

RE: The New Brunswick Power Corporation - RIGS

To the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Member of Parliament for the riding of
Beauséjour:

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Your words to the media one year ago:

"Protecting the Chignecto Isthmus is a priority for the federal government as this corridor plays a crucial role in the economy of our region. This project will create good jobs, protect key supply chains, and make communities on both sides of the New Brunswick-Nova Scotia border stronger and more resilient for generations to come."

"The isthmus is made up of natural infrastructure protecting local communities and highly sensitive ecosystems." (Paraphrased from the same speech)

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of International Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister and President of the King's Privy Council, and Member of Parliament for Beauséjour

March 20, 2025

1. The Isthmus of Chignecto is an integral part of the UNESCO designated Fundy Biosphere Reserve. *Biosphere reserves are areas designated by UNESCO to serve as models for demonstrating a balanced relationship between humans and the biosphere. One of the requirements for designation of a biosphere reserve is that the proposed area must contain a legally protected core area, such as a park or wilderness reserve. **Fundy National Park** serves as the core area for the **Fundy Biosphere Reserve**.*

The Fundy Biosphere Reserve includes an area of over 430,000 hectares of the upper Bay of Fundy coast, stretching from St. Martins to the Tantramar Marsh near Sackville, N.B. and inland to Moncton, N.B. The Bay of Fundy and its adjacent landscape forms a unique region in its geological formations, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, cultural heritage, as well as a variety of rural communities and urban areas.

Connecting Chignecto

By March 2026, Connecting Chignecto will deliver actionable data, strengthened partnerships, and a roadmap for maintaining and improving ecological connectivity across the isthmus. This is an essential step toward ensuring that wildlife can move freely, ecosystems can function naturally, and communities can adapt to a changing climate.

This work is possible thanks to funding support from **Parks Canada's National Program for Ecological Corridors and NB Wildlife Trust Fund** and through the collaboration of many organizations working together for the future of the Fundy region.

Ultimately, a well-connected Chignecto Isthmus strengthens both biodiversity and human resilience. By investing in forests, wetlands, and natural passageways, we are not only helping wildlife navigate a changing climate but also enhancing the quality of life, cultural heritage, and long-term sustainability for the communities that call this unique landscape home. The Chignecto Isthmus has always been a landscape of movement. With thoughtful, coordinated stewardship, it can remain that way for generations to come.

As we understand it, this must be a Federal responsibility to keep this precious ecosystem safe, given its ***significant designation***. As our Federal MP, we need you to take a position to protect the Isthmus against the RIGS proposal by the provincial power utility, just as you spoke about it one year ago.

2. Climate Change: Canada has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and aims for net-zero emissions by 2050. The country is also working on a 2035 target to further enhance its climate action efforts.

Does a Federal Minister not have an obligation to address a situation within his or her riding that directly violates Canada's climate obligations. It is not possible

to estimate the greenhouse gas emissions from this proposed plant by NB Power as it is unclear how much the plant will be in operation annually. However the contract is for 25 years so it can be safely concluded that it will significantly contribute to climate change. We now know that renewable sources of electricity with modern grid battery storage systems will meet the needs of NB Power at much less cost to ratepayers and will not cause massive environmental damage or exacerbate the climate crisis.

3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission: The Government of Canada recognizes that meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples aims to secure their free, prior, and informed consent when Canada proposes to take actions which impact them and their rights, including their lands, territories and resources.

The name Chignecto is a European adaptation of the Mi'kmaw term for a much larger region, Sikniqt or Sikniqtuk, the drainage place, that extends from the Cobequid highlands to the eastern edge of the Wolastoq (Saint John) River drainage area, and north to the Baie de Chaleur. The isthmus, at the centre of that district, is a resource-rich marshland traversed by rivers and portage routes that link the Bay of Fundy to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and further to major river routes leading to the interior of the continent. Sikniqt is a large district of Mi'kma'ki, with the isthmus at its centre.

The Peace and Friendship treaties of 1725-52 were meant to establish peaceful relations and protect Mi'kmaw rights in their territories. Today, the Mi'kmaq continue to assert their treaty rights, which include hunting, fishing and land use. These rights are recognized under Canadian law.

The New Brunswick utility violated these rights when they signed a contract with an American company to build a gas plant in the Isthmus *without* free, prior and informed consent of the Mi'kmaq people.

4. Finally, there is a groundswell of constituents in your riding who are learning about the benefits of renewable energy and who strongly object to the construction of a plant to burn fossil fuels from the US in your riding:

- There have been educational meetings in Sackville, Midgic, Cap Acadie, Dieppe, Memramcook, Shediac and Moncton.

- A coalition of 20 environmental organizations has been formed undertaking a number of initiatives opposing RIGS, one of which was being an intervenor at the recent provincial EUB Hearings.
- There have been meetings with Premier Holt and the Minister of Energy, Mr. René Legacy in Fredericton.
- There are regular submissions to local governments and the Municipal Council for Tantramar has now passed a motion stating their opposition to RIGS.
- A letter, dated February 7/26, from 130 New Brunswick academics was sent to the provincial government, outlining their scientific opposition to a gas power plant in New Brunswick.
- A thousand name petition was read by Elizabeth May on March 10th in the House of Commons.
- It was announced on March 18/26 on both Radio Canada and Le Téléjournal that 331 physicians and dentists from Georges Dumont Hospitalier Centre have voted unanimously to publicly oppose the gas plant.

We feel there is a strong argument to be made that there are Federal Government implications with this project as outlined in this message to you. We need you, as our MP, to speak up and assist us in stopping this proposal. We are running out of time as environmental damage has already taken place at the proposed site. WE DO NEED YOUR HELP.

Yours very truly,

Penny Mott

On behalf of Seniors for Climate - Tantramar