

Presentation to the Law Amendments Committee

Re: Bill 57: Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

November 1st, 2021

Caroline Beddoe

Hello, my name is Caroline. I am a 23-year old settler here on unceded Mi'kmaq land. I am here today to speak to you as a youth in this time of climate emergency, but also as a member and representative of the Blomidon Naturalists Society, from the eastern Annapolis Valley.

The BNS currently has over 150 members (individuals and families), united by a keen interest in and appreciation for the natural world. Naturalists know the shifting stories of our ecological landscapes, and this connection that we have with the natural world propels us to demand action. We need strong policies on biodiversity and conservation, and climate action. We are a signatory of the joint response to this act, organized by the Climate Emergency Unit. And I come here today to outline our response to Bill 57: Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act.

First, we would like to say that, overall, Bill 57 is welcomed for its wide range of targets, and it must pass. Although it is tabled by the PC government, climate change and the environment are not partisan issues, and all parties must support this bill.

In particular, we applaud goal 10 (a) regarding the protection and conservation of land and water as an important step in addressing the biodiversity crisis. I also welcome the focus on equity, however wonder where the discussion on environmental racism and a just transition to support jobs and all workers as we move away from a fossil fuel economy is... Indeed, there are other missing pieces and this bill must be stronger.

This bill states that “climate change is recognized as a global emergency requiring urgent action.” Yet it is vague in places, missing key components, and lacking the urgency to truly respond to an emergency.

We call for:

- 1) more robust climate goals,
- 2) shorter and defined timelines for implementing change,
- 3) stronger accountability, and
- 4) collaborative approaches amongst all parties to ensure effective climate action.

1) More robust and urgent climate goals.

This bill needs stronger climate goals and greenhouse gas emissions targets (in section 6 of the bill) to better respond to the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises:

6 (a): While we appreciate that goal 6 (a) is the most ambitious climate target in Canada, it still isn't enough. The only benchmark we should be comparing ourselves to is the science. We ask

that the target for 53% reduction of emission below 2005 levels by 2030 be **increased to a 58% reduction**, which is needed to be in line with our fair share of emissions reductions to keep warming below 1.5 degrees. Exceeding 1.5 degrees puts us into unknown and dangerous feedback loops and tipping points. We need a target that will honour the need to protect lives.

6 (b): With respect to **goal 6 (b)**, we need *true zero*, not *net zero* emissions. Greenhouse gas removal technology is uncertain, expensive and should not be our main plan of action. This is a climate emergency, we need to make a plan to be at true zero by managing and mandating a rapid and just transition away from fossil fuels.

2) Shorter and defined timelines for implementing change.

Bill 57 has many positive goals, but that require swifter action and defined timelines to be effective and appropriate to the urgency of the climate crisis and environmental issues of this province.

First, we ask for swifter action on ecological forestry, as outlined in **goal 10 (c)**. We are pleased to see a goal to implement ecological forestry management in line with the Lahey report, **but it must happen before 2023**. Our forests, biodiversity and species at risk, such as the critically endangered mainland moose, cannot wait another two years. It has already been three years since this report was completed. We cannot continue to push off implementation while clearcutting persists. The Lahey report is imperfect, especially with regards to glyphosate, but it has many valuable goals to implement. This goal 10 (c) must happen sooner, or a moratorium on harvesting from Crown lands should be put in place until a plan is made.

Moreover, we call for the strategic plan, "Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth," as outlined in **8(1)** to be released as soon as possible, before the end of 2022, since action is needed now. **This plan must contain clear interim targets and goals, and timelines** to achieve greenhouse gas emission targets (8a), to get to at least 80% renewable energy by 2030 [8(l)] (we suggest a push for 90%), and to phase out coal by 2030 [8(m)].

Most of this bill sets mandate for 2030 or later. This is an emergency. We need frequent targets set for before 2030 to ensure action happens. The sooner we phase out coal, reduce emissions and increase renewables, the better. **This strategic plan must come soon, and contain shorter timelines with mandated change and annual targets.**

3) Accountability.

A related ask is the need for stronger accountability measures in Bill 57.

We appreciate the inclusion of annual reports under section 8(2) and 21(1), however the bill lacks clarity on what will be in the annual reports. As already stated, we believe that to ensure accountability and action, the reports must not just be composed of reporting but must be clearly *active* by including evaluations, recommendations, timelines and trajectories for meeting targets (both *interim* leading up to, and the long-term goals set for, 2030 and 2050). We need the swiftest change before 2030 and if we do not meet these targets, we will not stay under 1.5 degrees of warming.

This Bill needs external accountability mechanisms to ensure urgent and effective action. We call for goal 21(2) to be amended such that the Minister **must** seek advice from the Round Table when preparing the annual report. We would also support discussion around increased measures for external auditing of the Act's progress, such as by establishing external commissioners.

4) Collaborative approach amongst all parties.

We call on all parties to work together on this bill and in Nova Scotia's approach to the climate emergency, biodiversity crisis, and just transition for workers away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy work. These are non-partisan issues dealing with life and lives, and we welcome and call for collective work for the benefit of all.

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I also want to say that I come to you as an individual, a 23-year-old growing up in these existential times. I feel the urgency of the climate crisis every day. It has fundamentally shaped how I live my life and the state of my mental health. It is exhausting, anxiety-inducing, depressive, ever present. I feel deep anxiety and grief for the lives of my generation, for the kids we don't know if we will have anymore, and for all the species that we have lost and are losing in this time of extinction and climate crisis. Youth like myself are grappling with intense emotions, we are reconceptualizing what it means to live, and we are out in our communities, in our streets, and online fostering radical and compassionate change, promoting alternatives, and being bold and brave even when our voices waver.

I ask you to consider these emotions. This is hard work, but we must make policies as if lives are on the line – because they are.

In these existential times, hope is psychologically imperative for survival. And hope is an action. We need action to have hope. I applaud where Bill 57 is starting to take us, and I thank you for working to represent us. But I ask you to push further. To be bolder. I ask of you to be even more courageous in these hard times - to do what is needed. I have to believe that it is possible.

This is a climate emergency after all, but it is also the possibility for *emergence* from our current destructive, extractive system towards a more compassionate, just, and resilient society that honours and protects the natural world and all life.

“Climate change is recognized as a global emergency requiring urgent action.”

Please don't just tell me, show me.

Thank you.



Caroline Beddoe