

## **Re: Submission to Bills Committee on Nova Scotia Bill 127 – Section II**

I am writing with respect to Section 2 of Bill 127, which was supposedly introduced to “protect Nova Scotians.”

First, I want to raise my deep concerns with the undemocratic process surrounding this omnibus bill, which lumps many disparate issues together and has been pushed through with no respect for allowing Nova Scotians the time to have our voices or concerns heard and addressed. A government which respects the will of their constituents would not push through legislation of this import without adequate time for consultation and input. I urge the Bills Committee to ensure that there is respect for the democratic process which includes separating out the many issues contained within this proposed legislation and allowing adequate time to hear from Mi’kmaq rights holders, experts, and the public.

While I support much of what is proposed in this Bill, **I am deeply concerned with the amendments to the Crown Lands Act proposed in Section II.** These amendments do nothing to “protect Nova Scotians”, but instead introduce more opportunities to criminalize those in our communities committed to protecting the land and water for future generations. Section II of Bill 127 in fact prioritizes the “economic interests of the Crown” over the health and safety of Nova Scotians. The Conservative government has repeatedly allowed the spraying of a known carcinogen (glyphosate) on forested land, despite the health and safety risks to the population, and yet would criminalize those who oppose such operations. In addition, those who oppose high impact forestry operations that threaten species-at-risk and critical habitat would also be impacted. Finally, the possibility that the government could use this legislation to criminalize Mi’kmaq land defenders on unceded Mi’kmaq land is a violation of Indigenous sovereignty and treaty responsibilities. Mi’kmaq land defenders are on Hunters Mountain because the province and the Crown has clearly been mismanaging those lands and they are trying to protect them for future generations. As a mother and the head of an organization dedicated to the protection of children, I am grateful to those who are standing up for their wellbeing, in direct contrast to the Conservative government and this legislation.

I am deeply concerned and opposed to the erosion of democratic processes demonstrated by this government and the introduction of omnibus bills of this nature, and the continual prioritization of shortsighted economic priorities and private interests over the health and safety of our children and future generations. **I urge the Committee to remove and reject Section II of Bill 127 and demonstrate your commitment to truly protecting our kids and our communities, and to reconciliation.**

Sincerely,

Christina McCarron