

**Law Amendments Submission  
Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act (Bill No. 57)**

November 1, 2021

I am going to be honest with all of you. I would rather not be here today. I would rather be spending time with my family—something that many environmental advocates sacrifice on a daily basis, in order to fight for climate justice and biodiversity. No one wants to spend all of their free time fighting for the environment. No one wants to camp out in the forest to protect mainland moose habitat or spend their weekends sending emails that are always ignored.

I am compelled to be here, because the state of our province and our world demands real change, right now.

I am obliged to be here—because the forests in Nova Scotia are being decimated, sometimes in the name of so-called “green” energy.

I am here—because we are losing biodiversity at a rate never before seen in human history.

I am here—because scientists warn that we are in a “code red for humanity.”

I am here—because I’m part of a whole generation that is wondering whether we can (and should) even have children.

I am here—because I’m scared.

But there’s another reason.

I’m also here today because I’m hopeful. There are solutions—sometimes very simple solutions—that we can implement. We can look to other provinces and countries and learn from their successes.

We can choose what kind of future we want in Nova Scotia, and I’m hopeful that we will make the right choices for this and future generations.

Choices like not allowing Northern Pulp to continue its legacy of environmental racism.

Choices like not selling off Owls Head Provincial Park.

Choices like not allowing Atlantic Gold to contaminate the drinking water for the next 1,000 years.

Choices like not allowing endangered mainland moose habitat to be destroyed.

We don’t have to choose extinction, inequity, or an unlivable planet. So why would we?

Together, let's choose to not only survive, but thrive.

To do that, we need strong legislation with interim targets, annual GHG-emission goals, and external accountability structures to help us satisfy the objectives in the Act.

This bill needs to define what "renewable energy" entails, and make sure that it does not include biomass, which is the lowest-value use of our forests and assuredly not carbon-neutral.

This bill needs to be upfront about environmental racism (which should be included in the equity and diversity statement).

We also need to significantly move up the timeline for fully implementing the Lahey Report. I am a fifth-generation woodlot owner and I want to see more ecological forestry practices being implemented across the province, because it's not only possible, it's *practical*. No other species willfully destroys the habitats it depends on.

This bill needs to include proper carbon accounting and recognize the true value of preserving our forests, wetlands, eelgrass meadows, and other important carbon sinks. We need to recognize that nature is our greatest ally.

That's why I'm happy that the commitment to legally protect at least 20% of our province for nature conservation by 2030 will be written into law. This is an important step towards aligning ourselves with the national and international targets of 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. It's also a hopeful sign that this government does recognize the importance of parks and protected areas—for Nova Scotians, for our tourism industry, and for our environment.

Over 5,000 Nova Scotians participated in the public consultation for the Sustainable Development Goals Act. The summary report says that Owls Head Provincial Park "received a significant amount of comments." Nova Scotians were clear that the delisting and proposed sale of Owls Head Provincial Park were critical issues—for the sake of our protected areas but also for government leadership.

I strongly encourage this government to include Owls Head Provincial Park in its protected areas commitment. This is a necessary step to restore the integrity of the protected areas network and start rebuilding public trust.

Nova Scotia can't reasonably claim to be an environmental leader at the same time that it is selling off a provincial park reserve with significant carbon sinks and biodiversity values.

Nor can the government continue to sanction rampant clear-cutting of our forests, imperilling endangered species by fragmenting or destroying their habitats, or poisoning the water that we all depend on.

Amid the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, we cannot afford to continue business as usual. We need to do more than state we're in a climate emergency—we need to act like it. This bill, in its current form, doesn't represent what it means to live in a climate emergency.

But you have the opportunity to change that.

In this time of unprecedented climate change and biodiversity loss, we are at a historic moment to choose differently, about what we value, and how we'll accomplish it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Lee