

Dear Law Amendments Committee and The Honourable Gordon Wilson, Minister of the Environment:

I am writing to address Bill No. 213, cited as the Sustainable Development Goals Act.

I understand from my MLA that public consultation about this most significant piece of legislation will be forthcoming. Can I trust that this process will be open, genuine and inclusive of all those who depend upon this land to sustain them? The government must meaningfully engage with First Nations, Black, Acadian, and newcomer communities; municipalities, workers in all sectors, those who represent society's vulnerable and the general public.

We all love our province and there is much of which we can be proud. At the same time our ongoing history of economic development has too many skeletons in the closet, too many patterns which cause us to call out "Shame, shame!" as we thump the proverbial legislative desk.

Most of us actually believe that our planet is facing an existential crisis.

Canada is also in an era of Truth and Reconciliation.

If we are honest, both issues reflect a harmful legacy of colonization.

So this Act must address two interconnected issues—Climate, and Truth and Reconciliation.

The philosophy of "dominion over all the Earth", which was foreign to the Indigenous Peoples of this land, gave way to the "Doctrine of Discovery", colonialism, and capitalism.

These belief systems, so alive and well today throughout Canada and Nova Scotia, do not represent sustainable development. Business as usual is no longer acceptable.

Unchecked industrial resource extraction— from the sea to the forests and across the land, and all forms of fossil fuel-based industries—is systematically destroying Nova Scotia while adding to our carbon footprint.

Nova Scotia has many ongoing challenges to overcome: to this day we continue to treat ourselves as a developing state, so desperate for economic silver bullets that over and over we sell out our province to the highest bidder in the name of false and desperate economic schemes, of fake "jobs, jobs, jobs" incentives that strip away that which is suppose to sustain us.

Just look at the cautionary tale that Northern Pulp in Pictou County provides. Successive governments have spent and continue to spend millions upon millions from the public purse to prop up a corporate entity and assume its liabilities for decades to come.

The Government of Nova Scotia proudly espouses "We're open for business". Any business? Is there anything to which you would say "No"? This indiscriminate approach is going to leave the province, as seen in Boat Harbour and the Sydney Tar Ponds, with a legacy of horrifying public health statistics, soul destroying blighted landscapes and an environment that will no longer sustain life in any form.

Such an indiscriminate approach to "open for business" is what this new Sustainable Development Goals Act should begin to control. It is Nova Scotia's chance to change direction and stop doing "business as usual". Because this land is not ours to destroy. The Peace and Friendship Treaties did not give up Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaw People. And the Land is THE issue to be faced in Truth and Reconciliation.

So which comes first in this Act which reflects a chicken or the egg conundrum? Goals and regulations or Regulations and goals? The Act offers a tone that is warm and fuzzy, using many words that are good to hear, what the drafters think we need to hear. But like the proverbial "white man speaks with forked tongue" I worry. This Act is thin on real substance, has few clear goals and is even thinner on the "How"-to-achieve factor.

And regulations are there to be broken. Yes, we need flexibility in our legislation but rarely does the flexibility work in the peoples' favour. Time and time again regulations afford to those of privilege the ability to achieve exceptions, to always find their way around regulations. Look at something as simple as the original View Planes by-law that established breathtaking views of Halifax Harbour from Citadel Hill. Or the view from the top floor of the new Central Library, now ruined by regulation made subservient to greed. These are not significant examples compared to one of a Federal law change to accommodate Alberta's Alton Gas and its environmental impact on the Shubenacadie River.

You just spent \$52,000 of tax-payer money for a Gold Show, to encourage gold mining development throughout the province. Have you looked beyond your four-year term to think of the the short and long-term effects of open-pit mining on the environment, on peoples' quality of life and health, effects on the water table, the watersheds, infrastructure and the resulting toxic tailings and their effects? Are you including the need for science-based regulations in your plans? How do the short and long-term effects on the healthcare system, the environment, the need for an extensive consultation process, the carbon footprint, ongoing monitoring and cleanup fit into your economic calculations of such developments? Can you honestly say that gold mining fits this definition in the Environment Act: "sustainable development" means development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' Or this one in the new Act: "sustainable prosperity" means prosperity where economic growth, environmental stewardship and social responsibility are integrated and recognized as being interconnected?' Have you ever looked into degrowth? What do you mean by 'integrated' and how does 'recognition' affect decision making, action or non-action?

Once again, as per the roll out to the Consultation, your timing seems bent on discouraging public participation. As someone wrote: "The provincial government quietly posted on their website on Friday afternoon that there is a Law Amendments Hearing for the public, on Monday, October 28 at 11:45AM, on the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ACT (Bill 213)." How do you expect people to participate with such short notice? You could have at least contacted those who submitted to the Consultation process to let us know about the First Reading. We spoke to our MLA and he was not certain of the schedule for Readings and the Law Amendment hearing. If he does not know, how are we supposed to know, realistically?

Well, here I am participating once again in spite of your ongoing endeavour to kill my faith in democracy. Rethink GOLD. It is willful ignorance to call that sustainable development! Climate Action and Truth and Reconciliation Action must be fundamental to all that comes next.

Thank you for the opportunity to express and share my thoughts on Nova Scotia's future. Please! Think about what you are doing.

Sincerely I am.

Aloha,

s. j. hauer