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Joint Review Panel
Whites Point Quarry and Marine Terminal Project

Submitted & presented by:
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Fisheries Critic/Liberal Caucus
Approximate presentation time: 15 minutes

June 26th, 2007
7:00pm

- ◆ Have heard from people concerning quarry both for and against it.
- ◆ Fear of the unknown about this quarry's future.
- ◆ Those for it -jobs - jobs - jobs, only positive thing.
- ◆ Why we have lack of jobs in the coastal communities
- ◆ How we could have jobs if our Federal government would help with our coastal water problems - seals.

My name is Harold Theriault and I have been the MLA for Digby – Annapolis and Nova Scotia fisheries critic the past four years.

I want to thank the panel for this opportunity to express some concerns of this area regarding the proposed Digby Neck quarry.

My family has lived and fished in this area for 15 generations and hopefully that will continue for many more.

I have heard from many people concerning this quarry over the last number of years, and its clear the matter is somewhat divided and is on the forefront of people's minds in our community.

I believe people are against this proposed quarry for fear of harm it may cause to what many have worked hard to establish in this area.

However, there are a number of people in favour of it because they believe the jobs may help our communities economy. And jobs are the only positive thing I've heard from people concerning this quarry.

People need a job for income to support their families and nobody should blame anyone for wanting this.

But, those who are against it say Digby Neck and Islands has been compared to places such as the Florida Keys of the United States, and ask why would we risk this for a few jobs?

People have worked hard in the last twenty years towards making this region a first class tourist destination, and they are succeeding, but they are wondering if they should continue?

Digby, Nova Scotia was recently selected as “the most romantic town in Canada.” Annapolis Royal was picked as one of the best small towns to live in North America.

People are asking me: “Will a mining project in the same community destroy this image?”

I have also heard from many concerned fishermen about this proposed quarry.

They are asking me what will silt do to the last few fisheries that we have left on this Bay of Fundy shore in generations to come?

They are also saying the proposed shipping route to the quarry will be traveling over miles and miles of lucrative lobster grounds.

How much lobster gear will be cut loose from this massive ship traveling over these grounds?

This lobster gear can run upwards of \$150 per trap with thousands of them being fished in this proposed shipping lane.

Another question I hear is, what will major quarrying do for future plans of this area becoming a retirement community of Nova Scotia?

If we look at other areas in Canada where mining is going on, do we see any retirement communities near by?

Questions from other concerned people are: Why are we giving our rock away to another country, for just the promise of a few jobs?

This Province's roads are a mess, and we are 4 billion dollars behind in road rebuilding, why can't we receive a royalty from this material to rebuild our own roads?

Another question is, why is the United States coastlines protected from this sort of quarrying and our coasts aren't.

Do the American people know there is something wrong with this, that we don't?

Another question I have been asked, if you have a pile of rock 30 miles long, 1 mile wide and 200 feet high, and you take 2 million ton a year away from that, how many generations would it take, to make this pile of rock disappear?

And last but not least, a few years ago the Federal government seen it wise to stop fresh water from leaving this country in bulk, so why are we letting our land be taken away in bulk?

I could go on and on with the questions I've been asked, but I'm sure by now the panel has heard them all.

Now, on the other side of this issue are the citizens in favour of the proposed quarry.

I have not heard from many of these people, but those I have heard from are desperate for a job, especially since the downturn of

our groundfishing industry here. I've been asked, what is wrong with a quarry that will create some jobs?

I've been told that there have been 400 resumes submitted for the jobs this quarry would provide.

At the same time, I hear that only 34 jobs will be available.

If this is true, 366 people that believe they may get a job are going to be VERY disappointed, and I believe this will create even more and division in the community.

I want you to know that I'm fully in favour of creating more employment opportunities in Western Nova Scotia.

For 15 generations, my family and many others have worked and survived in this community and my hope is that can continue on for many more.

I believe we must do everything we can to keep our families together in Western Nova Scotia and in a sustainable way. Many of these people that want a job are not cut out to work in call centres.

