

From: Megan Crowley [REDACTED]
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To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Written Submissions to the Public Bills committee- bills 1, 6, 11, 12, 24
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Written Submissions to the Public Bills committee

Nova Scotians ask you to rescind (or vote no) to Bills 1, 6, 11, 12 and 24. These bills represent vast government overreach and working to dismantle democracy in Nova Scotia.

I do not support Bill 1 and reducing transparency by allowing freedom of information requests to be denied, dismantling communications NS, limiting debate in the legislature, and granting authority for non-unionized government workers to be fired without cause. N.S. information commissioner Tricia Ralph states that "the legislation [in bill 1] could diminish government accountability" and "is calling on the governing party to withdraw legislation that she says weakens the public's right to access government records and documents." (from CBC). This is a significant withdrawal of transparency and accountability and should not go through.

I do not support lifting bans and community consent on uranium mining and fracking in Bill 6. Removing requirements for community consent for fracking is alarming and an irresponsible way to proceed with something that can cause so much harm. Nova Scotia has the densest rural population in Canada. Over 40,000 families and houses depend on well water for drinking. In Saskatchewan, uranium mines are 600 km away from communities and towns. Before you vote on this, I would ask if you are comfortable having a uranium mine or fracking site close to your house and your family? I implore you to vote no to Bill 6. Tim Houston is greenwashing Nova Scotians about the ability to safely mine and frack, and the science backs up the dangers. Studies have found that fracking and uranium mining are linked with contaminated water, lung cancer, respiratory diseases, congenital birth defects, childhood asthma & leukemia, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, higher overall mortality rates and reduced life expectancy. This is completely against the health care platform that the Conservatives ran on and will cost more in health care dollars in the long run. The rights and voices of KMK and the Assembly of NS Mi'kmaw Chiefs need to be heard and consulted on well before any legislative changes are made.

Uranium mining also adds in health risks from radioactive dust and potential water contamination. It is also fiscally irresponsible as the mining and milling waste are a perpetual health hazard (far more toxic than uranium) that will need to be monitored and managed at the public expense for thousands of years with significant and severe water contamination risks.

Jobs that benefit our province and its people are one that are forward looking and green. Climate change has been listed as the greatest global health threat of the 21st century and the forest fires, floods, and storms we have seen in the last decade make it clear we should not be promoting fracking and uranium mining. Retired geologist Dr. Elisabeth Kusters wrote in the Halifax Examiner "Does Nova Scotia have a large uranium reserve? We don't really know, because Nova Scotia has had a ban on uranium exploration for decades. But we do know that our reserve is completely insignificant compared to that of Saskatchewan...Nova Scotia uranium is not now and never will be economic on any scale whatsoever and that's leaving out whether it's desirable to produce uranium or not."

Retired University professor, Gillian Thomas, in another Halifax Examiner article, "painstakingly debunks all the claims about the benefits of uranium mining that MANS touts in its report, one by one. Among other things, she noted:

- Uranium is not universally agreed to be a “critical mineral,” essential for the transition to a clean energy. It is not designated as a critical mineral in Nova Scotia, nor is it in the UK and France, although both depend heavily on nuclear power.
- MANS relies almost entirely on the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to argue that uranium mining is “safe” for both humans and the environment, although the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, officially the regulator, has been shown to have an “institutional bias” in favour of the nuclear industry, something the Canadian Environmental Law Association has frequently condemned.
- MANS ignores numerous peer-reviewed studies showing clear health and environmental risks of uranium mining and contamination, including the 2011 book, ‘Uranium Mining in Virginia: Scientific, Technical, Environmental, Human Health and Safety, and Regulatory Aspects of Uranium Mining and Processing in Virginia.’”

Another point raised was If uranium mining is only allowed in arid states in the USA [due to safety concerns and Virginia has had a supreme court upheld ban due to its high rainfall and intense storms], why would Nova Scotia be suitable when it has a higher precipitation rate than Virginia (and much higher than Saskatchewan) and a history of intense storms that are only going to increase in intensity and frequency with climate change?

It does not make sense financially, environmentally or socially to lift these bans. Nova Scotians do not want you to lift these bans. This is backed up by Dr. Steven Emerman, who is a mining expert and also a retired university professor and geophysicist who is world renown. “Emerman told the Halifax Examiner that the ban on uranium mining in Nova Scotia should stay in place, and that among many other things, the high precipitation in the province alone should preclude safe uranium exploration or mining.”

I also oppose the ability to override the authority of municipal governments to make decisions about transportation (bill 24) and having government overreach in academic settings that influence research and education (bill 12). Universities need academic independence for excellence and impartiality. It is not okay to control and force change on institutions or government bodies that do not agree with you. This is not democratic.

I also disagree with changes in Bill 11 that allow health providers to charge more to private insurance than MSI pay limits. This is a playbook from Doug Ford. I am worried that instead of strengthening public health care, Tim Houston is working to divert public funds to for-profits private companies. This breaks the system by underfunding it and forces people to seek private care when they don’t have any other options and pushes Tim Houston’s privatization of health services agenda. Provinces that outsource care have longer wait times, and higher costs. Please direct public money into the public health system.

Tim Houston’s conservative government may have a super-majority, but this is not because the majority of the people of Nova Scotia are behind him. Tim Houston broke his own law to call an early election in a mail strike and when the political climate was advantageous. It is the MLAs job to vote in the best interest of the people of Nova Scotia, not special-interest industry associations that have a poor track record in Nova Scotia, or for bills that overstep authority. These changes were not included in the platform of the Conservatives and significant changes should not be passed quickly through an omnibus bill and without listening to the concerns across party lines from Nova Scotians throughout this province.

Sincerely,

Megan Crowley
Caledonia, NS



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