

March 18, 2021

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

As the son of a dairy farmer, I am writing to ask that the Law Amendments Committee, and Government of Nova Scotia take the necessary measures to have Bill 4 and the Biodiversity Act less intrusive of private land owner's properties and to focus their attention on managing Crown Lands in Nova Scotia in this currently overreaching Bill.

The Biodiversity Act - Bill 4 may be well intended but it fails in providing any regulations or clarification on how this would affect private land owners, especially farmers. It gives the Minister of Lands and Forestry broad powers that could have negative consequences to Nova Scotia's farms, as almost all farm land is privately owned.

I am a grade 12 student who has applied to both UPEI and USask for Environmental Studies. I am passionate about this topic and understand the importance of a diverse and healthy environment as it relates to farming and food production, and as such, the province's future. I believe private land owners take pride in their land and want it to be there for the use and enjoyment of future generations, as well as financial success of the province. These private lands are important to farming, forestry, and tourism, and thus the economic well being of the province. Land owners need to be able to manage their lands and continue to reinvest in that land. This is something that will happen best if there is less over- arching power to the Minister of Lands and Forestry of that land. The current regulations that land owners must adhere to regarding Endangered Species and Species At Risk allows for a more collaborative approach than the proposed Bill 4. There must be consultation by those that own and manage private lands in Nova Scotia for success for all Nova Scotians on this topic. I feel a collaborative approach is lacking from this legislation, and I think that reflects poorly on this Act, but also on the current government.

Please take the time to ensure the Biodiversity Act and Bill 4 has a collaborative approach with those who manage and contribute to Nova Scotia's agriculture industry, as well as other natural resource industries in this province. As a young person in Nova Scotia, I am disappointed by the failure of this government to consult on this important topic. I encourage MLAs to reconsider the consultation process and seek more input from those most directly affected. As a young Nova Scotian who fully intends to be a private land owner in Nova Scotia, I expect to work collaboratively with government departments to ensure biodiversity was maintained on my land. I feel I will have the passion and knowledge to ensure this, as I think most current land owners have, but I feel the far-reaching approach of this Bill suggests otherwise. I encourage you to refocus the Act, and ensure adequate consultation with all stakeholders.

Sincerely,
Bryce Thomson
Antigonish, Nova Scotia

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