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The Honourable Susan Holt, M.L.A.

Premier of the Province of New Brunswick

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Sent by email: premier@gnb.ca

September 2, 2025

Dear Premier,

When your government was elected, we hoped that you were going to be a leader that listened to your citizens and governed accordingly with compassion, understanding and inclusiveness. Unfortunately, this summer our Tantramar community has experienced nothing of the sort.

There is no question that our provincial government has treated our community with little or no respect as it relates to the Centre Village RIGS Natural Gas Plant Project. Once again, I can only hope that you might have a change of heart and recognise this mistake.

Since you have not replied to my previous correspondence, I felt this has left me with little recourse other than filing two complaints to independent oversight agencies. One with Ombud NB and the other with the Federal Competition Bureau. Both complaints focus on the unfair treatment and false and misleading public statements concerning this project.

Your interview on August 1, 2025, on CBC radio exemplifies and highlights my concerns.

You made the following statement:

'The one thing that we are encouraged by with this project is that it will be co-owned by a group of different First Nations, a group of different New Brunswick First Nations that have an ownership stake in this project, giving it not only Canadian but New Brunswick ownership... for First Nation communities in this province.... that are keen to play a role in the evolution of our energy systems, and that's something that we have been expanding pretty significantly over the last couple of years...'

In this statement you have not only falsely claimed that this project is Indigenously led, but you also implied it was a New Brunswick, Canadian owned endeavor as well. It is now public record that this statement was not true. Instead, the actual status of this project is that it is a NB Power investment, via contract, in an American natural gas and diesel facility. A proposed project centred in one of the most ecologically and culturally important corridors in our province and arguably the country, the Chignecto Isthmus.

NB Power and PROENERGY's efforts to try and label this project as "renewable" to make it sound "green" rings hollow. Instead, it replicates a classic strategy to "Greenwash" while manipulating our Indigenous community in the process.

Greenwashing has been used to exploit Indigenous rights by using vague language claiming sustainable products or services that lack connection to genuine Indigenous environmental stewardship and knowledge. This practice tends to mislead people and can distract from the real issue of Indigenous land and resource rights being ignored or violated in the name of profit.

It should also be made clear that it was our Indigenous community members that came forward and exposed this lie. During a forced public question and answer session on August 13, 2025, PROENERGY had to admit that there was no actual equity agreement secured with any First Nations group. Our Indigenous community's response was to immediately launch their own Mi'gmaq Rights Impact Assessment (MRIA) to protect their important sovereign rights.

What concerns me the most about this whole process is how shameful it is for our government to attempt to cast our communities against each other. This has been an obvious effort to fabricate a wedge between indigenous and nonindigenous members, and it is dangerous and just simply wrong. Whether intentional or not, it is antithetical to the purpose behind national Indigenous Reconciliation.

Since this public session, PROENERGY will no longer make any more statements until after the EIA process is complete. Yet they are still maintaining this lie on their webpage. (<https://rigsenergyatlantic.ca/community-page/>)

In addition, our MP Dominic LeBlanc has used this false partnership as reason to not get involved, and to date, your only public statements have positioned yourself in support of this project going forward without verifying key core facts.

The Competition Act states that it is against the law to advertise or market something in a way that is false or misleading. PROENERGY is marketing this project claiming it is indigenously led through an existing minority equity holder agreement. This clearly is a false representation of this project's present management structure.

New Brunswickers are going to be the consumers of this service if it is built. They would rightfully have expectation that their government will protect them from fraudulent business activities. The last thing we should expect to see is our government conspiring against its own citizenry to perpetuate fraud. In the case of PROENERGY you have publicly supported their false claims. Whether you either did so with full knowledge of them being false or you were misinformed, in either case, it does not lessen the severity of its wrongful impact. It is important that you explain to our community what happened. I believe you can understand how this type of action damages our trust in how our government is working to protect our interest from a business that exploits our community this way.

If I were to operate a business knowingly using this type of misleading and false public representation to gain support for my work, I most likely would be facing stiff penalties under this Act.

I hope you can understand that we want to see this government succeed for all its residents. Right now, many in our community are genuinely concerned about our own physical well being and all the things that we have worked hard to attain in life being lost should this project move forward. Yes, we are scared but strong, and a community that is willing to fight to protect our communal health and safety as I am sure you would do to protect your own.

Where is this government's openness and communication you have spoken about so eloquently when running for office and in the early months of your government? Where is the willingness to listen?

Right now, this community needs to start regaining public trust in its government. We are not an enemy that needs to be suppressed and conquered. What would go a long way in rebuilding our trust would be you publicly acknowledging and retracting the misleading and false claims you have made about this project. Specifically directing this apology to our regional Indigenous and Tantramar communities. And most importantly, canceling the contract with PROENERGY since it was based on a clearly deceptive and false management strategy.

One final point. Usually when a government tries to build such large-scale infrastructure in a location as sensitive as the Chignecto Isthmus there are lengthy discussions with all key professional stakeholders prior to any location determinations. This is done to avoid situations as to what has happened here.

I can't help but notice that nearly every professional group that is active in our area that has a project, program or interest in the Isthmus seems to be concerned about this development. This would include ecological, cultural, social, academic, health, environmental and most importantly indigenous groups, and associations. We urge you to read the 271 IAAC submissions to grasp the depth of knowledge, serious concerns and thoughts from the constituency of the region.

We need you to stop this project now! It is simply unwanted, detrimental to the Isthmus and health of those of us that live here, and it should not be forced on our community.

Sincerely,



Barry Rothfuss

Executive Director

Atlantic Wildlife Institute