How many people have gone to Alberta, Ontario or other places looking for work because of lack of jobs here?

We're not happy about it, but its called survival and people of this region will do what they have to for survival.

Some people will leave this land to survive and others will think about giving it away to survive – it's partly to do with desperation because of no groundfishery.

We need to explore every option to increase economic development and job opportunities in this area but in a sustainable way.

I believe the opportunities are already here, we just have to convince the Federal government and others to help us revive an industry that helped to build this province and country.

Nova Scotia was one of the original provinces in Confederation and it was our fishing industry that supplied trade and commerce to the rest of Canada and we've done so for many generations.

We used to have one of the most prosperous fishing industries in the world and many believe that can happen again!

In the past decade or so, our ground fishing industry has fallen on hard times, but we could bring it back to a sustainable level if our Federal government and others would listen to some common sense.

Our lobster and scallop fisheries are still viable and sustainable, but we must bring our ground fishery back to compliment it, like it was for many generations in this community.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Ottawa has mismanaged our ground fishery for a number of years, and is still doing so, with no will to correct it. Many believe, if the fishery was doing well people would not feel the desperation for jobs and probably wouldn't support this quarry.

Before the collapse of our ground fishery in this area, twenty fish plants operated between Digby and Briar Island, employing approximately 30 people per fish plant. Today that number is three part time groundfish plants.

Keep in mind that this proposed quarry is just the equivalent in labour, as one fish plant.

The vast majority of people in the fishing industry know that if some proper management was used, we could put a lot of these 20 fish plants back into operation.

Over the years with DFO's mismanagement plans, and fishermen, and myself included, who following them, helped bring the ground fishery down, by thinking it could never end.

Now we know better, but we also know we are not keeping it down.

Since the downturn of the ground fishery in Nova Scotia, a predator to groundfish called seals has exploded to a population tenfold of what it was before the collapse of the fishery.

What has caused this? Many fishermen and others around this coast can tell you that sharks that have been caught up were the predator of the seals. There may be other reasons also, we are not sure. But one thing we are sure of, the number of grey seals in

our coastal waters of Nova Scotia, have gone from 25,000 ten years ago, to 250, 000 today.

This is a low figure I'm using and fishermen and others living in our coastal communities will tell you it's much higher than this, possibly 450 000 of them and growing.

These animals grow to a weight of 1000 pounds and need a food supply of at least 20 pounds of fish per day, and many say up to 40 pounds per day.

But just at 20 lbs each, this calculates out to 5 Million pounds of fish per day being eaten by these animals while fishermen and fish plant workers sit on the wharves, wondering where they are going to get a job.

One fish plant employing 30 people needs approximately 50,000 pounds of fish per day to fully operate.

The 5 Million pounds of fish that is being eaten by seals around our coasts, would operate 100 fish plants, employ 3,000 people, 365 days a year.

Remember these are low figures I'm using. We may not be able to bring our ground fishery back to the glory days of having 20 fish plants on the Digby Neck and Islands, but we could bring it back to HALF of that if the powers that be and others would recognize this problem.

If the fishing industry would have had the amount of attention that this quarry has received over the last 5 years, we could have maybe generated thousands of jobs back into the fishing and processing industries of coastal communities, including Digby Neck.

Over the past few years very few fishermen have been fishing for groundfish, and there is less of them fishing every year, yet fish quotas are still in decline.

With the ground fishing industry nearly gone from Nova Scotia's coastal communities, some people feel they have no other choice than to use the land in whatever way than can to survive.

They can't understand why our federal and provincial governments won't work with us to help us re-establish our main

economic generator: the ground fishing industry? They can't understand why they won't help us grow our aquaculture industry that could create more jobs for coastal communities. Nova Scotia is supposed to be the best fish producing province of Canada, it's a natural place for doing so.

A lot of people in coastal Nova Scotia believe it has come to the point that if the powers that be and others want to save seals, then we'll have to give our land away to survive.

We have a serious problem with seals in Nova Scotia's coastal water with regards to our ground fishery and all the sustainable jobs it should be creating.

