

July 11, 2007

Dear Panel Members

I am a Nova Scotian who has been living “abroad” in other parts of Canada. In my retirement, I am returning to my heritage home. My husband and I have purchased a property in Brighton, just outside of Digby. We chose this place because of the beauty of the area and the feeling of once again being connected to the land and water. It is also near my family’s homestead in Tiverton.

When I heard about the Whites Point Quarry, I could not believe that any reasonable government would entertain such a project in this particular area. I have hiked in parts of Ontario where there are quarries. They are ugly, noisy and dusty. To find out more about the proposed quarry, I attended many hours of the Joint Review Panel Public Hearings held at the Digby Pines Conference Centre. I left even more puzzled and more convinced that a quarry is not the right project for Digby Neck.

Two areas of particular concern for me are tourism and domestic water supply in the proposed site area.

On June 25, 2007, Ms Darlene MacDonald, Manager for Tourism Development, Tourism Division, noted that “Nova Scotia is Canada’s foremost seacoast vacation destination that offers an authentic experience for your body and soul better than any other destination...Nova Scotia uniquely combines spectacular scenery, living tradition, maritime culture and lifestyle with a feeling of deep-down spiritual satisfaction”. I fail to see how a quarry at Whites Point fits into this vision (which I happen to embrace) of Nova Scotia. Many tourists today want to visit parts of the world where environmental protection practices are observed. They hike, bike, kayak and take helicopters to enhance their travel experience. Coming across a quarry...its appearance, its noise and its dust...is not what this type of tourist is looking for. Eco tourism is an opportunity for Nova Scotia. Why risk killing this opportunity with a quarry. Why risk negatively impacting Nova Scotia’s tourism brand? Instead of allowing the rape of our land and resources, the government needs to assist regions in developing and enhancing their tourism potential. This would provide much needed jobs without the destruction of our land and waters. Tourism is important to Nova Scotia’s financial well being. Nova Scotia’s financial well being is important to me in my retirement years.

The impact of blasting and other quarry activities on water quantity and quality is another concern that I have, especially after hearing Dr Miroslav Nastev’s presentation to the Panel on June 22, 2007.

Dr Nastev pointed out that fractured rock aquifers are very complex and “...are probably the most difficult hydrogeological settings to define”. He further noted that “...there is no one watertable; there is no one water level in this aquifer”. The Proponent’s methodology in several areas was also questioned by Dr Nastev: 1) “I think that the approach, the methodology for field campaign used by the promoter is or was not appropriate to study this type of aquifer”. 2) “...the methodology, the approach used by the promoter to define transmissivity, the hydraulic conductivity of this type of fractured aquifer, I think is not appropriate”. Dr Nastev then indicated that “there are actually very few field data to support the characterization and...support what could be the expected impact”.

Given the complexity of the aquifer in the proposed quarry site and the inappropriate methodologies used, how can one be sure that there will be solutions to problems that could arise? If the water supply is adversely affected, it may be that drilling new wells will not solve the problem. If there is not adequate and safe water in an area, the quality of life for residents decreases dramatically. Perhaps they will have to move away. Other business ventures would not likely choose to locate in a region that does not offer an adequate, safe and efficient supply of water. The area could hardly then be described as offering “an authentic experience for...body and soul” or “a lifestyle with a feeling of deep-down spiritual satisfaction”. I am worried that the quarry has the potential to destroy the quality of life in the surrounding areas. It could also prevent diversification instead of being a sign of it.

Unrestricted industrialized growth does not equal progress. There are costs to industrial activity. Some of these costs we cannot afford. Loss of tourism and loss of domestic water supply will cost more than the benefits seen from 34 quarry jobs. I ask the Panel to make it clear to the final decision makers that the cost of the Whites Point Quarry to Nova Scotia is too high.

Please, Stop the Quarry!!

Lois Oliver