

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Speaker: Hon. Francis (Buck) Watts

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Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries

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LOCATION: LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER, HON. GEORGE COLES BUILDING, CHARLOTTETOWN

SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON NEW WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY AT NORTHERN PULP MILL, PICTOU

COMMITTEE:

Hal Perry, MLA Tignish-Palmer Road [Chair]
Dr. Peter Bevan-Baker, Leader of the Third Party
Kathleen Casey MLA Charlottetown-Lewis Point (replaces Hon. Paula Biggar, Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy)
Jamie Fox, MLA Borden-Kinkora
Colin LaVie, MLA Souris-Elmira
Alan McIsaac, MLA Vernon River-Stratford
Hon. Chris Palmer, Minister of Economic Development and Tourism

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Hon. Paula Biggar, Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy
Hon. Sonny Gallant, Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Hon. James Aylward, Leader of the Opposition
Darlene Compton, MLA Belfast-Murray River

GUESTS:

PEI Fishermen's Association (Melanie Giffin, Robert "Bobby" Jenkins, Ian MacPherson)

STAFF:

Ryan Reddin, Clerk Assistant (Research and Committees)

Edited by Hansard

The Committee met at 10:00 a.m.

Chair (Perry): Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries. I'd like to call this meeting to order.

I have a few housekeeping rules, I should say. Make sure your cell phones are either turned off or to vibrate please and please address the Chair so we can try to keep some order. Before you speak, just state your name so that Hansard will have – and also for audio they will have it.

Today we also have a substitution, Paula Bigger is out-of-province, so Kathleen Casey, welcome. We also have Darlene Compton sitting in on today's presentation.

Number two; adoption of the agenda. Everyone had an opportunity to go through the agenda; do we have adoption of the agenda?

Ms. Casey: So moved.

Chair: Thank you very much, Kathleen.

This brings us to a briefing on the concerns regarding Nova Scotia Northern Pulp Corporation's waste water treatment project. Today we have a presentation by the PEI Fishermen's Association. We have Bobby Jenkins, Ian MacPherson and Melanie Giffin here to do a presentation. I will give you guys the floor.

Again, just state your name prior to speaking, please. Do you want to do questions during the presentation or do you want to wait until after the presentation?

Ian MacPherson: I would think afterwards might be a little more –

Chair: We'll do that.

Ian MacPherson: Then we can take proper time to explain.

Chair: Sure, so the floor is all yours.

Ian MacPherson: Ian MacPherson with the PEIFA.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good morning to all the members of the provincial Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries. My name is Ian MacPherson and I am the Executive Director of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association.

Today, I am joined by marine biologist Melanie Giffin, who has an extensive background in a number of species and PEIFA President Bobby Jenkins, who has over 40-plus years in the harvesting sector and is still an active captain; to address the important issue of the propose effluent discharge pipe in the Northumberland Strait from the Northern Pulp Mill in Abercrombie, Nova Scotia.

Once again, the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association is pleased to present to this committee and we are appreciative that the committee understands the importance of issues facing our organization, and more importantly, the issues facing our captains, who make their living on the water.

Many of us in this room attended the standing committee session with Northern Pulp representatives several months back and we appreciate the seriousness this issue was accorded by the standing committee.

Unfortunately, since that time, very little has changed in terms of new technical options being pursued or any meaningful dialogue with either Northern Pulp or the Province of Nova Scotia taking place.

Our intent today is to give a brief update on what the PEIFA has done on this file over the past few months, and also provide the committee with our most recent scientific update. This update was presented to members of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, CEAA, on Tuesday afternoon of this week.

The position of the PEIFA and the Northern Pulp working group which consists of the Gulf of Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board, the Maritime Fishermen's Union, the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association and the Pictou Landing First Nation, has not changed.

No pipe in the Strait is our collective mantra. We believe that other technical

options exist to keep the mill operative, but have not been pursued. The mill response for some time now has been ‘no pipe, no mill’.

It is important to declare that the PEIFA and the working group support the closure of the Boat Harbour waste treatment facility by the agreed upon date of January 30th, 2020. We continue to be frustrated that valuable time is being wasted pursuing an option that is not suitable to Pictou Landing First Nation, our collective fishing communities, or many of the residents and businesses in the Pictou area.

Our collective advocacy for a Federal Environmental Assessment is to ensure a comprehensive program is in place to assess a project such as this. This does not mean the PEIFA or the Northern Pulp working group support the project proceeding. The predictions on how the system will operate are made with predictive modeling that is based on short time periods and limited data.

Over the past number of months the working group has engaged an environmental consulting company, retained legal services and engaged in an advocacy organization in Ottawa to assist in communicating our message to all government departments that will be involved in an environmental assessment application.

The working group fishing organizations have provided both financial and volunteer resources. Quite simply, we are committed to doing anything we can to change the proposed outcome. Our organizations and Canadians need to know that proper checks and balances are in place to ensure projects that could potentially damage our world class Canadian seafood brand are not allowed to proceed.

In conclusion, I would like to request that the committee call members of the Northern Pulp working group to present at a future standing committee meeting so that the concerns of the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia fishing communities are heard.

I would now like to call upon PEIFA Marine Biologist and Program Planner Melanie Giffin, to walk the committee through a number of compelling scientific reasons as

to why the proposed project should not proceed.

Would you mind handing out those documents?

Just before Melanie starts, I will say this was the presentation that we passed on to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, so it is addressed to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, but I think you’ll find there is some very compelling scientific information in it.

Melanie Giffin: Thank you very much.

Melanie Giffin, with the PEI Fishermen’s Association.

To point out – as I get started here – as Ian already mentioned, this is a letter that we had drafted to give to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. And in opening on that letter, we did point out that a Federal Environmental Assessment for a project can be ordered if the project may cause adverse environmental affects and we’re confident that this proposal may cause adverse environmental affects to the Northumberland Strait.

The next paragraph as you can see is highlighted, which is the third paragraph down on page one: We are confident that the anticipated negative effects of the effluent project touch on several areas of the federal legislative authority, namely: fish and fish habitat; aquatic species under the *Species at Risk Act*; changes that impact a province where the project is proposed (Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick); and impacts to the Aboriginal rights of Pictou Landing First Nations.

If you move on to the second page: The Department of Fisheries and Oceans have been shifting their management methods over the last couple of years. What they’re trying to do is incorporate a more robust and integrated plan. The management is on a larger scale now is what their focus is on; ecosystem scale rather than a species specific or a localized scale. This would include things like physical attributes of the Northumberland Strait. All species that are being fished, their diet, their life stages at every life stage, the ideal habitat, the bio-

accumulation and the cumulative impacts and the direct and indirect effects the contaminants will have on all of these points.

This has actually come up recently. I sit on the FSCP, which is the Fisheries Science Collaborative Project board of directors and we met on Monday and this actually came up at that point, where it was brought up that maybe we should start using some of the funding from this collaborative project to look at incorporating the entire robust ecosystem scale on every stock assessment that's being done by DFO.

At this point, DFO has identified numerous ecologically and biologically significant areas within the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. This is accepted as a valuable tool nationally and internationally for aquatic resource conservation.

So, DFO in the Gulf region has actually taken this information and the principles, which are uniqueness, aggregation and fitness consequences, to examine coastal areas of the southern portion of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. What they've done, is they've used those three criteria and applied it to 32 different fish species and 23 different benthic invertebrate taxa and they've actually isolated three important areas in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. Those three important areas are all surrounding Pictou County area. So, the Northumberland Strait itself – and you can see it in figure one – in case you're unfamiliar with where St. Georges Bay is, that is another one. Then the third one is the eastern end of Prince Edward Island.

So, to get into a little bit of a physical attribute of the Northumberland Strait, the mean water flow is from east to west and the resident's time within the Northumberland Strait of water is weeks to months but this will vary with storms etc. I'm actually on page three now if you guys are following along, sorry.

There are two gyres at each end of the Northumberland Strait, which actually have the capability to retain and redistribute particles, being larvae or toxins.

Ian MacPherson: (Indistinct) explain gyres.

Melanie Giffin: So, gyres are basically a rotating water area that will actually – and they actually work somewhat as a self-containing unit – so it kind of cuts off the Northumberland Strait and the rest of the Southern Gulf, which I'll explain a little more in a minute here.

To give this a little bit of context I'm going to talk about lobster larvae and the transport of lobster larvae within the Gulf a little bit.

If you want to look at the next page while I explain this, the next page in figure two, actually, shows a map with some red lines on it. Basically, those red lines are separating – it's the Gulf broken down into 25 larval sources in sink areas. Basically, when a larva is released from a tail of a lobster it will float in the water column for three to twelve weeks and it is completely reliant on the currents at that point. It doesn't have the capability to swim to the bottom and search out suitable habitat until it reaches stage four.

What you'll see is Pictou is in Area 21 of that source in sink. What we've been told on numerous occasions from the receiving water study from Northern Pulp is that, with that mean water flow from west to east, anything that's released from the mill will just travel up the western side of Cape Breton to the Cabot Strait and leave the Southern Gulf.

But if we actually look at what's happening with lobster larvae, Area 21 – lobster larvae that are released in Area 21 floating the water column for three to 12 weeks and actually seed Areas 23, 24, 22, 20, 18 and 19. If you're looking at that map you'll see that areas 18 and 19 are actually to the east. This model is run for a 10-year period during post-larval season from June 1st to September 30th and it actually shows that in particular circumstances that the currents run east to west and that could last days to weeks. This is a data gap that we pointed out within the receiving water study from Northern Pulp and understanding an actual larval dispersal.

If we get into the contaminants a little bit, the method that's used at Northern Pulp will create chlorinated pollutants such as chloroform, dioxins and furans and other contaminants released include, heavy metals

such as mercury, zinc, cadmium chromium, along with organics, alkyl phenols and oxygen depleting nutrients.

Now, this is some information that we've gathered from scientific research articles. Another data gap is the fact that we don't actually have a list of what will be released from the effluent that's coming from the proposed effluent treatment facility.

In all of the reports that Northern Pulp has handed out to us state: That the outfall location is the lowest potential for long-term cumulative effects. Or it is expected to have a minimal impact, or it is not likely to result in potential adverse effects. These statements are just not acceptable to harvesters in the Northumberland Strait.

The proposed effluent release – we were told and this is from personal communication as well within the receiving water study – that there will be increased total suspended solids that will be released from this new processing effluent, or the new treatment plant, sorry. Increased total suspended solids would include organics and organics contain endocrine disrupting properties. So this would be things that would disrupt things like the metabolism growth and development of the lobster or any fish, the species that are living in the area.

If we move on to page five and the second paragraph that you see highlighted there, so issues relating to ice include damage to diffusers. We know there's ice that forms in the Northumberland Strait annually and there's a possibility that there could be damage to the diffusers, the pipe itself, and this creates difficulties in terms of a timely identification of the problem, fixing the diffusers or repairs to anything.

This is also something that I want to say was pointed out to Northern Pulp in the very early stages of consultation with the fishers. Fishers pointed this out as being a possible problem and it actually turns out that when Northern Pulp looked further into it, it's the reason they've had to find a new route for any location for their outfall at this point.

The next paragraph basically just states that a lot of the work that's been so far, the research focuses on contaminants

independently and it doesn't focus on the cumulative effects or the slurry of toxins that are actually present in the effluent. I've listed in extremely raw form some of the articles – and this is not exhaustive whatsoever – it's a very short list of some of the contaminants that could be in the effluent and the negative effects that it has on some different species.

