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Subject: Law Amendment Comments for Bill 213

**** EXTERNAL EMAIL / COURRIEL EXTERNE ****

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My name is Sadie Beaton. I'm a settler here on these unceded Mi'kmaq lands. Many of my ancestors have been settled on these lands since the times when the Peace and Friendship Treaties were signed and I am participating in this law amendments process for Bill 213, an update to the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, as a practice of my responsibility as a "Treaty person" here.

First of all, I'm curious about the inclusion of "Netukulimk" as a guiding concept in the Act. While it seems laudable, it also seems a bit out-of-place, and leaves me wondering about how it came to be included. I don't pretend to have a deep understanding of the concept, but I appreciate that it is a verb with deep, deliberative meaning related to taking care of each other and respecting nature and natural laws. I have noticed that this word isn't used lightly by the Mi'kmaq rights holders that I know.

Would the roundtable say that they deeply understand the implications of Netukulimk as a guiding principle for Nova Scotia's environmental and economic goals? What has been done to ensure that this government is truly accountable to a true Mi'kmaq understanding of Netukulimk? Would the provincial government consider being accountable to a circle of rights holders and Elders who can advise on the transformational changes that we might need to make in order to truly align with this concept?

Apparently Netukulimk was added into the Act back in 2012. This begs the question of why, even just considering the short definition supplied within the act, have there been continued clearcuts on Mi'kmaq land over the last seven years. Why is Boat Harbour still a thing? And why hasn't the provincial government suspended the permits for the proposed Alton Gas project?

If we are going to renew this Act, I would hope that we would do more than lip service to Netukulimk and truly centre the rights of Mi'kmaq people and the wisdom and authority of Mi'kmaq laws on these lands.

It isn't clear to me how this legislation will help us contend with the disproportionate impacts of the ecological crisis we are facing, either. Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq rights holders have already let you know that the climate targets you are offering are not enough, and that we need to decarbonize (as well as decolonize) more quickly to do our part to limit climate change impacts. Ecology Action Centre has recommended a bolder set of goals [here](#), and the grassroots climate movement is calling for even more ambitious action, to give us our best chance at a livable future.

I also wonder how this proposed Act will contend with the ways that climate change will continue to exacerbate existing inequities, including those of race, gender, income, and ability - added of course to the ongoing impacts of colonization and racism across the province. How will this Act ensure that these disproportionately affected communities, including African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities, are

appropriately involved in building solutions, and that they genuinely benefit from the transition this legislation is supposed to support?

There is a growing consensus that we are going to need to radically shift our relationship to this place and this land if we are going to survive the climate crisis. Even the IPCC says that we need to embrace “transformational change.” Responding to this crisis means embracing a truly new vision where we recognize that it is up to us to really look after one another’s health and well-being, and that the economy is just a small part of a much bigger set of responsibilities that we have to each other.

I don’t know what that Act means by “clean growth”, but it sounds like the roundtable might need to spend more time talking to the communities who have been on the front lines of these intersecting crises for a long time, and to be brave enough to hear and implement the solutions that they long been offering. It sounds like we could all spend some more time soaking in what the concept of Netukulimk might have to offer us, if we actually opened ourselves to transformational change.

Finally, if we had a government that actually honoured the Peace and Friendship Treaties, I wouldn’t even need to ask these questions.

Sadie Beaton