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MINISTER'S OFFICE
MAR 11 2009
NOVA SCOTIA ENVIRONMENT
37-516

From: "Dave Morse MLA" <morse.mla@ns.sympatico.ca>
To: "Hon. David M Morse" <MIN_ENV@gov.ns.ca>
CC: "Pamela J Hill" <hillpj@gov.ns.ca>
Date: 2009-03-10 2:26 PM
Subject: Fw: Avon River Causeway, Nova Scotia
Attachments: FAR Aug 28th HearnPress Release Final (PDF)13.pdf; FAR Letter to Min Hearn from MP Brison July22 08.doc; FAR - Brison to Hearn Letter - Oct 24 2007.doc
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----- Original Message -----

From: Sonja Wood
To: Scott Brison ; Junior Theriault ; David Morse ; Stephen McNeil ; Ron Chisholm ; Min. Gail Shea ; Gerry Byrne
Cc: Dale Palmetter ; Elizabeth May ; Franco Vessio ; Gretchen ; Justin Duncan ; Randy Matheson ; Robert-Yves Mazerolle ; Pat Stewart ; Richard Armstrong ; Ray Parker ; Pam Denicola ; Ken Greer ; Doug Crossman
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2009 1:39 PM
Subject: FW: Avon River Causeway, Nova Scotia

Dear Min. Shea,

Below is a letter our groups (FAR & APWPS) sent you on January 30th, 2009. We have not receive a response therefore, we are resending our request for you to initiate an 'emergency comprehensive environmental impact assessment' on the complete Avon River Watershed in Nova Scotia.

Please address our request as soon as possible.

Sincere Thanks,

Sonja Wood (FAR Chair)

Raymond Parker (APWPS Chair)

-----Original Message-----

From: Sonja Wood [mailto:bbfossils@xplomet.com]
Sent: January 30, 2009 4:10 PM
To: Ron Chisholm; Stephen McNeil; David Morse; Junior Theriault; Scott Brison; Min. Gail Shea
Cc: Dan Snider; Emily; Elizabeth May; Chuck Porter; Gretchen; Justin Duncan; Mark; Randy Matheson; Jon Cuming; Gardner Mac Neill; Robert-Yves Mazerolle; Pat Stewart; Richard Armstrong; Ray Parker; Pam Denicola; Ken Greer; Doug Crossman
Subject: Avon River Causeway, Nova Scotia

Dear Min. Shea,

Here is a bit of a large information package that has been growing for the past five years in regard to the Avon River causeway near Windsor, Nova Scotia. In the past, we the Friends of the Avon River (FAR) along with another interest group and our MP, Scott Brison have requested that Minister, Loyola Hearn initiate a Comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment on the complete Avon River Watershed. (see attachments)

Therefore we, (FAR) and the Avon Peninsula Watershed Preservation Society (APWPS), are writing today requesting that 'you' instigate an 'emergency comprehensive environmental impact assessment' of the complete Avon River Watershed, in order to obtain hard data on the remaining fish populations, the extent and quality of their 'critical habitat' (historically and today), and to identify and mitigate any 'stressors' (including lack of fish passage) shown to be detrimental not only to the 'endangered iBoF Atlantic Salmon' but also the American Eel and their 'critical habitats'. It is imperative the Fisheries Minister of Canada recognize the immediate concerns of our two groups as they pertain to fish and fish habitat. Two projects, which could both heavily impact endangered (and other) fish species and their 'critical habitats' within this iBoF watershed include not only the pending "Hwy. 101 Twinning Project", but also recent concerns around the "Miller Creek Quarry Expansion Project".

The FAR group and Hon. MP for Kings-Hants Scott Brison have requested that such an investigation be initiated by Min. Hearn in the past, due to the lack of 'fish passageway' at the Avon River causeway and because the upcoming 'twinning project' is to begin on the causeway in the very near future. Minister Hearn's, reply to Min. Brison and FAR was, "once the proposal from Nova Scotia Transportation and Public Works (NSTPW) and the accompanying EIS have been received by DFO, a review will be initiated under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) process. The proposal will be reviewed under the applicable sections of the Fisheries Act, Species at Risk Act and the CEAA".

The DoT have hired the consultant group and are near conclusion with their EA on the causeway. FAR and APWPS are counting on you to shoulder up with this expensive project, to ensure that the endangered species within this watershed are protected, we feel very strongly that the Federal DFO should not be idling, but instead and for the reasons stated in the rest of our letter YOU MUST ACT NOW.

The Fundy Gypsum Co., based in Hants County, NS is involved in a controversial issue with the APWPS regarding a mine expansion in a quarry located at Miller's Creek, Avondale very near St. Croix River. The expansion was put on hold until April 2009, after a call for additional information was requested by 'then' Provincial Environment Minister, Mark Parent. (Current Dept. of Environment Minister, David Morse)

The recent EA, conducted by Fundy Gypsum, has failed to address the impact potential that the proposed quarry project will have upon critical habitat(s) of both the St. Croix and Kennetcook Rivers and of the entire Avon River Watershed (ARW). Sixteen different wetlands will be impacted, surface water and groundwater in the area will be affected and so will the 'species-at-risk'. Past Min. Mark Parent expressed particular concern about a lack of information surrounding the effects on fish and fish habitat. He said, 'a fish survey needs to be done in nearby Shaw Brook. The presence of fish could trigger the need for a

federal environmental assessment'. We agree, but again this assessment needs to cover the entire ARW. (Atlantic salmon are slated for recovery by the IBoF Recovery Team in these listed 'rivers of concern')

The Fundy Gypsum Company wants to open a 400-hectare quarry, and already have two quarries operating on the Avon Peninsula.

If the Provincial Department of Environment is concerned about fish and fish habitat (among other things), it should cause some alarm to Canadians in general if they were to discover that Federally, there is no initiative to share these concerns. It should become obvious that there are several reasons to warrant your concern regarding the obvious plight of the Avon River Watershed. Critical Habitat is under threat and these rivers ARE SLATED FOR RECOVERY by the iBoF Recovery Team.

Strict scrutiny is needed from the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans on any form of Industrial or Infrastructure Development being proposed and on any EAs that are being generated by these upcoming projects. The Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans needs to keep their commitments for recovery of these IBoF Rivers and it needs to begin to develop its own background information on the ARW. No approval should be given to such projects as the causeway twinning and mine expansion until your Department can determine how these fish and critical habitat will be preserved throughout the entire watershed.

We feel the long over-due 'comprehensive environmental impact assessment' is the only reasonable way your department can evaluate what it is going to take to save the important fish in our watershed.

Both FAR and APWPS are expecting to hear from you on this serious matter very soon. FAR and the Councils of Hants West, the Town of Hantsport and the Town of Windsor are unanimously opposed to any delays when the Hwy.101 twinning project begins. We foresee that if DFO doesn't start this assessment immediately and if DoT doesn't factor in possible passage requirements in their bridge design, then this in itself will cause delays. FAR and a large number of people in the communities along this watershed, want these rivers to recover and the species therein given a chance to survive.

Sincerely,

Sonja Wood (FAR-Chair)

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Hantsport, NS

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Raymond Parker (APWPS-Chair)

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