For instance, if they're alkyphenols and alkyphenols are known to be produced from pulp and paper effluent, those can actually affect the shell hardening after a molt for lobster.

There's also a comment in here about the fact that the combination of these – so in terms of cumulative effects – chlorine and temperature increase will actually create a toxicity for a species living in the area.

Another thing that was brought up on page six – if you look at page six the last paragraph – it's been pointed out to the PEIFA before that there are mills in BC that release it in a marine environment as well. I did some looking into these mills in BC and some of the fisheries in the area. If you look on page seven, you will see bivalve closures annually in comparison between the east coast and the west coast. Now we're not saying that the closures that you see that I'm pointing out in the west coast are solely based, or solely to blame – the pulp and paper mills are to blame for those – but the pulp and paper mills and the effluent would absolutely feed into the cause of those closures. That's a large area you can see on page seven; that's actually closed down on the west coast.

On the last page on page eight, I list some of the important and declining species that are located within the Northumberland Strait.

For instance, the first paragraph states that the essential portion of the Strait acts as a major nursery for juvenile Atlantic herring and there are very few herring spawning beds left in the Southern Gulf. One of those beds is actually located directed outside the mouth of Pictou Harbour.

The winter skate and Lady Crab populations are very, actually, unique to our area. There is only one area within the Northumberland Strait that contains Lady Crab. Winter skate

has a high likelihood, actually, of becoming extinct before the description of the species can actually be completed.

Winter hake is another species that's located within the Northumberland Strait and it's in St. George's Bay, which is one of the areas of importance. It's the only remaining spawning area and critical summer feeding area for that species.

The Atlantic Sturgeon is another one that was listed threatened by COSEWIC in 2011. It's very rare to see here. Actually, in October of 2018, there was an Atlantic Sturgeon caught in a herring net right off of Caribou, and that is just based on personal communications and pictures that were sent into me at the PEI Fishermen's Association. That fish was tagged previously and released happy and healthy from the boat that day.

What you'll notice if you ever have had the opportunity to go through some of the recovery strategies for different species at risk, is that a majority of recovery strategies list decrease in contaminants in the area as one of the key elements in a recovery plan.

In conclusion to this letter, this is a very brief review of factual information that we've identified. There's an exhaustive list of the number of things that we could be looking at from an ecosystem perspective; the uniqueness of the area, the ecologically and biologically significant zones, nutrient loading, currently, which is actually pinpointed as a key problem within the straits already.

There are current anoxic areas which is a concern as well within the Northumberland Strait; species of interest in the area; the delicacy of ocean acidification in the Northumberland Strait. The Gulf has actually been pinpointed as a hot spot for possible problems with ocean acidification. The warming waters in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Northumberland Strait, and this is already factual and proven to be happening as we speak, and the changing ecosystem in the Gulf from 2016 until now.

Some examples of that that you would have all most likely heard about; the fact that the North Atlantic right whales have shown up here in the Gulf shows a changing ecosystem. There are now Atlantic chub

mackerel which have been showing up in higher numbers, and we also had a huge population of squid this year that washed up on our shores.

This is something that should be taken into consideration by Northern Pulp when they're considering the possible negative effects, but I'm not sure that the changing ecosystem is being considered whatsoever in their science. Although we're requesting that a federal environmental assessment be conducted, there's a lack of concrete scientific evidence proving the effluent is safe. Based on the importance of the ecological area to our collective fisheries, the proposed project cannot proceed. There are numerous data gaps in the receiving water model, seeing only a snapshot and not the entire model, for instance, and the modeling that was presented to us actually shows it's been done with ping pong-sized particles that are expected to float and this is not accurate representation of what actually happens with those particles in the ocean.

Thank you.

Chair: Is that it for the presentation?

We'll open the floor for questions. First on my list is Colin LaVie.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

Thanks for coming in for your presentation. It's always good to see where we're at on this project.

Ian, where are we at with the federal review?

Ian MacPherson: Well, it's a little bit of a hamster wheel and part of the issue is that both governments are saying: Well, we can't really respond one way or the other until the company files. So, we were expecting Northern Pulp to file in the spring, or spring/early summer, and then the issue, as Melanie noted, came up that the area that we said the pipe would not work because of ice covering, their consultants came back and told them the same thing so they had to go right back to square one.

Our most recent information is that there may not be any filing until December of this year.

Mr. LaVie: What concerns does your group have if the federal review doesn't happen?

Ian MacPherson: Well, we didn't present it in our presentation today but there's been a great concern about the conflict of interest with the Government of Nova Scotia and their involvement financially with the proposed project. Based on that and some other reasons, we feel that's a pretty significant conflict of interest.

The other reason that the group is pursuing a federal EA is the time period for assessment. We could be reduced to something as short as a 30-day comment period if a provincial assessment was done.

There are lots of little nuances to it in terms of jurisdictional issues and whatever, but at the end of the day, I mean, it's a federally-regulated fishery. We feel the most robust environmental assessment should be done, but as we stated earlier, that does not mean we support a pipe in the stream.

Mr. LaVie: Are the feds saying they'll do a review if it's filed?

Ian MacPherson: They'll consider our request and to our understanding how the process goes, is you have the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency that that's who we've been presenting our information to. There have been other organizations that have also submitted documents to them and they basically assess that information and that goes to the minister for a recommendation. Or not a recommendation – they disseminate the information; I guess condense it down, and then the minister makes a decision based on that.

Mr. LaVie: What's our biggest economic impact if this project goes?

Ian MacPherson: Well, as I mentioned, I think certainly we're putting our Canadian – our incredibly strong and well-respected Canadian brand at risk.

One of the issues that have come up, we don't have a clear definition on it, but I think this committee knows that Marine Stewardship Council, MSC certification is in that whole area. PEI was a little sooner than New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but that

whole area is certified for lobster and some other species, and MSC has recently said that something like this could impact our certification, so that's a pretty big deal, especially in European markets.

Mr. LaVie: Oh yeah.

Melanie, maybe you can answer this one for me. What's our biggest environmental issue on this project?

Melanie Giffin: That is a tough question.

I mean, environmentally we're looking at the Northumberland Strait from an ecosystem perspective, so I think that the problem is there's too many data gaps to be able to definitively say exactly what's going to happen with the Northumberland Strait. We already have some issues in terms of warming temperatures and warming temperatures can in turn create anoxic conditions, and those anoxic conditions spread, so environmentally, we're just looking at an unbalanced ecosystem within the Northumberland Strait, possibly.

Like I say, the data gaps are a little too big to definitively say for sure what would happen.

Chair: Do you have another question, Colin?

Mr. LaVie: Yeah.

Chair: Colin LaVie.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

What communications are we having with Northern Pulp? Are they on a regular talking basis or –

Ian MacPherson: We were in some meetings in the latter part of 2017 and I think early 2018?

Bobby Jenkins: March 2018.

Ian MacPherson: March?

And then one of the things that the working group was frustrated by was there were no other options being presented, so we had discontinued conversations and recently, very recently, Northern Pulp has asked to

meet with representatives from our working group and we will meet on Monday morning. Early Monday morning. I don't know if there's a pending announcement or whatever, but we did agree to meet.

Mr. LaVie: Where are we with our own province? Are they on board? Are they in the talking?

Ian MacPherson: Certainly from our perspective we feel that Prince Edward Island has been – all parties have been behind us on this issue and for that we commend everyone – right from the start. It's not something – we knew when it started, we don't know when it's going to end.

But certainly, any support we've asked from politicians – I mean I think everyone understands there has to be a very appropriate process for the environmental aspect, but the second part is that we think it's the wrong project. There again, we get into this little bit of a hamster wheel until we know exactly what the company plans to do. Sometimes it's hard to get specific responses on certain issues.

Chair: Darlene Compton.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for coming in, Melanie, Ian, and Bobby.

The letter that you just read from, Melanie, I don't see a date on it. Did you give us a date on when that went out to –

Melanie Giffin: It went out on Tuesday.

Ms. Compton: It went out on Tuesday? Okay.

Melanie Giffin: Yeah.

Ms. Compton: Of course, have you had any kind of response from the feds? Did I miss that you – you haven't? Maybe not just with this letter, but in general? They're just waiting for the filing, is that the only –

Ian MacPherson: Yes.

CEAA, my understanding, is a Crown Corporation so that the – I have been told by

some people in Ottawa that basically, the elected representatives have to be careful about being perceived as influencing or getting involved with what CEAA does, so we can respect that.

There will be a little more formal one go out, but we wanted to bring the text here today. We did present to two representatives from CEAA in a face-to-face meeting on Tuesday.

Ms. Compton: With the information that you knew and we knew about the ice scouring and the shipwrecks and all of those things coming forward, is there any indication from the Province of Nova Scotia if there is a delay – well, there will be a delay – will they move the date of 2020? Does that have to go to the legislature? Do we know – are they just going to barrel through for 2020?

Ian MacPherson: That is a complicating issue, for sure. The closure of Boat Harbour and maybe I'll elaborate a little bit.

One thing that's been frustrating for the working group, and as you can see there, there's three provinces that participate on it plus the Pictou Landing First Nations, that no one from the Province of Nova Scotia, since the initial meeting, has agreed to meet with us. We've struggled to get responses to letters. It's been extremely frustrating. It's hard to have dialogue and get current information if one of the main parties, that at this point, seems to want to do the federal assessment won't even speak to one of the groups that has some major concerns. So that's been a problem.

Sorry, the other part of your question, Darlene, the last part?

Ms. Compton: Was just about whether there's any indication there would be a delay in the 2020 date.

Ian MacPherson: As I've mentioned several times in our document, Pictou Landing First Nation is also part of our group, and a very vital part of the group. Chief Paul is very passionate that this has gone on way too long, and that based on what her elders have said, no, they cannot move on that date. We totally respect that.

That's why it creates certainly some time pressures, and that's why I guess our frustration level continues to rise in that as each month ticks by and there's no other options on the table, really, is it a ploy just to back us into the corner and just say this is the only option and this is the one that must go, regardless of what it can do to our fisheries? It's been frustrating for sure.

Chair: Darlene Compton.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

So just on that, we know supposedly it's going to be the Nova Scotia government that decides on this unless the feds step in. They provided \$6 million in funding to Northern Pulp to come up with a solution, so the whole conflict of interest is huge. I think we'll all agree upon that.

Do we know what kind of influence PEI and New Brunswick will have on the decision? Is there any? Or have you had any indication from the feds that this just isn't a Nova Scotia issue for sure?

Ian MacPherson: Certainly we've been united in our approach to this, and that's why it was – what started off as an ad hoc group just with a common concern blossomed and – you know, there's strength in numbers, and certainly there's a very active and vibrant community at Pictou Landing. Their fishing – that actually is one of their traditional sources of revenue and still is to this day, so we're talking about that potentially impacting thousands of fishers; I would hope that carries some weight. As Melanie mentioned, just with the way that the water and the larvae go, they don't stop at a line.

Ms. Compton: Yeah.

Ian MacPherson: You know, this is all Nova Scotia lobster and this is PEI and that's New Brunswick, it doesn't work that way of course.

Chair: Darlene –

Ian MacPherson: And other species, too.

Chair: Oh, sorry.

Darlene Compton.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

It's a huge concern for the constituents that I represent, as you well know, and I've heard from a number of them over the summer that – especially from the fishermen – that a lot of people just don't understand or haven't listened to what's going on. We all know that you need to hear something 20 times, and here in the Legislature we might be fed up with talking about something but you keep doing it because people still aren't hearing.

