



Presentation to Law Amendments Committee:

Bill 57 - Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

Nov. 1, 2021

Summary

The HFC is pleased to see many of the hard commitments and goals that are enshrined into future legislation. Overall, there is much to commend within this Bill. In particular, the commitment to protect 20 percent of the province's land and water by 2030 is a big step in the right direction and we applaud this aspect. However, although this Bill makes good strides in land protection, it fails to adequately address the implementation of the Lahey report, and subsequent application of ecological forestry on public land in Nova Scotia.

HFC Supports:

- 20% land and water protection by 2030. This goal is a great move forward for conservation in Nova Scotia and will help bring the province closer to meeting the federal targets of 30%.
- Legislated commitments to the implementation of the Lahey Report and ecological forestry (see more below).

HFC Recommends for improvements to Bill 57:

- A clause committing to a rapid phase out of biomass as a renewable energy source. Burning biomass for the purposes of electricity generation emits more carbon than coal and has driven some of the worst harvesting practices ever seen in Nova Scotia. In large part, this is due to the impacts of the types of harvests that biomass necessitates in order to make it profitable. High efficiency biomass burning for space heating can potentially be acceptable provided the source

material only comes from sawmill residuals and not purpose-specific harvesting - but burning it for the generation of electricity does more harm than good and must end. This is the legislation that should mandate an end to big biomass in Nova Scotia.

- We would like to see an interim target set for the land protection goal of 17% by 2025

- We are beyond disappointed to see that implementation of the Lahey Report and ecological forestry has been delayed for at least two more years. The Lahey Report is over 3 years old and the Natural Resources Strategy, its predecessor, is over 10. This means that Nova Scotian's have been promised a significant reduction of clearcutting and even-aged harvesting practices for well over a decade. The costs of this delay are apparent across the province with even-aged, or clearcut harvests still occupying the majority of treatments.

- As a bare minimum, until the Lahey Report is implemented the HFC calls for this government to:
 1. Place a moratorium on clearcutting and other even-aged practices on all public land
 2. Uphold the legally-binding commitments of the Endangered Species Act and identify core habitat for all relevant species