

Media Release

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## **Boat Harbour must close on schedule, say united fishermen No surprise that Northern Pulp won't meet deadline for new facility**

Fishermen's organizations say they are not surprised that Northern Pulp will miss the deadline for constructing a new treatment facility. "Everyone knew that Northern Pulp could not meet the deadline of January 30, 2020. To say that they will only miss the deadline by a few months seems wildly optimistic. It doesn't even reflect the advice of their own consultants," says Allan McCarthy of the Northumberland Fisherman's Association.

"It is the position of our working group, representing over 3000 fishermen from Nova Scotia, Pictou Landing First Nation, PEI and New Brunswick, that Boat Harbour must close on schedule. All parties in the NS legislature voted in favour of the Boat Harbour Act in 2015. We call on all parties to honour that Act now," McCarthy adds. "If you think tensions are high now, you don't want to think about what could happen if MLAs do not honour the Boat Harbour Act."

"Our community has lived with polluted air and water, broken promises and broken pipes for over 50 years," says Chief Andrea Paul of Pictou Landing First Nation. "Boat Harbour is closing on schedule and we expect nothing less. We have also made it clear that we oppose dumping treated pulp effluent anywhere in the Northumberland Strait."

Fishermen say people in the community are asking whether this new route is even a serious proposal. They don't know what to answer. With only 14 months left until Boat Harbour closes, Northern Pulp does not have answers to essential questions about their new proposal. Required reports and tests have not been completed.

The fishermen's working group last met with Northern Pulp on October 22, one day after the effluent pipe leak. Northern Pulp showed the group their proposed new route, running more than 10 km on land, with the effluent pipe travelling along the narrow Pictou causeway, through the Pictou Rotary, and passing through two watersheds, before entering the Northumberland Strait from Federal lands at Caribou, then extending 4 km underwater through rich fishing grounds.

"We pointed out that the two maps they provided showing the outflow location were not the same. They didn't know. We asked Northern Pulp whether there would be a "no fish" zone in the area of the pipe. They told us they did not know. We asked whether the on-land pipe would be buried or above ground. They told us they did not know. Apparently Northern Pulp was also not aware that the route passed through the Town of Pictou's watershed, and the Caribou watershed," says Ruth Inniss of the Maritime Fishermen's Union.

“We have seen that after mistakes are made, it can take a very long time to correct them. In the case of Boat Harbour, it has taken more than 50 years,” says McCarthy. “Harming an ecosystem has long term effects. This time, fishermen from Nova Scotia, Pictou Landing First Nation, PEI and New Brunswick, with the support of thousands of community members, have come together to prevent harm before it is done.”

The groups point out that Northern Pulp has known since May 2015 that they need a new effluent treatment facility for January 2020. “We have explained the harm caused by dumping treated effluent into the Strait, and asked the mill to consider alternative options,” says Bobby Jenkins of the PEI Fishermen’s Association. “The company’s stance continues to be ‘*No pipe = no mill.*’ Northern Pulp has not shown that their plan will not harm fish or fish habitat.”

The groups point out that treated effluent still contains contaminants that are harmful to marine environments, including solids and heavy metals. They say they have repeatedly asked Northern Pulp for detailed information about the composition of the effluent they plan to discharge, but Northern Pulp still has not provided that information.

“The fact that Northern Pulp can’t meet the deadline is definitely no surprise,” says Jill Graham-Scanlan of Friends of the Northumberland Strait (FONS). “The time crunch is so glaring that FONS had a short video on the subject ready to release this morning. We think our video, [Don’t pass the blame, Northern Pulp](#), tells a story that everyone should know about what has happened over the past 4 ½ years.”