

Environmental Liaison Committee (ELC) “A

Community Liaison Committee”

Sixth Interim Project Summary

**Submitted to Paper Excellence Canada, Northern Pulp Nova Scotia, and Ernst & Young Inc. acting as
court appointed Monitor of the CCAA proceedings August 30th, 2023**

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Executive Summary

The ELC continues to operate under the Court approved mandate (Terms of Reference) with direct reporting to Ernst & Young Inc. acting as Court appointed Monitor of Northern Pulp Nova Scotia and related entities (the “**Monitor**”) while Northern Pulp (“**NP**”) is undergoing CCAA proceedings. The Monitor will consider this report as they continue with their professional responsibilities under the CCAA.

The ELC’s role is to inform the Mill transformation by:

- Reaching out to stakeholders to ensure they have an opportunity to be heard.
- Holding meetings with Northern Pulp to provide feedback from stakeholders.
- Attending NP organized presentations to stakeholders to ensure dialogue is free flowing and recorded.

To date, the ELC has met with many community stakeholders and received presentations to better understand the views and perspectives on the Mill of various groups and individuals. While not all stakeholders have accepted the ELC’s invitations to meet, efforts continue to ensure that all stakeholders understand the invitation remains open and the ELC would welcome their views at their convenience.

The ELC continues to engage with the community and aligns its active listening and engagement sessions with those held as part of Northern Pulp’s community consultations for input into its Environmental Assessment Report. As well, the ELC has reached out directly to the public through newspaper print ads, postcard, and poster distribution throughout Pictou County.

Notably in this period, the ELC members also reached out directly with the most affected stakeholders by intercepting them at their places of work and at community events. This proactive outreach allowed ELC members to better gauge feelings and attitudes among those that were unlikely to provide input through established channels. These encounters were rich in feedback and demonstrated the ELC’s desire to reach out to all individuals to ensure their views are heard and reflected.

During the period covered by this report, Northern Pulp continued its extensive environmental studies related to air, light and water impacts of its transformation plan.

For comparability with previous reports, we have maintained the same format for this report, and it should be read in conjunction with the ELC’s February 2020 report (the “**First Report**”), the ELC’s October 2021 (the “**Second Report**”), the ELC’s April 2022 (the “**Third Report**”) the ELC’s October 2022 (the “**Fourth Report**”) and the ELC’s April 2023 (the “**Fifth Report**”).

ELC Terms of Reference (TOR)

The TOR defines the ELCs purpose as:

“To encourage that any transformation of the Northern Pulp mill (the “Mill”) be done in accordance with a manner that respects the environment (land, sea, and air) and promotes economic and social well being for its community partners, while respecting the unique cultural and traditional requirements of our Indigenous communities.”

The ELC's October 14, 2021, Report details the objectives of the ELC.

Summary of Sixth Report Activities

Throughout the report period, the ELC met and considered many subjects to provide input to Northern Pulp and the Monitor. The main ELC activities included reaching out directly to the public and hosting or participating with external groups;

ELC Activities since April, 2023

- **Chair and Vice chair engaged with fishers at the Toney River wharf and Caribou wharf** and spoke to over 20 fisherman and the responses/opinions overall were varied as was expected but great, respectful conversations were had. Postcards, ELC notepads were distributed.
- **ELC members met with a local company (wanted to remain anonymous)** and they discussed their current EA struggles.
- **ELC members met with Forest NS Executive Director Stephen Moore** to discuss their new campaign.
- **ELC hosted NS Liberal Party Leader, Zach Churchill.** Zach understands and realizes Nova Scotia needs a pulp mill in the province to utilize low grade fibre.
- **Attended Government Central Region Woodland Conference** – spoke with individuals about Mill concerns and prospects.
- **Attended Forestry Contractor annual meeting**, handed out more ELC notepads. We had an opportunity to speak with DNRR Minister Tory Rushton.
- **Attended Pugwash Forestry meeting** with locals concerned on environment issues/Fiona, handed out ELC cards/notebooks.