I wonder if there's any value in continuing public meetings here on PEI and convincing New Brunswick to do the same. We saw what happened with the dairy farmers just recently and how putting pressure on the federal government is one way to change or to influence their decision.

Bobby Jenkins: Great question, Darlene. I'm not 100% sure if – most of the fishers are out there are pretty informative on what's going on with Northern Pulp. Would having more meetings on PEI help? It probably wouldn't hurt; but is it going to change the outcome of what's coming? I don't know.

My own personal opinion is the province of Nova Scotia wants to do the provincial assessment. They don't want to see the federal assessment done. That's a question Colin's asked, you've asked.

Melanie brought up a great point about the ice scouring and stuff. Well, I was at that meeting. It was us fishers that pointed it out. We told them to get satellite imaging from 2015. You know what happened in 2015, Colin. We lost 13, 14 days; and everybody thought for 20 years, we heard the strait's ice-free; we're never going to see any delays in the Strait again. Then, 2015 arrived and all of a sudden, bam, Mother Nature turned it all around.

Had we not been there to point that out, I don't think they would have – Mel, you can help me here if you want, but I don't think they would have actually looked at that, went for the satellite imaging and everything that we suggested.

The more education that people know about what's going on over there, obviously the

better; but will it change the final outcome?
I don't know.

Ms. Compton: Just one last comment on that: I think the fishermen were bringing – and I'm not saying the fishermen aren't aware, but they're saying people don't know what this is about, the general public.

I know we've talked about it and PEIFA has talked about it. Again I'll say everyone's in their bubble and they think everyone knows about it, but everyone doesn't know about it because I've heard people say to me: What are the 'no pipe' signs, what is that all about? So it is obviously an issue with the public.

Then I'll urge the committee – I'm not a voting member, but I would like to see Northern Pulp come forward again to the working group to present to us. Whether they will or not, they got quite a going-over the last time, you know, but (Indistinct) –

Bobby Jenkins: Well, Mel pointed out (Indistinct) here already today. The thing's moving east-to-west, okay?

Ms. Compton: Yeah.

Bobby Jenkins: You got cruise ships lining up here in Charlottetown at the mouth of Hillsborough Bay. Where do you think some of this stuff's going to end up? It's not all going to stay over there against the Nova Scotia shore. It's going to move. Some of this stuff is going to move; and you're talking 70 million liters of effluent a day, that's a lot of stuff that's going to hit the Northumberland Strait.

I don't have any illusions that this stuff is all going to stay over there on the Nova Scotia side. It's going to move around. How much are we going to get? Well, nobody's told us yet. We've asked that question. Nobody knows. Mel's asked it numerous times.

Ian MacPherson: In terms of an engagement, you raise a good point that we're aware of. I guess a couple of things that – the focus of the group, because irrespective of whether it's a provincial or a federal one, we're going to need good science to make a case. So the group has been focusing a lot of the resources on that.

I do know that the eastern chamber had planned a meeting some months back to have some of the folks from – executives come over from Northern Pulp and explain – both sides were going to be presented that evening and that didn't materialize because Northern Pulp cancelled. So there hasn't been anything like that.

I guess we're trying to pick our spots, Darlene, in terms of when (Indistinct) the most public pressure, but I can assure you there's a lot going on behind the scenes to ramp up that engagement. I guess we'll find out Monday if there's some more options on the table and maybe that changes the dynamic. If there's not, then that's going to be extremely disappointing and then we go to other things.

There was a very well-attended – I forget when that was, the rally, July?

Bobby Jenkins: July.

Melanie Giffin: July 6th.

Ian MacPherson: Yeah, July 6th and lots of folks were there from Prince Edward Island. You were there and some other people, Peter, and a few other folks from the Legislature, which was greatly appreciated; but certainly engaging the public more and getting information out, but there is a lot of critical data, information and research that's going on behind the scenes.

Because that's ultimately, I guess (Indistinct) –

Ms. Compton: And I'm not saying –

Ian MacPherson: – who we have to convince, yeah.

Ms. Compton: – that's not the case, but the comment was made to me just from Joe General Public that what is this about and how do we find out more about it, so –

Ian MacPherson: Well, and I guess one thing too, until we knew the particulars of the project – and I think we know most of them, but one should not assume – that until you know the wholeness of the project, then you can engage in a whole education process, too. So, certainly on our radar.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

Thanks very much for coming in, Ian and Melanie. I appreciate that.

I've got a couple of basic questions here. I'm interested in page five of Melanie's briefing that she went over, where it talked about the ice. Has there been any thought of what particles would be suspended during the winter in the ice or captured within the ice and then spread over a greater area as ice floes move out of the Strait into wherever?

Melanie Giffin: It's a question that was brought up by some of the fishers, and there hasn't been an answer to it.

Mr. Fox: Hasn't been an answer to that?

Melanie Giffin: No.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

We know that we're seeing changes in weather patterns with stronger surges in tides and torrential rains and even warmer temperatures we saw this year. Has there been any information provided on how climate change could possibly affect the project?

Melanie Giffin: No, and that's one of the data gaps that I pointed out to them, that we're seeing some major ecosystem changes right now in the Southern Gulf. What appears in their receiving water studies, it doesn't appear that they're taking any of that into consideration whatsoever.

Mr. Fox: I'd like to pick up on a point that Darlene mentioned – would there be a time now to do it or later – a motion by the committee to have Northern Pulp come back to the standing committee to present. So I'd like to make that motion that they be asked to be brought back.

Chair: We'll bring that up, Jamie, in new business, okay please.

Mr. Fox: Thank you. That's good for now.

Chair: Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Sorry, just before we go, (Indistinct) respondent.

Ian MacPherson: Just a point of clarification.

We also have a specific request that the working group present to the standing committee, just to be clear. We're calling it the Northern Pulp working group, but that's harvester groups. So we'd like them to present too.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: One final point on that and I just thought, is there any way that we could have DFO come before the standing committee and present? Would that be an avenue also?

Chair: The request has been sent?

Mr. Fox: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I'll just follow right up on what Jamie just mentioned there regarding the federal involvement in this and you very clearly stated that you feel it's appropriate and necessary for a federal assessment to take place, not just a level one provincial assessment in the hands of the Nova Scotia government.

Your lack of response from the Nova Scotia government is telling, but not unsurprising, this being the way that they have dealt with this for many decades now. I absolutely agree with you that a federal assessment is called for here, both from an environmental point of view and also from the responsibility to the First Nations in the area and you've alluded to that as well.

Melanie, you'll be very well aware of the article that Michael Harris recently wrote on (Indistinct) politics, you were quoted in that quite extensively and he makes a very compelling case for a federal assessment to be carried out. That's where I'd like to start.

I was not aware of this letter until this morning when it was circulated. But DFO

wrote back after they were requested to come and present here to the committee and I'm just going to read the final paragraph.

Essentially what they're saying is: The DFO does not feel responsible for reviewing any of the potential outcomes related to the effluent discharge. They're only going to concern themselves with reviewing the project from the point of view of the physical impacts of the pipe installation itself. That absolutely astounds me.

Can you tell me what your response to that is? That was from Sarah Doucette, who is a regional director of the DFO.

Melanie Giffin: From a science perspective understanding that – and I do sit in the peer review science for some species and on the board of the FSCP board and we, on numerous occasions from a science perspective, speak about the fact that we are looking at a more robust analysis and understanding those contaminants and industrial runoff and temperature and physical attributes of a waterway to better understand what a species is doing.

I'm definitely disappointed from a science perspective to hear that response, knowing that with the whales coming in right now some of the things that will be looked at in that science peer review is, from a satellite imaging the chlorophyll that's in the surface water, to understand where they're going to be feeding. If we're looking at all of this kind of robust science to understand a species, then it's disappointing to hear that DFO science is taking a step back from the specific topic. It definitely plays a role.

Chair: Just for clarification on this, that letter that you referred to that you received this morning was received and circulated in May.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, I didn't read in that time, Chair.

Chair: Did you want to respond to that, Ian?

Ian MacPherson: I guess what we continue to be surprised about is how no one wants to be the person, kind of, holding the ball in this situation and I guess I'll give a specific example.

What we've been told by the federal government is the reason that a provincial EA is even under consideration is it's where the effluent originates, so that should make it a – to me, is astounding when you're going out 10 kilometres and four kilometres. It doesn't matter how far you're going out and discharging into federal waters and that this is classified as a minor modification to the plant.

When you're actually introducing a whole new process, a whole new facility, a different location; totally shutting down the existing facility – so anyhow, is, we've had lots of surprises along the way and I'm sure we'll have some more, but obviously for, I think, some political reasons no one wants to kind of be holding the ball on this one.

Chair: Melanie has something to add and then Bobby wants to –

Melanie Giffin: I forgot to mention, and I think we've sent this out in a letter before, but we've been talking so much lately with DFO about marine-protected areas and that we need 10% protected by 2020 and one nautical mile from shore all along the coast of Nova Scotia, and even more than that on the PEI side, is actually a marine refuge which is considered a portion of that 10% for the marine-protected areas.

The outfall location of the pipe would actually be within a federal marine-protected area. That just kind of adds to my disappointment of them not stepping up in this case because they have a marine-protected area there – a marine refuge, which is there, specifically, to protect juvenile lobster habitat.

Chair: Bobby?

Bobby Jenkins: Yeah, I was going to bring up MPA, so thanks for doing that, Mel.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Getting back to what you brought up, Peter, regarding DFO; the only thing I would surmise in that whole thing is they're probably going to take their cue from Environment Canada. I would say they're looking at it from that kind of a perspective right now. They're going to wait until it's a federal EA or a provincial EA or whatever,

and then move on from there. They have been very quiet throughout the whole process.

Chair: Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Bobby, I absolutely concur with you and actually to be fair, in this letter it does say that Environment and Climate Change Canada is the department that we should be contacting at a federal level to look into the effects of the effluent.

I'm still astonished that DFO is unconcerned about that, but I think you're absolutely right. We're dealing with, clearly, a very complicated situation here when it comes to the ecosystem of the Northumberland Strait and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and there are so many unknowns. You've used the phrase 'data gap' a few times, Melanie, this morning and there are unknowns in terms of what's happening with the ecosystem right now and there are a lot of pressures on that; this being just one potential one, the introduction of a pipe that's going to pump 24/7, 365 days a year, (Indistinct) million litres of effluent.

But, there are other things going on there as well. You mentioned the anoxia and the gyres at either end of the Northumberland Strait and the flow, which is essentially a fairly stagnant, I may be overstating it, but the idea that the water that sits in the Strait does not flow continuously and easily around.

The recent report from the Washington State University of the general health of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the anoxia that's present at a wider level; clearly a lot of concerns. I'm wondering – you mentioned the species which are showing up now in the Gulf which weren't there before, the squid and the white sharks and the right whales, and others. Do you have any sense – and I realize that there are so many unknowns here, but this ecosystem is in flux at the moment, serious flux. What impact – and lobster are moving around like all other species – are there any studies that have been done to suggest – specifically when it comes to lobster because from an economic point of view, that's by far the biggest component of the fishery here in the Gulf –

what the impacts may be on the lobster fishery around the Island?

Melanie Giffin: You mean in terms of the climate change –

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Just the changing ecosystem in the Gulf. Have projections been made with all of these factors; the climate change, heating of the waters, the anoxia, this potential effluent?

