



# Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

---

December 5, 2011

Ross Landry, Chair  
Law Amendments Committee  
PO Box 1116  
Halifax, N.S. B3J 2X1

Dear Mr. Landry:

RE: **Proposed Changes to the Environment Act, Bill 122**

I was a member of the Advisory Committee which worked diligently on the proposed changes to the Environment Act and provided advice to Environment Nova Scotia. I was disappointed to hear the Minister of the Environment state that all of the recommendations from the Advisory Committee had been included in the revisions to the Act now being presented for approval. This is not the case.

Our Federation forwarded a letter to Mr. Daly, Executive Director of Policy & Corporate Services Division, Nova Scotia Environment on September 6<sup>th</sup> 2011 which provided four points which our Federation was concerned about, including:

- 1) Expanding the requirements for reporting spills/releases could have a negative impact on many extension programs for farms. Farmers may simply close their doors to these extension services rather than run the risk of being reported and/or fined.
- 2) Grandfathering provisions provided prior to 1995 should continue to be honoured.
- 3) There should be a right to appeal any decisions or orders given under the Environment Act.
- 4) A system of administrative penalties should not be introduced.

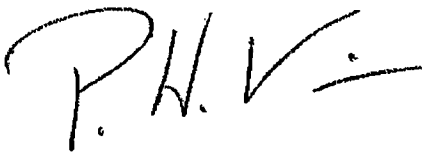
The Federation is pleased to note that the decision has been made not to introduce administrative penalties at this time.

The Federation is however concerned that the requirement for consultants to report all infringements that they find within their extension capacity on a farm will result in farmers restricting access to such programs. The Federation currently administers the Environmental Farm Plan program and provides an advisory function to the Nutrient

Management Program. These are programs aimed at assisting farmers to improve their environmental stewardship and to do so often means an additional investment cost to the farm operation. To place the additional risk of a fine, on top of the costs of implementing the other recommendations made by the consultants, is just not the thing to do in such situations.

I would be pleased to provide additional information if the Committee decides to take a look at this concern in detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. H. Vissers'. The signature is stylized with a large 'P' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Henry Vissers  
Executive Director