express such support, on these grounds. It is important that local input and municipal jurisdiction be retained, to respect local rights to a healthy environment.

Fast-tracked resource extraction is not an appropriate response to tariff threats from the USA. It is a backward step to outdated economics and resource management. Instead, innovative economies based on safe and sustainable value-added products and services are warranted, such as developed through ecological forestry, sustainable fisheries, agriculture and mining, tourism, and educational institutions.

The fast-tracking of resource extraction and development supported by Bill 6 requires substantial financial inputs, as shown in the tabled budget. Rather, these funds should be redirected to support the development of made-in-NS value-added products and services, such as from ecological forestry, sustainable fisheries and agriculture, and tourism. A tremendously prosperous economy and society could be generated by focusing efforts on ecological restoration, for example. Revenues for these could be generated by further taxing the wealthy, both corporate and individual,

and removing subsidies for industrial and other activities and developments that degrade the communities and ecological systems and contribute further to climate change.

Serious questions arise.

- The government has stated it has no intention of listening to so-called “special interests,” which are not explicitly named but seem to include anyone with environmental or human health concerns that might “stretch” the problem. Consequently, how can Bill 6 be responsibly implemented, namely by determining and considering the relevant pros and cons of any proposed resource development policy or project? How can this be done without input from environmental experts, communities of people concerned about the health of the land, soil, air and water, and local communities and their municipal governments?
- To fast-track resource extractive developments without meaningful scientific and public engagement is a problematic approach. How will this government determine which resource extractions and developments can be done safely and therefore are able to be fast-tracked? How can safety be confidently and responsibly defined and determined without inputs from environmental experts at arms-length from industry and government?

The provisions in Bill 6 to lift the ban on uranium mining and eliminate the need for community input into hydraulic fracturing are so egregious that I cannot imagine anyone would support them except for (1) those who do not understand the serious negative ecological and human health implications and (2) power-and-wealth elites who want to concentrate it further into their own hands, such as resource extraction industries. These latter are already extremely powerful “special interest” lobby groups whose opinions should be suspect, given their self-serving conflicts of interest.

Crucially, we are facing existential threats to life on earth posed by the climate and biological diversity crises. Scientific studies show that we are at or beyond planetary limits for both. Any resource development must also maintain and restore our life supporting ecological systems and their ecosystem services. There will be no economy without clean air, water, soil and the diversity of species that comprise the living component of ecological systems. Excessive and poorly sited resource development will further fragment and degrade these systems.

With respect, my deep concern is that this Bill and others are setting the stage such that this government will not proceed “with strict adherence to environmental laws and regulations.” Another is that this government will not engage with constituents about their environmental and health concerns. In their efforts to “fast-track” resource development and extraction, through Bill 6, it seems this government is gearing up and putting in place a legislative framework that enables them to override or ignore citizens’ health and environmental concerns.

This Bill, put forward without constituents’ engagement and discussion, serves to undo and limit environmental laws, policies, and processes that were put in place for good reason and with much discussion and research.

It is exacerbated by other Bills (e.g., 1, 24) that limit opportunities for public input by dismantling avenues for arms-length and unbiased information sharing, FOIPOP requests and media engagement, and leapfrogging over municipal governments by asking for their *carte-blanche* support and by limiting their input into so-called “provincial” matters, even though these are at issue in their local jurisdictions and communities.

These, along with other concerning over-reaches of power apparent in other Bills, such as Bills 1, 12 and 24, are cause for great concern. They certainly rock my faith and trust in this government and the Premier. Public trust has been further eroded by the Premier labelling all who differ from

him in their opinions as “problem stretchers” and “special interests”. By behaving this way, the Premier and this government, through Bills such as Bill 6, are being “problem creators.”

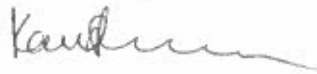
By swiftly introducing wide-sweeping changes such as those in Bill 6, it is difficult for citizens like me to understand the full implications and respond to them under the tight timeline. I cannot help but assume that this is the intent. And, indeed, the Premier more-or-less admits that this is the case. The Premier has indicated that he wants to act quickly and then clean up his mistakes if that’s what they turn out to be. I submit that this Bill is a mistake. It should have been withdrawn before getting to this point in the process.

For the good of all Nova Scotians, now and future, I urge you to please recommend amendments to Bill 6 that address the concerns I have expressed. At a minimum:

- Delete or amend clauses 10 and 17 such that current (past) limitations and provisions around hydraulic fracturing are retained, such as the requirement for community involvement.
- Delete Clause 21, which repeals the Uranium Exploration and Mining Prohibition Act: “**21** Chapter 6 of the Acts of 2009, the Uranium Exploration and Mining Prohibition Act, is repealed.”

I thank the Public Bills Committee for their time and efforts. It is dismaying to have to fight for good legislation and the health of our home province while existential threats to our nation deserve our full attention.

Respectfully,



Karen F. Beazley

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[REDACTED]

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