Melanie Giffin: I'm not sure about long-term past 10 years, but there's been a decline in Maine in terms of numbers, in terms of landings. There's been an increase in Newfoundland. So it appears to be a shift of the population from south to north.

What we do here around Prince Edward Island is we actually put out lobster larval collectors and that gives us somewhat of a predictive model for five to seven years down the road. So basically, we put out, in seven sites, 30 larval collectors and leave them out from June until September, late-September/October, and when we pull those in we count up the number of young of the year larvae that are in there. It takes those young of the year larvae five to seven years before they make it to the fishery.

So assuming that nothing catastrophic happens to those larvae within those five to seven years, we have a bit of an idea of the number of larvae that are out there and what the landings could or should be. It doesn't give us a specific on landings, but it gives us a trend. We know that, for instance, this year we had some amazing high numbers in Skinners Pond and Cove Head in terms of those lobster larvae so it usually takes 10 years of data to really be able to feed that into a model, and currently we've only got nine years so we're just about at the point we can feed it into a model and see if it really does correspond.

That's how we're trying to track it here on PEI in terms of those trends and shifting in terms of the ecosystem.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I want to move to the closures maps that you have on page seven of the document that you brought in.

It's very dramatic. It looks very alarming, but you were very fair in saying that we're not suggesting that this is entirely related to the pulp mills in the area. But a question I do have; the current owners of Northern Pulp also own many mills in that area, I believe. Can you confirm that? That the owners of the pulp mill in Pictou are also owners of some of the mills in the area where these closures on the west coast have occurred?

Melanie Giffin: Yes. I believe it's three.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Okay.

Thank you.

Chair: I would like to take one moment to recognize James Aylward who is now sitting in on this presentation. Welcome.

Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Boat Harbour – and this has been alluded to by other members already – is scheduled to close, in fact it's mandated to close at the end of 2020. We still have nothing from Northern Pulp as to which of the many options that they had gone through, I think it was six or seven options regarding the treatment facility onsite which would feed in, ultimately, to the effluent pipe and there's no clear idea as to what's going to happen in 2020 if things are not in place. It's looking increasingly like that timeframe does not allow them to build a sufficient treatment plant in that time. Of course, we're not really sure what's going to happen with that.

Fishers in other areas – and Allan MacCarthy, he's a representative; I'm sure you both know Alan with the Northumberland Fishermen's Association. He's absolutely adamant that there will be no pipe in the Strait. I know Darlene was there in Pictou that day, as you were, and that was a very moving experience. Dave Dunning, the musician and somebody who is a local resident and really understands this issue at a very deep level, has said that there are fishermen who are ready to go to jail over this. That's how strongly they feel and there are thousands of people behind them, and that if they're going to put that pipe in

the Strait they're going to have to – well, what he says is they're going to have to send down the Navy in order to do that.

That's a measure of how serious the fishers feel about this. I'm wondering if the PEI fishers share that same depth of concern and willingness to go to those sorts of lengths to make sure this pipe is not built.

Bobby Jenkins: I guess that's for me to answer, is it?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm not going to go out and say that we're going to get involved with anything that's unlawful or anything like that, Peter.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: No. Just to be clear, I don't think Allan was suggesting that. This is a peaceful protest (Indistinct) what I understood.

Bobby Jenkins: I'm not sure if the pipe goes into the Strait what kind of course of action will be taken in the future.

I can tell you from my experience in 2003 at the wharf in Souris with the herring seiners, that if individuals believe that their way of livelihood and way of life is being threatened, there probably will be consequences. I would say that.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

I do have more, but maybe you want to come back.

Chair: Sure, I'll go back and put you back on the list and come back.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Chair: Alan McIsaac.

Mr. McIsaac: Thanks very much, Chair, and thanks for coming in, folks; great presentation.

A few comments that all of you have made that I'm going to refer to, and I think the first thing is Ian brought up was good science. The other thing Bobby mentions there, too, is the fact that from Melanie's charts here on page four, the larvae source-sink area, when you see 24 kind of feeds or

seeds 23, 22, 20, 18 and 19, three of those areas are right on our coastline.

Then you talk about the potential problems and contaminants in there. There's some pretty scary-sounding chemicals there with – I don't even want to mention them; but what I do want to get a little more info on, and I've heard it before at some of your meetings, and that was the last one you mentioned on page six there that says: combination of chlorine and temperature increases. This is the one that really got me.

I think, Melanie, you did the presentation and showed the schematic of the larvae when they're being born, and the fact that you introduce warm water – and fresh water, just how that can affect the life of the larvae, and then it all percolates down, you may say; but this is a major industry, not only on PEI but in Nova Scotia and the whole east coast.

If you could just explain a little bit more what happens in that life cycle, just without the chemicals, just with fresh water and warm water hitting some of those.

Melanie Giffin: Yeah, so basically, as I mentioned, the lobster life cycle, the moment they're released from the tail, they'll float in the water column and they are completely reliant on the currents and they float near the surface for anywhere from 3 to 12 weeks.

We know, for instance – the science has been done – that fresh water has a negative effect on lobster larvae. We even know that it has a negative effect on adult larvae. If adult lobster are rained on, for instance, they arrive seven times weaker at a plant, just from rain. So yeah, that fresh water and the temperature can both have negative effects on larvae, excluding the chemicals and the contaminants altogether.

To give an idea of that source and sink table that I put in there, I mentioned that within the Northumberland Strait where they seed, and that it seeds all just kind of right around it, on the north side of PEI for instance, just to show how weak the current is within the Northumberland Strait, on the north side of PEI for instance, like Area 1 from New Brunswick actually seeds the entire northern part of PEI.

So on the north side, that current is flowing good and fast, and it is coming down, and it seeds a good distance, but within that current – so when you've got fresh water which floats to the surface and it remains for anywhere from 3 to 12 weeks, it's obviously not dispersing the way that we're being told it is. So that will kind of accumulate on the surface and the contaminants, and interact with all of those lobster larvae.

At this point we don't know exactly what's in it, but the fresh water and warm water will have a negative effect as is.

Mr. McIsaac: And if the seed from 24 seeds into those other areas 23, 22, 20, 18 and 19, eventually some of that seed will settle. Let's say 18 will eventually seed into 16, 17, sort of up, and it eventually it accumulates out, which is of grave concern, too, for every lost larvae. It affects you long-term, affects our whole industry, and that's just looking at it from the point of view of fresh water, not contaminants.

So if the pipe was there and it actually was putting out pure, clean water, it's still going to have an effect. So it still should not be done in that case; and then you put in the contaminants and things like that, it just accentuates the whole situation there.

The economic impact, I guess everybody could have their say on that, but it's certainly a serious issue; and I know when we had the people in here from the plant, we gave them a fairly serious discussion on it as well.

I think the department of environment, as well as DFO, needs to be called upon directly on this issue, and we definitely need to have the assessments done before anything goes by, and I think the timeframe is pretty short for that.

As far as coming up with other alternatives, I don't know how many people have looked at other alternatives. Can we put that pipe in another direction? Can we do some other way of running that plant? The whole thing, but I think everybody would agree one business should not be allowed to affect so many other businesses in the area around it.

I guess I just want to say: Whatever we can do, we'll help with. I know the fishermen for

sure and the DFO are on this topic and will continue to be; but we have to realize, too, it's not just the lobster industry, it's so many little industries, or not even that little industries. Many, many other industries, many other species that we rely on, not just as a food source or an economic source, but this is livelihood of so many people directly impacted. When you think that just fresh water can affect that whole thing, add in these other contaminants and it just exacerbates the whole thing.

Anyway, it is a serious issue and I'll let someone else ask you some questions, I guess. It's just unbelievable that they would even consider this, I think.

Chair: Ian has a response.

Ian MacPherson: There's just a couple of general points I wanted to make, but it certainly ties in with what Alan has just said.

One of the big things – and this is in part of the changes that the federal government's proposing in terms of how these projects are looked at, but cumulative effects are supposed to be significant. I don't think you can probably get another project more significant than this in that we don't know the cumulative effects.

As Melanie has pointed out several times, we're looking five to seven years out, so you could not see anything for two or three years and everybody thinks this is great. Then all of a sudden, wham, you don't have a lobster fishery, you don't have herring, you don't have other things.

In terms of public engagement, I wanted to make the committee aware that CEAA, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, received thousands of responses from people, from the public, thousands. The comment from one of their executives was not even close to any project they've ever had in the past in terms of people being engaged and concerned about this project.

Although they were receiving water study, the proponent will need to do a new one, just some of the parameters around that. The lobster season wasn't even in progress when they did the study. I think it was a little over three months. Do you recall?

Melanie Giffin: Oh, it was a one-month.

Ian MacPherson: It was a one-month data gathering, one month, when the lobster season wasn't even on and the larvae and whatever hadn't even been released yet. These are the kinds of things that are of a great concern.

I guess one point also I wanted to mention is when we talked about – if you talk about cost, and this is public knowledge, but the province of Nova Scotia is responsible for solely paying for the new facility, so it's – we can't help feeling that it's, you know, as any responsible government tries to do, it goes with the lowest cost option, but there's far other many more factors rather that need to be taken into consideration.

Chair: Okay, Kathleen Casey.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Although I'm only a substitute member today, I've been following this with great interest and I know there's not one person in this room that's not supportive of the PEIFA on this subject. I do also appreciate the scientific evidence that was presented today.

I wonder, Mr. Chair if – I know we can't tell another committee of another legislature what to do, but I'm wondering if a letter from this committee – I know, Ian, you mentioned that you can't get before a committee in Nova Scotia, but this can't hurt, but I'm wondering if a letter sent on behalf of this committee, signed by all the members of this committee, to the appropriate committee in Nova Scotia, with some of the – you know, a paragraph on scientific evidence and the importance for the PEIFA or your working group to be heard by the appropriate committee in Nova Scotia.

I don't think it can – it won't hurt, but I think it would be appropriate for us to do that. What they do with it, that's up to them, but I think as a support to the PEIFA, I know if a letter came from another legislature to a committee that I was the chair of or the committee that I sat on, I would step up and take notice.

So I don't think it could hurt, and if everybody's in agreement with that, I think a

letter requesting that the appropriate committee in the Nova Scotia legislature hear from this group, or the most appropriate group deemed by this group, would be appropriate.

I would be prepared to move a motion if we needed to do that, or if we can just have a consensus. I know I would stand up and take notice if it came from another legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Thank you very much, Kathleen, for that. I'm going to ask you to repeat that again during new business.

Ms. Casey: Thank you.

Chair: Okay.

Chris Palmer.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Chair.

I don't know if I really have a question here or more of a comment, but this is – the economic impact of this decision is tens to hundreds of millions of dollars in PEI and in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

This is a big deal; and as Ian had said, there's no good science behind this. So how can we support getting that good science in place, because this is, as you had suggested, this is now, the feds are now looking at it as an ecosystem approach. This isn't one particular silo here, this is – to their mandate, is to look at the entire ecosystem.

The data gaps that we've talked about are glaring, but any of the data that we do have, none of it suggests that this is a good idea. So even if we were to take the science that we do have, that says this is a bad project. This shouldn't be happening and it's going to hurt our livelihood of a number of folks. It's going to hurt the economy here. Surely to goodness with the technology that's available today, somebody's got a better solution than what they're proposing.

I don't know if there's ways that our committee can be pushing someone through DFO, Environment Canada or whoever it is, to find another solution, stop ignoring what we think is happening – which is nobody wants to talk about this until it's too late –

and find us a better solution to get this thing in place so that we can protect that entire ecosystem that they're responsible for.

