

March 18, 2021

Dear Law Amendments Committee, Minister Delorey, and Minister Porter,

As I reviewed the Biodiversity Act and Bill 4 and realized the vagueness of the wording, as well as the overreaching powers that this Act would empower the Minister of Lands and Forestry if passed as is, I was disappointed as a land owner and resident of the province. I admire the goal of protecting species, however the failure of the government to widely consult, as well as provide specifics with respect to regulations is not acceptable.

Without any form of regulations aside from what a current or future Minister of Lands and Forestry may determine, this proposed legislation is overreaching and may limit what current land owners, including farmers, are able to do with their land, or when they are able to do it. I am particularly bothered by the failure to allow for wide spread consultation with private land owners in particular on this Act in advance of its development.

As a dairy farmer for several decades, I take tremendous pride in my ability to manage the resources with which I have been entrusted, as well as those nearby my properties that could be affected by my actions and decisions. Throughout my farming career, I have worked tirelessly to ensure the property that I own and manage is invested in and improved, not just for financial success for my business but so that future generations may have the same opportunity to align their desire to be a steward of the environment with their agriculture endeavours. As such, it is bothersome to me as a property owner that my commitment to the resources- soil, water, air and species, with which I have been a steward of is not recognized in this legislation. It is more concerning that there is no specific or regulations surrounding this Act with which a land owner such as myself could work within and that decisions made solely by the Minister of Lands and Forestry could affect my family business and use of the property

I would ask that the Law Amendments Committee and Ministers and Departments responsible for this Bill reconsider the far-reaching power this Act places on the Minister, and the consequences it will have to our agriculture community. As a life long farmer, I understand the requirement to manage farm and woodland, and in fact all resources, in a manner that reflects the importance of biodiversity and environmental stewardship. That requirement must be done in a manner that also permits food production for our province without undue hardship or interference, which is not able to be concluded as the current Bill is presented. I ask that the Law Amendments Committee as well MLAs in the province apply this Act to Crown Lands only, and work collaboratively with land owners and the public to develop any further regulations that could have serious consequences to our ability to farm in this province.

Sincerely,  
Jack Thomson  
West River Holsteins  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia

