

Media Release
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FRIENDS OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND STRAIT SAYS ENVIRONMENT MINISTER HASN'T DONE HIS HOMEWORK ON PULP EFFLUENT

A citizens' group in Pictou County wrote to Environment Minister Iain Rankin last week, asking him to do more homework to understand how Northern Pulp's proposed new effluent treatment plan could impact the Northumberland Strait.

Friends of the Northumberland Strait (FONS) points to the Minister's response to a concerned citizen as an indication that the Minister needs to learn more. The Minister wrote, "I am sure you are aware that effluent from the pulp mill has been treated by the Boat Harbour effluent treatment facility and then discharged into the Northumberland Strait for the last 50 years."

"It's as if you said to your doctor 'I've been smoking for 20 years and I don't have cancer,' and the doctor said, 'Well then, I guess there is no harm if you keep on smoking,' says Jill Graham-Scanlan, a member of FONS.

FONS prepared a document titled [50 years of Pulp Effluent](#) to provide the minister, his staff and the public with detailed information on how Northern Pulp's proposed new effluent treatment facility poses increased risks to the Strait and its prime fishing grounds.

The detailed backgrounder looks at 4 key issues: 1) Whether harm is already being done by pulp effluent, 2) how the proposed new system could discharge more harmful effluent than is presently entering the Strait, 3) the greater risk to fisheries of the proposed new discharge point, and 4) increasing stresses on the ocean environment, which means that the impact of releasing pulp effluent into ocean waters will be greater now and in coming decades than the same effluent would have been 50 or 25 years ago in healthier oceans.

"The impact of pulp effluent going into the fishing grounds is a key issue that the environmental assessment process has yet to resolve," says Graham-Scanlan. "When the Minister implies that there is nothing to worry about, it is not surprising that people have doubts that the environmental assessment process will be fair and unbiased."

Graham-Scanlan says FONS would like the Minister to become more informed about the complexities of the issue, and refrain from issuing further statements implying that Northern Pulp's new proposal is of no greater risk to the fishing areas of the Northumberland Strait than the present treatment facility.

The FONS letter also makes clear that the group fully supports the closure of the Boat Harbour treatment facility and the clean-up of Boat Harbour on schedule.

For more information
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Attached
[50 Years of Pulp Backgrounder](#)
FONS letter to Minister
Minister's response to concerned citizen