Ian MacPherson: Thank you very much for those comments, and we concur.

I guess one of the things that we've been trying to do all along – and whether we're naïve, perhaps, I don't know – was that – and we've been very clear as the working group to not say, our intent is not to close that mill.

It's 2018. There should be technological solutions out there. I believe Bruce Chapman, who's the plant manager there, has said that – and there are different types of mills, and they have different types of effluent, and we understand that – but apparently there were no other mills in North America that either have a closed-loop system or some other arrangement. Whether things in other countries have been – technologies in other countries have been looked at; we just don't get that sense.

I think one of the other things that is a great concern is the life cycle of the plant. To my knowledge, I believe the same owners put a billion, \$1 billion into upgrading one of the plants out west, which was a lot newer facility, I think.

So there's money there for upgrades, but we seem to be dealing with something that – I mean, we've had people say: What, is this 1970 we're talking about here, with this kind of solution.

We will continue on that. I guess I just wanted to make clear the reason we were so focused on getting a federal EA, and still are, is to buy time; but unfortunately, time's ticking away and no other options are coming to the table, so maybe we'll be looking at changing a strategy here and that has to be the focus of other technologies and methods.

Chair: Bobby, you wanted to respond also?

Bobby Jenkins: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I like what Kathleen brought up there. I'll commend all of you on this side of the Strait for your stand on Northern Pulp so far. The problem's not on this side of the Strait. It's

over there. Okay? That's where the inaction is.

Alan, when he was minister, he done everything in his power to help us there. The Premier came out from day one. Peter and Darlene were over there to support the rally in Pictou. It's not this side of the Strait. You guys have been great. I commend you all for all the hard work you've done in trying to do this, but it's over there where I see the inaction. I think there's a lot of players that have to step up to the plate over there.

Probably Chief Andrea Paul, last November at the wellness centre in New Glasgow said it best: They spent 50 years wrecking the back yard over here, now they want to wreck the front yard. She's got it summed up. That's basically what's going on over there.

Until the players that have to make decisions step up to the plate over there, just keep hammering away over here. That's what you've got to do, because we're all going to be affected. It's like Alan said. We're all going to be affected. It's not just Nova Scotia. It's PEI and New Brunswick, and the fishers know that. We've pointed it out from day one. It's not just you guys here. It's all of us.

Thank you.

Chair: Okay, round two.

Colin LaVie.

Mr. LaVie: Thank you, Chair.

In round one, I heard a lot about federal, federal, federal. Where are our federal MPs on this issue?

Ian MacPherson: We have received support, supporting our request for a federal EA, from our MPs. They've been strong.

Bobby Jenkins: The other thing is there's no submission in yet. They don't want to comment till the submission is in.

Ian MacPherson: Yes. Thanks, Bobby.

It alludes back to one of my original comments is that from a federal political standpoint we go, I really can't get involved

very much or do things specifically until we know what the plan is, so that depends on the submission being (Indistinct) with the specifics of what the proponent's going to do in terms of their proposal.

Chair: Colin LaVie.

Mr. LaVie: So does our Island MPs have the pressure on their government to get a study here? I don't want to hear it's too much.

Ian MacPherson: That study, in terms of the environmental assessment?

Mr. LaVie: Yeah.

Ian MacPherson: Certainly, yes, yeah, we've had support from the fisheries minister. I was going to mention earlier that there's been a plan on the table for quite some time to have the environment minister and fisheries minister of both Nova Scotia and PEI meet in a meeting and we would attend that, but we can't seem to get any traction with the Nova Scotia folks coming over.

And I'll tell you one thing about our working group: We've dealt with some very confidential issues, and there is great integrity with our working group. We're just trying to understand this, and if there's anything we need to be focusing on or not, but it's a very complicated issue.

Some of the decisions and the agreements that were signed were done by previous governments and I'm not here to comment that their – it has some very long-term consequences for the taxpayers of Nova Scotia for sure.

Mr. LaVie: Ian, was there ever any talks of a second option for this plant?

Ian MacPherson: Very early in our discussions, the question was asked by one of our committee members: What's plan B? The plant manager was very quick, and I think very honest, saying: We don't have a plan B.

If you talked about a timetable, the initial direction of Boat Harbour, I think it's almost five years now that that's been on the radar, that it's going to close. So now we're

probably good into year three-and-a-half and still no plan, no formal plan being registered, and basically no plan B.

Just to address one of the earlier comments, and maybe it's my naiveté, but I like to think there's a real opportunity here for new technology. I mean we talk, all governments talk, incessantly about new technology and how we have to develop it. Well, here's a real world, a real problem that we're dealing with, and it'd be great to have a technical solution.

Because I'll tell you one thing, Colin, it's ripped that community apart. It's ripped them in half –

Mr. LaVie: Oh yeah.

Ian MacPherson: – in terms of mill people, they don't want to lose their jobs. The fishers, they don't want to have their jobs threatened or their livelihoods for generations to come, so it's not the way to be. That's not the way we should be solving those issues.

Chair: Bobby, you also had something?

Bobby Jenkins: Yeah, Colin, just to further on what you asked there: They did, there was a paper there, I think Mel was at it there, where they had three or four different options. I remember one in particular that kind of sounded the alarm bells for some of us in the room, and that was they were going to – one of the options was hauling the effluent to some place inland and dumping it. I forget what the number of trucks was per day, but it was an astronomical amount of trucks that we're going to need to do this.

I think at the end, the final analysis on everything that they had on the paper was that it was too costly for any of them, right?

Ian MacPherson: I was just going to add that, yes. I don't have that right with me. I've got like a six-inch file that I could have brought (Indistinct)

Bobby Jenkins: (Indistinct)

Ian MacPherson: Anyhow, we did have a meeting and I think it was one of our last meetings where a number of options were presented. I'm going by memory, I think

there were eight. I think anyone off the street could have easily ascertained that maybe three or four of those were just not feasible. When you're talking about 400 truck loads a day or some number like that –

Bobby Jenkins: No, it was an hour.

Ian MacPherson: Yeah, that's right; 400 truck loads an hour. So that also gives you – tractor trailer loads – so that gives you an idea of what kind of volume we're talking about. Thanks, Bobby.

What for me was really disappointing is that there was no cost analysis to accompany them. It was just that: Look at this, we've gone through them. They're not going to work, so next item. It's been very frustrating.

Chair: Colin LaVie.

Mr. LaVie: Yeah, this is 2018. There's got to be a better system out there than putting it into the Northumberland Strait, for sure.

I'm just going to make a comment. There's no question. I want to commend you fellows for the work that you have done on this file, for sure. I want to commend your working group for sure, and I want to make sure that we don't make this partisan, that we're here for one reason and Bobby, you're right, when you're saying we over here are all on board. We know what we want. It's over there we've got to convince. It's over there, our fight is, and I shouldn't say fight. We all got to work together on this and there's got to be a better solution out there, like Alan says, than putting this in the Northumberland Strait.

This is a no-brainer. This is not a complicated situation. This is just a big no. There's too much at risk here. Everybody is at risk, not only the fish; it's livelihoods, and nobody can actually guarantee the effects of this. So if you can't guarantee anything, why are we even talking about it? Right?

But Bobby, you're right. We've got to get our message across, and Kathleen has a real good idea there. That's a real good start right there, I believe. There is some good coming out of this meeting and I appreciate all the work that you fellows are doing on

this for the fishers and for everybody on PEI, really.

Thank you.

Chair: Darlene Compton.

Ms. Compton: Thank you, Chair.

Ian, you mentioned discussing the life of the mill. We're 50 years into this mill with a lot of provincial and federal money. No one wants to see the mill close, is kind of what we're all aiming for, but in this day and age it's not 50 years ago, it's not 25 years ago. If we took the \$600 million the province is willing to put into that and looked at retraining or new job skills for those people who are at the mill – we talk about clear-cutting and how that's not a viable or good option anymore and that's what's happening with all the wood that goes from here.

You talked about a plant that the Widjaja family have out west and I think they put a billion dollars into it. Well, we know there's an indemnity clause: Why would they ever put a billion dollars into the one here? I understand the frustration that you folks feel because we feel it too, and dividing a community is just a great way to move forward with what you want because they'll just come up the middle and do what they want.

Has there been any talk at all about the possibility of closing the mill and doing something different? I mean, do we need to send bleached toilet paper to Asia? That's where we are in 2018.

Ian MacPherson: Well, I think it goes right back to right after we decided we weren't going to attend meetings anymore and I was waiting for it, it came out pretty soon after that. I mean, I don't think you can get much more clear than, 'no pipe, no mill'. That doesn't show a lot of flexibility. That doesn't show cooperation. It doesn't show the willingness to look at options. That's just: It's our way or the highway.

I'll tell you, the harvesters in our group will not be to blame if that mill closes. I can't be any more clear than that. We are not the bad guys on this and I think – I hope some people start to understand that, that we're talking, not only about a very lucrative and

expensive or valuable fishery now, but that's been there for generations, that needs to be there for generations again.

Ms. Compton: I would just like to again recommend to the committee that the province, the Premier, whomever, sends a letter again to the federal minister. If we do not keep putting pressure on the feds, who is going to do it? It's a motion maybe someone can bring forward, but I think we've seen it with the ferry. If you're not going to keep your voice at the forefront, the federal government is not going to do anything, possibly. We're hoping that they will.

They should look at science and how it will affect – but I keep coming back to if it's, 'no pipe, no mill', then where is the federal government's responsibility in that? Where is the Nova Scotia government's responsibility? We all would have to say they're in a very, very tight spot. There's no other way to put it. They've sunk millions and millions of dollars into this and do not want to see it close because it would be catastrophic, supposedly, for this community and even for Islanders. I mean, there was push back when I brought it up with people who truck pulp over there.

But in this day and age, I think we just need to look at a different way of doing things and if you told any other business in 2018 that they can put a pipe into the Strait, they would be laughed at. So I think, we as a province, need to keep pushing. Nova Scotia, keep pushing the federal government.

I would urge that the committee send a letter to the Premier and say we need to keep pushing on this, and to the Nova Scotia government as well, to the premier of Nova Scotia and say we're not going to lie down about this.

Thank you, Chair.

Chair: Thank you, Darlene.

Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

I would just like to go back to some of the science for a minute. Melanie, you mentioned about the very few herring

spawning grounds that are in this area and that this proposed effluent pipe will actually discharge into one of the very few. What's the latest – what are the latest data on herring stocks in the Gulf and are you concerned with that?

Melanie Giffin: Herring is not my file; I'm not going to lie. It's my colleague, Laura, who deals with herring. But there's definitely concern about the spawning beds and we've actually requested that, at the last herring meeting we had that I was actually in attendance at, we actually requested that Northern Pulp and the proposed effluent release be included in the CSAS document, the upcoming CSAS document, which is a federal document on stock assessment for herring because of the fact that is one of the only ones.

So, there's concern. There is absolutely concern. There's concern about the mackerel stocks as well and I sit on a mackerel rebuilding group and there are a lot of mackerel larvae in that area as well. Yeah, they are both of concern, herring and mackerel, and the effluent going in there is definitely a negative towards their larvae floating.

Chair: Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

As you and everybody else knows, herring and mackerel are critical species when it comes to all sorts of other things in the Gulf, including the lobster fishery because that's the predominate bait that's used. As I mentioned earlier, there are clearly other threats to the two billion dollar fishing industry in this region, including the anoxia, which is real and present and happening now, and also climate change, which is more insidious, and the evidence of that is not so easy to point to.

