



**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF RETIRED PERSONS  
Nova Scotia Chapter**

5545 Stanley Place  
Halifax NS B3K2E8

Dear Premier Houston,

CARP NS is in support of recommendations intended to ensure more effective coordination of efforts to establish protected areas on Crown land with competing demands of industrial forestry harvesting, as conveyed to your office in the attached October 16, 2024 letter co-signed by representatives of some 18 Nova Scotian organizations.

In essence, these community-based recommendations call for a moratorium on forestry activity within areas of Crown land proposed for protection or otherwise recognized as having high conservation value and for the stoppage of clearcutting on Crown land – until such time as your government’s target of protecting 20% of Nova Scotia’s land and water mass by 2030 has been met. Acceptance and implementation of these recommendations is essential to the fulfilment of protection commitments set out in your government’s signature environmental legislation (EGCCRA, Section 10).

These recommendations are consistent with concerns previously registered by CARP NS regarding the ecologically degraded state of Nova Scotia’s forests, as contributed to in part by forestry practices on Crown lands that are out of step with recognized ecological principles but that nonetheless have been permitted under a succession of government administrations. Our view is that responsible Crown land management must demonstrate best practices, to earn credibility and trust and thereby enable effective promotion and encouragement of responsible forest stewardship across the province, on both public and private land.

Surely the time is long past due to recognize Nova Scotia’s public land as a highly-valued natural asset that must be managed in consideration of a wide-ranging ecological, cultural, social and economic values and objectives, including in reference to the following:

- biodiversity protection and provision of ecosystem services;
- recognition of Indigenous interests and rights;
- provision of opportunities for outdoor recreation, nature tourism and community uses; and
- sustainable resource development and use, including forestry.

Clearly, industrial forestry can no longer be considered as the presumptive primary use of our Crown lands. Instead, adoption of comprehensive land use planning approach, as called for in the amended purpose section of the Crown Land Act (as passed in the Spring, 2021), is needed to guide decisions about the future uses of these lands in order to meet the broad range of objectives that demand recognition and attention.

The longstanding, widely-known and still prevailing disconnect and consequent tension between the mandates of the departments of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) for environmental stewardship and sustainability and of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR) for resource development and extraction simply must be addressed head on. Corresponding challenges are highlighted in the examples cited in the referenced October 16<sup>th</sup> letter. The organizational structures of these two departments evolved incrementally over the past several decades and are now overlapping, competitive and in too-often conflicting. The pressing need is for the updating of government structures and related procedures to respond to 21<sup>st</sup> Century imperatives driven by climate change and biodiversity loss.



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The *Independent Review of Forestry Practices in Nova Scotia* (Lahey, 2018) emphasized that protecting and enhancing ecosystems should prevail as the overarching primary guidance for forestry practices on Crown land. In other words, decisions about where forestry activities can occur and how they are to be conducted should be guided by ecologically-based policies, plans and regulations. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts and intentions behind the Lahey recommendations and the acceptance of these same recommendations by government, our Crown lands continue to be managed with a resource-extraction, forestry-first mentality.

As an organization of retired persons, CARP NS's interests and activities are known to have been directed toward issues such as equitable access to health care, financial security and freedom from ageism. However, while these and related issues remain front of mind, there is growing recognition within our membership, and across Nova Scotia's society at large, that the ecological health and integrity of the environment, the earth's ultimate life-sustaining natural system, is becoming ever-more compromised and vulnerable. As a consequence, responsible stewardship of our environment, including of publicly-owned land, is of existential importance to everyone, including retirees and seniors.

Premier Houston, it is with these thoughts in mind that CARP NS urges you and your government to act on the recommendations advanced in the attached letter in order to ensure that best available remaining Crown-owned candidate areas for contributing to your government's 20% protection target are not lost to the competing demands of industrial forestry.

Further, CARP NS also urges you to recognize the fundamental need to review and update the roles and responsibilities currently assigned to DECC and DNRR so as to ensure government structures and processes are more fully attuned to 21<sup>st</sup> Century realities and priorities relating to environmental stewardship and sustainability. A commitment to comprehensive land use planning on public lands is essential to the fulfillment of government's commitment not only to protected area establishment and ecological forestry but also, and equally if not even more importantly, to the responsible stewardship of Nova Scotia's public lands.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Swan', is written over a horizontal line.

Ron Swan, Chair  
CARP NS