The fishing industry doesn't want to see the seal herd disappear. They just want it brought down to a manageable level and in doing so we can create a sustainable way of life again in coastal communities, including Digby Neck.

There are examples of this in other industries in Canada. For example, in Saskatchewan, the agriculture industry had a serious

problem with gophers eating crops. They had a fear there of losing jobs in that industry.

The damage to Saskatchewan's economy was reported at being \$200 Million per year, and here, in Nova Scotia, we're talking about BILLIONS of dollars per year in our coastal waters being destroyed by the over abundance of wild animals.

The federal government stepped in to aid the farmers of Saskatchewan and they plan to exterminate 80 percent of the gopher population in that province so no jobs will be lost.

We are not asking the federal government, to help us exterminate our seal population. We are asking to harvest and sell 50 % of the seal population in our coastal waters. This still won't bring it down to the normal levels it was before the groundfishery collapse, but it would give our coastal communities a fair chance to survive without destroying our land.

In turn, the fishing industry believes this could create many jobs in coastal communities of Nova Scotia, including Digby Neck.

We know of two other countries that have gone through similar experiences in the past with lack of jobs in their coastal communities.

Iceland and Norway both had the will and common sense to return their fisheries back to two of the best fisheries on Earth after their groundfish collapse over 20 years ago.

Their seal population exploded just like ours has. They now harvest their seals in their coastal waters similar to how we harvest our wild animals on our lands. If we didn't control the population of our moose, deer and rabbits, you wouldn't be able to grow a garden in this Province – it's just common sense.

We don't let animals eat us out of house and home on our land. Why are we letting this happen in our coastal waters?

Today, Norway employs 20% more people in their fishing industry than they did two decades ago before their fishery collapsed.

All from a government and others that recognized the problems faced by the fishing industry and had the will to find the proper balance in the coastal waters of their country.

People in this area who are for this proposed quarry are seeking employment to feed their families. If it's not going to be in the fishing industry, then it will have to be what ever else comes along and that just happens to be this quarry.

To them, it is about jobs and survival, which everybody needs and deserves.

As MLA I know this proposed quarry has created some division in this community amongst families, friends and neighbors, this is not right.

There are people opposed to this quarry and people who are in favour of it. We need to find a solution for lack of jobs and in our coastal communities. We know rebuilding our ground fishery and growing our own fish are two of them.

We need to find a solution for keeping a healthy balanced environment and that includes our coastal waters and its shorelines.

If this would have been corrected ten years ago when the fishing industry first brought it to the attention of Ottawa, I don't think we would be in this process today wasting time, money and energy over whether we should give our land away or not for the sake of a few jobs to feed our families.

A lot of division has been created in this community because of lack of not understanding what this proposed quarry will mean for our future.

The average person, including myself, do not know what silt will do to the Bay of Fundy for generations to come.

We don't know what the ship will do on the shores of the Bay of Fundy during the Winter months.

We don't know what it will do to tourism on Digby Neck and its Islands.

We don't know what it will do for the future growth of a retirement area.

And we don't even know if any land will be left here in the next 15 generations, to do anything with. There is fear from this and there is fear that many more people will have to leave here for lack of jobs.

There are many in this community that do not understand what all this means for generations to come. One thing a lot of us do understand is that we have a lack of jobs in our coastal communities of Nova Scotia because we are being driven out from the over abundance of wild animals in our coastal waters. We also know this quarry will create a few jobs that people desperately need because of this. I believe if a similar assessment would have been held concerning the problems in our coastal waters of Nova Scotia we would be a lot further ahead today. Hopefully that can be one of the panels recommendations if part of this process is concerning jobs in our coastal communities.

We have had information concerning this quarry, both for and against, making good arguments, and I'm hoping it is the panels job to explain this out fully and clearly so all the people in this community can understand the truth of it.

Hopefully the people of this area will accept your recommendations, whatever they may be.

And we are also hopeful that your recommendation concerning this proposed quarry will be fair for the good of this area and all of its people for many many more generations to come.

Thank you for your time.