Although, the anoxia is apparently a result of climate change, but warming waters, changes in species' distribution, all of those things that go along with climate change. So climate change is a clear and present danger to the fishing industry, not just here on Prince Edward Island and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but all around the world.

I'm wondering what you would like to see governments do to have some clear and present action to combat climate change now.

Melanie Giffin: That is a loaded question.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yes. I know that.

Melanie Giffin: To be honest, monitoring is one of the big things. There's usually, for the most part I find from a science perspective, not enough long-term monitoring programs that are in place. Even temperature change within the Northumberland Strait, bottom water versus surface water, dissolved oxygen levels, that kind of information. We don't have a long-term study on how those are changing over time and actually, the fishermen's association themselves have taken it upon ourselves to purchase data loggers to put out into the Northumberland Strait in 10 locations to monitor for ourselves because it's the kind of information that's helpful to us, but is not currently being collected.

So I'm not sure, in terms of a moderating program, I don't know how that would – well, it wouldn't have an effect on climate change itself, but at least we would be more prepared to know it's happening.

Chair: Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah, and I appreciate that monitoring is important; but that, as you just said at the very end of your comments here, that is not going to do anything to combat climate change. We're going to combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions.

I'm wondering whether the PEIFA has any position on what you would like to see governments do to reduce carbon emissions in order to combat climate change, which is a threat to your industry.

Chair: If I may: I'm not sure if you guys want to respond to that or not, but the reason we asked them to come in today was regarding the Northern Pulp corporation's waste water treatment project.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Yeah.

Chair: So they may not be prepared to answer that, and if you're not, fine. We can move on.

Ian MacPherson: Actually, I do have something.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you.

Chair: Sure, okay.

Ian MacPherson: A few months back –

Bobby Jenkins: It's preliminary.

Ian MacPherson: Yes. Early in 2018, an Atlantic Fisheries Fund was announced which is specific to the fishery. It can fund a number of projects, but I'm pleased to say it's in the preliminary stages but we have drafted up a carbon reduction strategy and we're hoping to get funding under that.

We're very concerned about reducing our carbon footprint and we think there's ways we can do it. We're looking at submitting, hopefully, that project in the fairly near future.

I'll just make a quick comment here in terms of what would we like to see or whatever. We're working diligently with the federal government on this, but the consultation process is flawed. It's top-down. We just – Melanie and I had to go to Moncton one Saturday to present to a committee on marine protected areas, and the primary part of our talk was that the process wasn't working.

You've got a lot of fantastic knowledge out there in the fishing community and First Nations community and I'm sad to say that a lot of times it just gets either ignored or discounted or not considered.

That's what we do as an association on a daily basis, but I think that's – you've got to have the people that it's going to impact. You've got to have them involved in the discussion in the early stages.

I'll just make a little side comment here: We started off great with the consultation between DFO on the right whales, and then we're done our consultation, and quite frankly many of the guidelines that came out in the fall hadn't even been discussed in the

working groups, and there was some good information traded in those working groups. There's a prime example, something that's very current.

Now DFO's learned some things and we're going to change, and I think that has to happen with climate change, too, or should happen.

Chair: One more, Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: Thank you, Chair.

Yes, frustration around quality of public consultation is everywhere; not just within the fishery in this particular issue.

The thing that is most confounding – I'm going to circle back to the lack of federal stomach to do anything about this, that's the thing that confounds me most of all about this whole thing, where there is a clear call here, and I would say, a real necessity for the feds to step up.

Whether that's because of environmental concerns, whether it's because this is a truly inter-provincial affair, it's not just – yes, sure, the effluent originates in Nova Scotia, but the proposal to ship it into the Strait immediately makes it an inter-provincial affair which is federal jurisdiction. Then you have the Aboriginal component as well. So there are at least three reasons why this should fall under federal jurisdiction and we should have a full federal environmental assessment done, and it's just confounding as to why that is not the case.

Yes, I support the idea of sending a letter to the appropriate committee in Nova Scotia, and I will absolutely sign onto that; but I think we've seen decades and decades of inaction from the Nova Scotia provincial government and their – Ian, you alluded to that when you said that prior agreements have sort of tied the hands of current governments. I agree with you on that.

But we're at a point now where this is a really serious and urgent problem, and we need to cut through the politics of this and just do the right thing. The lawyer Brian Hebert who's the lawyer for the Pictou Landing First Nation, he said this – trying to understand why there is no federal action on this, and he said this:

“I would have to say that if the decision is that they...” – and he’s talking here about the federal government – are “...not going to get involved, that they will rely on Nova Scotia, that is purely political.” He says: “It is a Liberal federal government staying out of the way of a Liberal provincial government.”

Now, I know we said: Let’s not make this partisan. But this is an urgent issue, and we have to do something about that. I absolutely support sending a letter, but I’m concerned that with the decades and decades of history of inaction, that that letter is not going to be effective; and I’m wondering – this is my question – what else you would like to see your provincial government do to increase the pressure on those, whether it’s the owners of the mill or the Nova Scotia government or the federal government.

Ian MacPherson: I think we’ll have some very specific asks of everyone on this committee and perhaps everyone in this House in the very near future. We appreciate the offer, and we’re trying to be strategic when we call on our some of our resources here; but yeah, we’re getting close to what I would say is a pretty critical juncture.

To just briefly comment on what you said, the hours that not only our organization but the other organizations had put into this, it’s fine to say: Well, why don’t you hire a consultant or whatever? Well, guess what. We’ve done some of that, too, and it still added many, many, many hours to our resources or taxing our resources, so you do what you need to do.

I won’t share the exact number, but Darlene alluded to it earlier, that \$6 million has really gone already to the mill to help with their design and their strategies and whatever else they need to do around this. It’s not even close to what Pictou Landing has had available to kind of do it on their own, so we pooled our resources and hopefully we’re putting an effective fight up. But quite frankly, there are days we just say: Why are we even having to deal with this? Why is it even a question whether it’s going to be provincial or federal?

Chair: Okay, Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: I’m interested in – back in I think it was 1990 or 1991, McCains put two big pipes into the Strait when they were building the plant for waste water, or whatever, to go out from their treatment facility. Did you ever look at that, what the effects of that were to that area?

Melanie Giffin: I can honestly (Indistinct) –

Mr. Fox: Is that possibly something we could look at?

Melanie Giffin: It’s something we could, but I can honestly say it would be different effluent.

Mr. Fox: Okay.

Melanie Giffin: Completely different effluent, so the chemical makeup of it would be –

Mr. Fox: Yeah, understandable.

Melanie Giffin: Yeah, and then – but I haven’t looked at it, to be honest, no.

Mr. Fox: I’m a little bit wondering. When we’re talking about this pipe going out there, what is this – how big a pipe is this? What’s at the end of it? How does it disperse the actual product or what? Can you tell me about that?

Melanie Giffin: I can’t remember the size –

Bobby Jenkins: Thirty-six inches of the diameter at the end.

Melanie Giffin: And then it’ll have six diffusers from the end that will stand – how many feet up? Do you remember?

Dr. Bevan-Baker: A hundred and fifty meters from (Indistinct)

Melanie Giffin: Yeah.

Mr. Fox: The Atlantic Fisheries Fund, you touched on that for a second. Is there any way – and maybe your application takes care of that – but is there any way that fund can be tapped in to do more science-based funding? Because you said that study they did was only within a month when basically nothing was happening, right? So is there

any way we could tap into that fund to get more research done or more scientific data?

Melanie Giffin: (Indistinct)

Ian MacPherson: I'm just kind of going by memory here; technology is a pillar, marketing's a pillar, infrastructure's a pillar. I'm pretty sure there's not funding –

Unidentified Voice: (Indistinct) Nova Scotia government (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: For the science?

Ian MacPherson: – for scientific research.

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Ian MacPherson: I'm not sure on that, though.

Mr. Fox: Okay.

Kathleen would know better than I do, but back about a couple of months ago, Member of Parliament Sean Casey was appointed the parliamentary secretary for fisheries. Have you met with him yet?

Melanie Giffin: (Indistinct)

Bobby Jenkins: Ian has.

Ian MacPherson: Several times, and we're pleased that member Casey is very engaged and he said that he's got a lot to learn about the fishery but is willing to ask and find out the answers, and we're hoping that's going to be a plus. Also, in conjunction with that announcement, Sean Fraser, who is the MP for across the pond there, across the Strait, was made parliamentary secretary for the minister of environment.

The other thing we're hoping may help our cause is that now fisheries minister Wilkinson, we've had two meetings with him when he was the parliamentary secretary of the environment and climate change, so he's very familiar with the file. He's very familiar with our concerns. He'll be in Halifax or Dartmouth next week. Either the PEIFA or some of us are hoping to get a few minutes with him and I can assure you this issue will be raised.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: I had one more and I think I've lost it. You'll have to come back for a minute. Let me think about it.

Chair: I'll come back to you.

Alan McIsaac.

Alan McIsaac: Thank you, Chair.

Comment first, I guess. I think when you look at your business, I know everybody – every fisherman would do this and the fisheries industry here in PEI did the same thing a few years ago. How do you stabilize and how do you make your industry viable? They took this thing by themselves and on their own initiatives, they put in escape hatches. They put in a restriction on a number of traps. They have the lobster monitoring programs. They set aside promotion dollars. They worked with us at the department on the Atlantic Fishery Fund to grow their industry and make it stable for a long time.

Then you have someone who comes along and is going to tap into that; that they have no control over at all. If you look at it from the other side, from this plant's side and you hear the comment: no pipe, no plant. I'm sure the general manager, similar to the fishery (Indistinct), they sit down and say: What's the long-term for this business? He says: Well, no plant, no pipe. But, if I get a pipe, I could grow this thing.

So do we know what the capacity is of that plant? Or if they stuck a billion dollars into this plant or more, could they get it up to double the capacity and this pipe – do we know what this pipe can handle? Instead of seven million litres a day, you were saying, Bobby, or I forget how many truck loads of effluent you'd have to take away if they upgraded this plant for long-term, because if I'm the owner of this plant and I asked the brand manager: Where are we going to be in 10 years? Where are we going to be in 25 years? We're going to be just like we are today. I would be thinking: Is that the guy I want running my plant?

This is what scares me. What is the long-term for this plant if they get this pipe? I don't know if they're looking too much about how many fish or how many lobster Bobby is going to be hauling in, or Colin, or

Buck's young fellow or whatever, but this is crucial. Like, this is just opening the door, quite possibly, to more than we're looking at right now if they have the opportunity to get this pipe, grow this plant and put more investment into it and grow the thing. I can't see any plant manager being in approval of: No growth in my plant in 10 years' time or 25 years' time.

Ian MacPherson: What was presented to us – now, I don't know, Northern Pulp hasn't shared that with us and perhaps they would be the best ones to talk to about it. I'm not professing to be a technical expert, but one of the concerns that I have that we haven't mentioned today, is not only would that volume be going out into the Strait, if there was a disruption at the plant and they could not use that discharge avenue, the capacity for storing effluent is eight hours and then there's one or two choices, I think, that are going to happen. Either it's going to go straight effluent out into the Strait, or they're going to shut their plant down. I mean, eight hours isn't a very long time.

To me, that seems to be the minimum to handle what you're doing now, but maybe there is a plan to double or triple that capacity down the way but that was another big concern of our organization.