The ELC continued to reach out and seek presentations and information from groups and stakeholders that would be affected by the mill transformation. The following summarizes the current status of each major priority area as determined by the ELC. This Report provides updates of five subject areas: Mill Leadership, Environment, Forestry, First Nations, and Community.

1. Mill Leadership

Paper Excellence's transformation team led by JF Guillot has continued to meet with many Nova Scotians and has tried to engage with the Nova Scotia government during this period. The ELC remains frustrated with the Nova Scotia government and Northern Pulp, but they understand that the EA and CCAA process is a long and complicated one. The ELC is looking forward to Northern Pulp fully engaging with the general public as the EA work continues. Open direct communication and dialogue is the only path forward to guarantee success.

2. Environment

The technical analyses of some of the initial Environmental Assessment studies are ongoing. The ELC is discussing with Northern Pulp their plans to share further study findings as they are completed with the community and stakeholder groups.

3. Pictou Landing First Nation

The ELC continues to encourage engagement with Pictou Landing First Nation (“PLFN”) to meet and discuss issues and areas of common interest. The ELC will continue to find ways to foster dialogue with this vital community partner. The ELC understands and respects the PLFN position that its primary relationship is one of Nation to Nation with the Province of Nova Scotia. Two seats at the ELC table are reserved for the First Nation community.

4. Forestry

In this period, concerns of the forestry sector remain a high priority in the community. Generally, the situation for forestry has continued to deteriorate over the last three months.

The Province of Nova Scotia has introduced some programs to assist landowners and contractors in salvaging some of the windfall caused by hurricane Fiona last fall and the sector is appreciative of that support.

Northern Pulp had been considering allowing its onsite boiler to be used by a local utility to produce biomass electricity and consume much of the downed Fiona wood. Those efforts have not received sufficient government support to proceed at this time.

The ELC continues to hear that Nova Scotia’s forestry sector requires a market for low grade wood fibre.

5. Community

The primary role of the ELC is to ensure that community issues with Northern Pulp are heard and responded to by Northern Pulp wherever possible.

New efforts have included more direct outreach by the ELC to non-forestry related events and stakeholders and making ELC access and information available online and directly through easy to engage channels.

Future Work Plan of the ELC

- The ELC will continue to meet and reassess its performance and impact on NP’s activity and success in meeting its stated objectives.
- Increase distribution of postcards.
- Attend community events with a booth to encourage greater citizen dialogue.
- Provide direct independent community channel to receive public input on NP EA study releases and share those with NP.
- Attend all NP public and online open houses and provide summary reports.
- Invite local area teachers/educators to attend an ELC meeting.

Recommendations and Summary Comments

The ELC continues to believe that its members can provide a valuable service to both Northern Pulp and the broader community. The ELC are the “eyes and ears” for the community acting as a liaison between the community and Northern Pulp by providing them with valuable feedback they would not otherwise receive.

In addition to the observations detailed below, the ELC wants to also report that during this period we observed a decline in public confidence in the economic future of the Pictou county region as the inflationary pressures took hold, all forms of weather raged, tourism struggled to find a footing as the PEI ferry had performance issues, the effects of Fiona were everywhere and generally people were in a more pessimistic rather than optimistic mood.

Regarding the mill transformation, many individuals are still very reluctant to engage directly, or be seen engaging directly because the issue remains highly divisive for many people and families. The ELC’s efforts at more direct engagements were successful at revealing the extent of the willingness of people to be polite, forthright, and reasonable individually while also exposing reluctance to be seen as offside with their core cohort whether that is fishers or forestry workers or others. Sadly, there was a palpable sensitivity and reluctance to fully engage for fear of offending those who have the strongest views on either side.

In the period covered by this report, the ELC would like to make the following statements for consideration by Northern Pulp, the Monitor and the Province of Nova Scotia that may help guide their future choices and conduct.

- 1. The negative consequences of the mill uncertainty are worsening everyday.**
- 2. The public wants informed; responsible action taken by Government.**
- 3. Encourage urgent and best efforts at the mediation table by all parties and explore greater non-legal dialogue.**