

To the Public Bills Committee regarding Bill 127, Protecting Nova Scotians Act

I would respectfully request that members of the committee seriously consider the negative ramifications of the following clauses regarding NS Crown Lands:

"14 Clause 26(7)(c) of Chapter 114 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Crown Lands Act, is amended by adding ", block, obstruct the use of, impede access to" immediately after "barricade".

15 Chapter 114 is further amended by adding immediately after Section 39 the following Sections:

39A (1) Notwithstanding Section 39, the Minister may, without notice, remove, demolish or otherwise dispose of a structure, together with the contents contained therein, on Crown lands in respect of which there is not in effect a lease or permit issued pursuant to this Act if, in the Minister's opinion, the structure

(a) is a hazard to public health, safety or order;

(b) is harmful to the economic interests of the Crown or any person lawfully using Crown lands;

(c) obstructs or impedes in any way the lawful use of Crown lands by any person; or

(d) is being used in any way to facilitate the obstruction or impediment of the lawful use of Crown lands by any person.

(2) Where a structure is removed, demolished or otherwise disposed of under subsection (1), the expense of the removal, demolition or disposition may be recovered by the Minister in a court of competent jurisdiction in any action for debt on behalf of the Crown against any person who erected, occupied or used the structure.

(3) A person who erects, occupies or uses a structure meeting any of the criteria in subsection (1) is guilty of an offence.

(4) Except as permitted under subsection (2), no person shall be entitled to compensation as a direct or indirect result of anything done pursuant to subsection (1).

39B A person who fails to comply with this Act or the regulations is guilty of an offence and, except as otherwise prescribed by the regulations, is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than fifty thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not more than six months, or to both."

Our current government has not lived up to its vows of protection for old growth forests, appears to be grabbing what it can for the forest industry from Crown Lands, is not being transparent with the citizens of Nova Scotia regarding herbicide spraying of forests, and is hobbling, with this bill, the

ability for the citizens of this province to fight back in the only means that seems to have any impact on the industry and, by extension, the government. This Bill is not protecting Nova Scotians. It is putting our health at risk, and is diametrically opposed, by cutting old growth forest, to solving any of our climate change issues. Old growth forest is a critical player in stabilizing weather extremes, replenishing the water table, housing water in its plants and soil that help deter wildfire, and is the largest sequester of carbon that we have (the oceans being full and through stabilization re-release carbon back into the atmosphere).

Killing all the undergrowth with glyphosate spraying creates a huge fire risk, as does putting lumber equipment and workers in the dead undergrowth of sprayed forests to work. And this at a time when citizens were being fined astronomically for entering the woods. Between the government's recent actions - not protecting what you said you would, insisting on poisoning the population with spraying (and with this Bill effecting our ability to protest), no longer informing us of where and when spraying is occurring (so we can't try to protect our water sources), allowing industry to go in and continue working while keeping citizens out, and now sneaking in these Crown Land changes amongst so many other changes so that most don't realize what's happening, that we no longer have the tools to protest the government's behavior... Well. Premier Houston, you are not protecting citizens. You are signalling that a badly concocted and applied, money hungry forestry method is at the top of your agenda and the citizens be damned. You can give all kinds of scenarios, I'm sure, of why these Crown Land changes are "good", but when you behave as you have, there is no choice for the citizens of this province to see anything except nefarious connotations in your actions.

I beg the committee to reconsider. Please do not send Bill 127 on as is. There is no benefit to these changes that isn't already in place and no use of Crown Lands that warrants the penalties laid out in this Bill. That is strictly meant as a deterrent to anyone bold enough to stand up to a Premier determined to brazen his way through the destruction of our forests. Certainly, as is, profits are being made, and the desire for more never abates. I would ask that you consider the success of some of Cape Breton's spray free forestry practices. And leave us the only means we have left to protest a system that is poisoning our land, our water, and us for the sake of profit, to the detriment of our people, our weather, the rare and the beautiful of both plant and wildlife. Please, have a care for our home, even if our government does not.

Most Sincerely,

Deborah Gordon