Chair: Chris Palmer.

Oh, sorry.

Bobby Jenkins: Just to further on what Alan said there, Mr. Chair. I was checking with Mel there, but I don't think it's ever been mentioned at any of the meetings – the longevity of the pipe. I don't think we've ever heard if it's a 25-year span or – I can't remember. Can you, Mel?

Melanie Giffin: No. It has never been mentioned.

Bobby Jenkins: So, I'm glad you pointed that out because the next time we get over there that will be brought up. But to my recall it's never – the longevity of that thing hasn't been mentioned yet. It's a great question. Is it going to be 10 years? Is it 25 years? Is it 30? Is it another 50? Who knows? The thing could fall apart in five years. Maybe it's a five-year plan, Alan. I don't know.

Chair: Thank you, Bobby.

Chris Palmer.

Mr. Palmer: Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to go back to the technology side of this just for a minute and kind of following along the theme of what the Premier has said in the past, is when we address environmental concerns, is that we can do some things with carrots and not sticks, that we can deal with these things.

Is there a role – and I'll commit to – can we help with that from the province as the minister responsible for Innovation PEI that we can make a commitment to work with the PEIFA to see if we can find a technology solution, partner with the Nova Scotia government and the feds or whoever we need to so that we can find a way to make this work inside of the ecosystem that's here.

Are there ways that we can help find that solution? Because, as Ian has said, there's got to be a technical solution to this somewhere. There's got to be ways to make this work, so can we help with that? I'll commit that we'll work with whatever group it is to see if we can find financial support to see if we can come up with some kind of a technology solution, because somebody in the world knows how to do this. We just need to find them, or be a financial contributor to help them develop their technology to get it where we need to be.

Ian MacPherson: Certainly one of the things we tried to convey in the early stages, and still, is that we have our area of expertise and the mill has theirs, and there are experts out there. Certainly, to even find some consultants on the east coast that haven't worked for the mill or engaged currently with the mill, was a real challenge.

We don't feel that's our job, but I think it's time to look at that option. Really, it's kind of ludicrous that a group that opposes some technological answer is supposed to come up with a solution, but I think that's what needs to be done. As I said earlier, to me it was very disappointing to have those options out there and not to put a dollar figure to any of them is not very in-depth.

Anyhow, I welcome that and that could be a definite strategy moving forward.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Thanks, Chair.

I was sent a message a minute ago and it said apparently there is a science pillar to the AFF, so maybe it's something we could explore and get some more science and data to support what we're trying to do here.

Talking about – I'm not quite sure how to word this, but talking about political interference. Is there any – my understanding is that the bulk of this product leaving Northern Pulp goes through Halifax. So, I'm wondering sort of is there any avenue there to find out that we could use to help support what you're saying? Being cognizant of what is actually going through Halifax, because there would definitely be political will there to keep this thing going, right? Any comment on that?

Ian MacPherson: Yeah, we understand that Northern Pulp is either the largest or second largest customer –

Mr. Fox: It is number one.

Ian MacPherson: – for that – number one?

Mr. Fox: Number one.

Ian MacPherson: That's why I think the focus has been to let's find an option that works for both industries and we can't seem to get traction on that option. We have never stated that we want to see that mill close.

Mr. Fox: No.

Ian MacPherson: Let's put our heads together. There are a lot of bright people out there. It's not the only pulp mill in the world and those kinds of things, but as each month ticks away we get more concerned, for sure.

Chair: Bobby had something to add to that.

Bobby Jenkins: We've been told it's number one, but I know there's some of the groups in (Indistinct) – some of the parties in the working group have asked for a paper trail that states that it's number one and nobody has seen that yet.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: You just reminded me of something. I think back in the 1990s or early 2000s, when St. Anne pulp and paper mill up in New Brunswick on the Saint John River, they closed, it was owned by the Landeggers in New York, and then he sold it, and it was renamed and retooled by a company named St. Anne pulp and paper. I think it had something to do with a company in India; but I think that back then there was big concern about the amount of effluent, is it –

Melanie Giffin: Effluent.

Mr. Fox: – that's actually going, was going out into the Saint John River, and there was a threat there to the salmon stocks and the bass, if I believe; but there was something they did there, or they had to do, before they were allowed by DFO to reopen that plant.

Melanie Giffin: I'm not sure what kind of process they used at that plant, but every pulp and paper mill uses a different process in terms of whether they bleach or don't bleach. The one that's in Pictou is a bleached mill, and even in a bleached mill there's a mechanical bleaching process and a chemical bleaching process, and the mechanical one is even safer than the chemical one, and they used the chemical one in Pictou.

So in order to compare one plant to another, we need to understand what kind of pulping process they're actually using there. I'm more educated on this than I have ever been before, but it's still not an area that I am by any means an expert at. I've just kind of done my little bit of research to understand the fact that they each do use a different pulping process. So it would come down to what kind of pulping process that one was using.

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: Okay. I'm at the end of my questions, so do you guys have anything to add at the end? I'll give you a moment if you need to, and –

Ian MacPherson: I think we've covered a lot of things and I appreciate the committee's time. Just one quick comment

and we haven't mentioned it because I guess we don't represent that group, but let's not forget the impacts on tourism. There's a huge recreational fishery in Atlantic Canada that is over and above what we do on a day-to-day basis, and certainly there's concern from that sector, too, about the impacts of something like this.

Bobby, did you (Indistinct) –

Bobby Jenkins: No, I'm good.

Chair: Great.

Well, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, I want to thank Melanie, Ian and Bobby for coming in today on behalf of the PEI Fishermen's Association and presenting to us an update of what you're doing basically on this very important file, and I want to thank you for all that you do for Island fishers.

Unidentified Voices: Thank you very much.

Chair: So with that, committee, I'm going to take a two-minute recess just to give our presenters an opportunity to collect their paraphernalia and depart.

Unidentified Voices: (Indistinct)

Unidentified Voice: (Indistinct) like a fire drill.

Unidentified Voice: You run a tight ship.

[recess]

Chair: I will call this meeting back to order.

That was number three on our agenda. We're moving on to number four, which is review the scheduling of work plan priorities.

So I'm going to pass this over to the clerk, Ryan, to give us an update on our work schedule, work plan.

Clerk Assistant (R. Reddin): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You have the work plan document in front of you. It's a table that looks like this, and it has the various topics the committee has already agreed to look into, any priorities

assigned to those topics by the committee in previous meetings, and then briefings or witnesses that have either happened or are in the future.

The committee's top priority was actually the subject of buying local encouragement, value added production in place of agricultural imports and impact of cost of production, and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries had identified two staff members to address that with the committee. Those fellows are prepared to come before the committee but they just couldn't come in today.

Then on the Northern Pulp issue, the committee has Northern Pulp themselves in back in February. We've had the PEIFA today. There was a request to DFO Gulf and Maritimes regions that went out in the spring, and the letter that they responded with is in your correspondence package. They said that they are willing to come before the committee. In that letter, they mentioned several topics that they could talk to the committee about.

They did point out though that I think was mentioned before, that in terms of effluent regulation, that falls under Environment and Climate Change Canada, they suggested that the committee might want to invite that department in as well. That would be a committee decision.

Anyway, DFO, the two regions, they're prepared to come before the committee. They just need about two weeks' lead time and they couldn't come in today; but if the committee gave them another date in the future, they could probably work with it. The committee had also asked for a marine biologist on this, which would probably fit with DFO as well, and we had the testimony of a marine biologist today.

The committee had also invited Northumberland Fishermen's Association. I checked with the PEIFA just now, actually, and they are one part of the Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board, which is part of the working group. So if the committee were to invite the working group in, you might get the perspective from the Northumberland FA as well.

Pictou Landing First Nation has been invited as well, and they've communicated they would be happy to appear, and they are also part of the working group. Then on your working plan you've got several other topics, but anyway, those two that I just discussed were the first and second priorities.

Chair: Thank you very much, Ryan.

If I may have the committee's approval on this, I'd like to jump to new business because there are some that may change our work plan.

Jamie?

Mr. Fox: I'd like to ask that we have a briefing due to the new USMCA deal. I would like to hear from, as soon as possible, the dairy industry in PEI or the dairy producers on their concerns over this deal or what the deal means for PEI and the economy and so on. That would be one thing.

I'm really interested in this East Prince Agri-Environmental Association, what they have done year-to-date up in actually my area, and also the PEI soil quality organic matter because I'm hearing from farmers as a big area of my – is organic matter in the soil is a big concern to them.

Chair: I'll open the floor to discussion on either one.

Alan McIsaac.

Alan McIsaac: I'd like to hear on the USMCA as well, but I'd like to hear from the trade department. I mean, we weren't at the table. The dairy farmers weren't at the table. I don't even know if agriculture minister Lawrence was at the table. He is the point man for the province, but from the trade perspective, what actually were the discussions? How close were we, perhaps, to losing all of supply management? Because that's a concern.

We came out with it, I'd say, with a black eye out of CETA; we got a black eye out of TPP and a busted nose out of USMCA. We're still standing. We still have 90% of what we had, but we lost 10%. What happened at the trade table that we gave up

these amounts? And we might say: how do we save the other 90%? We have to look at it from both perspectives. How close was this thing to all going down?

But, the trade people are the ones who made these decisions and I know Lawrence has taken it on the chin and he is our point guy. But, I know from sitting at the minister's table with Lawrence at the FPT, federal-provincial-territorial ministers sat around the table, not once did I ever hear Lawrence MacAulay say anything negative towards supply management. He was one of the biggest boosters there. But, he did take a shot across the jaw, I guess, for what happened. But, you know what? He was not at the trade table, but I know from my experience in meetings I was with him, he fought for supply management and I'd love to talk to the trade people to find out exactly what took place, how close were – hopefully we weren't close to losing it all.

When I was chair of the milk marketing board in 1988-1989, there was talk of demise of supply management back then. That's 30 years ago. Lawrence has been in Ottawa for 30 years and we didn't lose it. Now I say he fought for us and I think he did, but it's still quite a kick in the head for the dairy farmers here; anybody who lost 10% of their business and they have no say in it really at all, except that we had the spokesman.

But, in PEI we have two of our MPs who are actually dairy farmers, know the system really well. I would be concerned if we didn't have them at the table what we might have had. If we had of had – what's his name, the guy from Quebec there that fell out with you guys there, that was death on supply management. How many – we need to have those spokesmen like Lawrence and Wayne at the table, but it's the trade guys that I would really like to hear from.

Ms. Casey: Maxime Bernier.

Alan McIsaac: Maxime Bernier, yeah. Mad Max or whatever, yeah.

But, I would really like to hear from them and I think we should be able to get something like that. We can have the dairy farmers in, fine. I think most of us know

what the story is there, but what actually happened to this?

And now, too, I'd like to find out do we now have peace with Europe so they're not going to come back at us? Do we have peace with the Pacific Rim countries so they're not going to come back and ask for more? Are we guaranteed now under USMCA we have peace in all of these areas and allow us to grow into it?

We have a fantastic bunch of dairy farmers on PEI. It's a very important industry to this province, but I think we need to hear from the trade people as to what really took place.

Chair: Jamie, to add to this discussion?

Mr. Fox: I never thought about that, but you're right, Alan.

I agree with that. Maybe we should go to the top with the trade people and who's at that table, whatever, and then work it downward. I've got no problem with that.

Chair: Thank you.

Peter Bevan-Baker.

