

An open letter to Premier Stephen McNeil of Nova Scotia

February 4, 2020

Hon. Stephen McNeil,

At the January meeting of our naturalists organization, Nature Miramichi, the president mentioned that he was encouraged by the decision you made on Dec 20: there would be no extension to the January 31 deadline for Northern Pulp to stop dumping effluent from the mill into Boat Harbour. Many other members had also made note of your announcement.

This deadline had been known for five years but during that time no acceptable solution to treating the effluent was proposed. The mill owners, Paper Excellence, and the workers and contractors presumed you would extend the deadline and effluent would just continue to flow into Boat Harbour and Northumberland Strait.

On Dec 19, just to be sure you got the message, Paper Excellence CEO Brian Baarda reiterated that 300 employees would be out of work if the mill closed and over 11,000 other jobs in the province could be impacted. Hundreds of affected workers and contractors rallied outside Province House to drive the point home to you and the MLA's.

Nonetheless, you refused to allow Northern Pulp to continue the devastation of Boat Harbour. On Jan 31 the flow of effluent stopped. Although site runoff and warm water from the boiler will continue to be dumped until the hibernation of the mill is completed in April, the revitalization of Boat Harbour can now be contemplated.

This was a significant decision taken with the long view that, in the short term, may cost you politically. We want you to know how much we appreciate your courage and vision. Leadership like this is required if we are to meet other environmental challenges and move towards a green economy.

Sincerely,
President and members
Nature Miramichi
Miramichi, New Brunswick