Dr. Bevan-Baker: I agree. Absolutely, we need to talk about this in this committee.

The other two things that Jamie brought up, I also would love to hear the East Prince Agri-Environmental Association come in. We did actually deal with the PEI soil organic matter back in March, so I'm not sure if you want them to come back or whether you need more information or what.

Mr. Fox: Well, see and I was off the committee now and back on the committee so I don't know what – I haven't actually been following what was going on before so I know –

Chair: So perhaps –

Ms. Casey: (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: – this summer – what's that?

Ms. Casey: Maybe you could get the notes from (Indistinct)

Mr. Fox: Yeah, I know this summer I have heard from farmers in right from Hampton, Victoria, up into Breadalbane, Inkerman, Shamrock, right around that area about soil quality and organic matter concerns.

Chair: Jamie, perhaps you could review the Hansard from that (Indistinct) any if there's any other questions, bring it back to us.

Mr. Fox: Yeah, if you could send me something – yeah that would be great.

Chair: Okay, any other discussion on this?

So, it's the committee's consent that we have the clerk draft that letter and send it out to the people who were involved with the trade agreement?

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Clerk Assistant: Federal representatives?

Chair: Federal, yes.

Clerk Assistant: And the dairy producers?

Mr. Fox: Let's go with trade first and then fall back on dairy, but I think if I'm – would you agree, Alan, that I think that given the circumstances that should be our first priority right now?

Alan McIsaac: I think (Indistinct) heard and we're going to continue to hear from the dairy farmers and maybe we can have them both in. I don't know, but it's the trade people – we need to know what exactly took place there and the dairy guys, they took it on the chin but they weren't at the table so let's hear from the people who were at the table.

Chair: Okay, Ryan will draft that letter up and send it out. Okay?

Mr. Fox: Thank you.

Chair: Great.

Any other new business? Kathleen, you had something previous –

Ms. Casey: Yes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sure if you ask I'm sure you'll find unanimous consent to my earlier suggestion that this committee send a letter requesting that the appropriate committee in Nova Scotia hear from the group who was just before us, the PEI Fishermen's Association, and I did have a side conversation since I put this forward with Melanie Giffin, the scientist involved who did the presentation, and she said she would be willing to work with the clerk just to add a scientific paragraph to that letter and just ask them to hear the group that was before us.

Chair: The floor is open for discussion.

Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Yeah, I would agree with that.

I'm just wondering if that letter should be CCed to anybody maybe on the federal side. Would that pressure help? Or would that –

Chair: I just asked the clerk what typically, when we send out a letter similar, who it would be CCed to so –

Clerk Assistant: It depends on the letter involved, but I would think to a committee of the legislature in Nova Scotia it would go to the committee chair and CCed to the committee clerk, but it's this committee's discretion as to anyone else it wants to CC on that letter.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: What about CCed to New Brunswick to their committee?

Chair: Any discussion? Ryan?

Clerk Assistant: I might add too, just to clarify, would the letter suggest having the PEIFA or the Northern Pulp working group of which the PEIFA is a part? And that includes representatives from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Ms. Casey: I think, Mr. Clerk, that maybe consultation with the group just before us to see who would be the most appropriate group to appear before the Nova Scotia legislative committee, and if they agree that it's their working group versus the PEIFA, I would be in favour of whatever group they see most appropriate to appear.

Clerk Assistant: Sure.

Chair: Great, thanks, Kathleen.

James Aylward.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair.

Chair, please understand I'm not making a motion because I know I'm not a regular sitting member of this committee, but I'd like to make a suggestion, possibly, and I completely agree with Ms. Casey's suggestion with regards to reaching out to the committee from Nova Scotia and potentially New Brunswick as well.

But, my suggestion might be to do something completely different than I believe has ever been done before, and that would be to send a request to the committee in Nova Scotia requesting that they convene a meeting with the committee from Prince Edward Island, and possibly with a committee from New Brunswick, to show everyone, particularly the feds, that this is how serious of an issue it is that we have provincial standing committees convening together to address this dire situation.

I don't believe that that's ever happened before, but I think that that would show a very strong sign that this needs to be dealt with.

Chair: Kathleen Casey.

Ms. Casey: I don't disagree with what was just presented, but I think that is totally different from the letter that we are going to send. This is two situations, but I would prefer the letter to go separately from – it's a great suggestion, but it might be two different – it's two different issues.

Chair: I'll give the clerk an opportunity first just to give a little bit more insight on that procedure.

Clerk Assistant: Since we're from separate provincial legislatures, there wouldn't be a way for it to be a joint meeting of this committee and Nova Scotia's committee, New Brunswick's committee, but typically, committee meetings are open.

So, if it was Nova Scotia convening a meeting on this, the members of the PEI committee could attend, but wouldn't be able to sit and enjoy the same rights and privileges as a Nova Scotia committee in their legislature.

Chair: James Aylward.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Chair; and thank you, Ryan, for that as well.

The presenters here today made a very important point, that the clock is ticking, and it's clicking very, very fast. All due respect to the clerk, I think that we need to do something that's completely outside the realm of what's ever been done before, and to look at the possibility, whether it's mandated within PEI's Legislative Assembly or Nova Scotia's Legislative Assembly, but we need to show, in particular the feds, that this situation needs to be addressed, and that whether it's environment or whether it's DFO federally, the responsibility lies with them to do the environmental assessment.

Because if this goes forward – and we talked already about the livelihood of the fishing industry here on PEI and the spinoff from that, I mean – you can sit here and talk about any type of business on PEI, that if we lose our fishery, it would be affected. I mean, we need to think outside the box and we need to show the seriousness of this situation, and that's again why I'm putting that suggestion forward.

Chair: Thank you.

Alan McIsaac.

Mr. McIsaac: If the committees can't meet, Mr. Chair, is there any way we could ask that the chair of their committee come and meet before us and we explain it, or the chair of our committee asks to appear before the committee over there? Because it can go both ways from my understanding; maybe the committees have never met before. I don't think that's impossible; but if that fails, then maybe we can ask to appear before them through our Chair, or their chair come and appear to us, so we get this message across. I think it's very important.

New Brunswick hasn't formed their legislature yet, so we may have to give them a little time before we find out who's who over there; but in the interim, I think it is pretty important and that was expressed really well today, that maybe yourself as our chair appear there, or their chair, ask them to come and appear here as a suggestion.

Chair: I think we can always ask. We always have that right to ask.

Ms. Casey: Perfect, thanks.

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: Let's deal with the letter first, if we can. So let's agree that that letter goes out as soon as possible.

Chair: Okay, so I'm going to ask our clerk just to recite that back to us to make sure that we're clear on whom the letter's going to and what's included on it.

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Chair: Okay.

Clerk Assistant: Well, as I understand it so far, the letter would go to the equivalent Nova Scotia committee on fisheries, and that that committee would request that that committee hear from either the PEIFA or the entire working group on this issue, of which PEIFA is a part. I will consult with the PEIFA to see which would be better from their perspective, and then inform this committee before sending the letter or drafting the letter.

Ms. Casey: Sure. (Indistinct)

Chair: Okay. Kathleen.

Ms. Casey: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Also in that letter is a – in that letter of invitation would be a paragraph on the science, just a short paragraph; and Melanie Giffin, the scientist who was here today, said that she'd be happy to consult with you on just a couple of sentences, scientific sentences, that could be included in the letter to show the importance of the reason for the meeting.

Chair: Sure, okay.

Clerk Assistant: I can certainly take that in –

Ms. Casey: Thanks.

Clerk Assistant: – but I will say it’s ultimately – as the Chair communicates on behalf of the committee, so it’ll be up to the Chair to decide if that would –

Ms. Casey: Okay.

Clerk Assistant: – be acceptable.

Ms. Casey: That’s great. Thank you.

Chair: Great. Thank you very much.

Ms. Casey: Thank you.

Chair: Is everyone in agreement with that?

Ms. Casey: Yes.

Chair: Great. Okay, we’ll move that forward.

Ms. Casey: Thanks.

Chair: Any other new business?

Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: I’d like to make a motion to ask Northern Pulp, given the information that they provided us today, a motion to ask Northern Pulp to come back before the committee on areas of concern that we’ve raised or thought of.

Chair: Any other discussion on that? We’ll send that letter out again and ask them – they were in this spring but we can certainly ask them to come back again. All in agreement?

Okay, so is that it for new business?

Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: One more, going back on a suggestion – maybe a way may be to hold an information or a round-table discussion between representatives of the Province of New Brunswick and the Province of Nova Scotia on this issue with members of this committee. It’s outside the committee, but it would be a way of them meeting with us in

some kind of forum to have a round-table discussion on Northern Pulp and the effect.

Chair: Kathleen Casey.

Ms. Casey: I don’t disagree with the suggestion; however, I don’t think anybody in around this table other than a few fishermen have any expertise. So if you’re going to have a round table, I would suggest you take in another group because I don’t think we have the expertise around the table to discuss what’s going on. So, if you’re going to have a round table, I would suggest that other groups with the knowledge and the scientific base and who have been involved in the situation would also be included in that working group.

Chair: Colin LaVie.

Mr. LaVie: What is the round table going to do for us? What’s –

Chair: Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: It would make sure that the MLAs or the elected representatives of all three provinces have an understanding of the issue at hand.

Mr. LaVie: What happens if Nova Scotia doesn’t come aboard or New Brunswick doesn’t come aboard? Do we still go ahead with the round table?

Mr. Fox: We roast them.

Mr. LaVie: What?

Mr. Fox: We roast them.

That’s a good point, Colin.

Chair: Any other discussion?

Ryan?

Clerk Assistant: I’m sorry. Are you talking about elected representatives of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and which ones in particular?

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Clerk Assistant: Any MLA?

Mr. Fox: (Indistinct)

Clerk Assistant: Okay and I'm not sure what you mean by a round table with the way the committee works. Would they be coming here as witnesses to provide their provincial perspective?

Mr. Fox: I'm just wondering if there's some way we need to make sure that the MLAs in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and us – we understand it, that how important of an issue this is between all three provinces, right? So, we have an open discussion and it could be before the standing committee, but in more of a –

Chair: (Indistinct)

Ms. Casey: Take it under advisement.

Mr. Fox: Yeah.

Chair: I also believe that as MLAs, we're on this standing committee representing all MLAs too, so I think that might take (Indistinct) of that letter that Kathleen said earlier and I will take that under advisement and give you a further update.

Any other new business?

Mr. Fox: No.

Ms. Casey: Call for adjournment.

Chair: Just –

Ms. Casey: Oh, sorry.

Chair: Just before adjournment, sorry, I want to go back to – because we did jump ahead – we did talk about the work plan, now we need to just talk about priorities again because our priorities may have shifted. I just want to confirm what our priorities are to move forward because we had a lot on the plate prior to coming in here today and there was quite a bit added to it again.

So, priorities coming in here; the first priority was to buy local, encourage to buy local. The second was the Northern Pulp waste water treatment, and that involved other steps. So are we continuing with those as our first and second priority or is Northern Pulp now moved to the first?

Jamie Fox.

Mr. Fox: The first priority should be the USMCA deal and the trade, how that affects PEI. Northern Pulp would be number two.

Chair: Okay, any other discussion on that.

An Hon. Member: Agreed.

Chair: Is everyone in agreement on that?

Some Hon. Members: (Indistinct)

Chair: Thank you, guys, very much.

Ms. Casey: Motion for adjournment.

Chair: Thank you very much, Kathleen.

The Committee adjourned.