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**March 24, 2026**

*A Letter to all supporters of the Atlantic Wildlife Institute:*

Dear Friends,

Implementing a policy based on “**nonmaleficence**” (the ethical obligation to "do no harm" or to minimize harm), is a core responsibility for all levels of government in New Brunswick, particularly in the contexts of public health, environmental protection, and occupational safety.

This principle is embedded in provincial legislation and guiding ethical frameworks that should guarantee our citizenry that a cure should not be worse than the problem it is design to address.

### ***Fatal Remedies and Ethical Responsibility***

A “**fatal remedy**” refers to an intervention, policy, or management technique that, while intending to solve a problem, makes the situation worse or creates new, more severe problems.

NB Power’s proposed diesel/gas Peaker plant in the Chignecto Isthmus presents a classic example of a “**fatal remedy**” which clearly puts our provincial government at odds with the important mandated responsibility to their constituents.

### ***Scare Tactics***

The proponents of this project, (NB Power, the provincial government and PROENERGY), have led the public to believe that saving lives through the prevention of rolling blackouts during extreme weather events is one of the main reasons for this facility to be built. In doing so, they have implemented a style of huckstering that is a deceptive attempt to force a sceptical and concerned local community to submit to their desired outcome.

In multiple public statements, Mr. Brad Coady, NB Power’s VP and Chief Commercial Officer, along with other project proponent spokespersons have stated that without this project, "public safety is at risk. People will die". They have specifically referenced a 2014 Newfoundland blackout to re-enforce this point, where extended outages led to a death from carbon monoxide poisoning as residents used diesel generators in enclosed spaces.

This scare tactic has been presented as one of the lynchpins for all their actions to date.

Deaths attributed to rolling blackouts in Canada are extremely rare with the majority being caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. This occurs when residents use, or incorrectly place, alternative heating or cooking fuel sources inside unventilated spaces to stay warm during cold-weather outages. Ironically, this also highlights a separate misuse of fossil fuels that is clearly disconnected from NB Power’s justification for a diesel/gas turbine overkill solution.

Over the 30 years I have lived in New Brunswick there has not been one year that I can recall that a power outage has not occurred. Some lasting hours, others for days and weeks. New power plants are effective at preventing blackouts, but only those caused by grid overload (when demand exceeds supply, such as during a heatwave or cold snap) or if the existing power supply fails. However, if the issue is a physical failure (i.e. storm, equipment failure) in the delivery network, new generation provides little benefit.

Fearmongering and promoting a solution that does nothing to really address a problem but rather promotes a miracle cure in a reassuring way is intentionally misleading. It is an age-old tactic that industry has used for decades to justify their relevance, their profitability vs. commonsense.

### ***Bridge to Nowhere***

The role of natural gas as a "bridge fuel" in energy transition is increasingly criticized, with many experts and reports now labeling it a "bridge to nowhere" or a "detour," locking in long-term fossil fuel dependency and harmful emissions. While it was long promoted as a cleaner alternative to coal for reducing carbon dioxide during the shift to renewables, evidence from as recent as 2025 suggests it no longer functions as a credible, sustainable bridge.

Natural Gas harvesting and fracking technique processing releases hazardous air pollutants (benzene, formaldehyde) that cause cancer, respiratory illnesses, and skin conditions in nearby communities. Furthermore, methane contributes to tropospheric ozone formation, which is linked to hundreds of thousands of premature deaths.

### ***Real Science vs Industry Science***

The main proponents of this project are using short-sighted "industry science" and regulatory bypass to undermine public awareness and generate a false pseudo-scientific narrative as to what really is in the interest of the public good. Using extreme hypothetical outcomes as justification rather than reasonable analytical analysis.

The industry science being used in this project conflicts with virtually every independent scientific analysis. The misinformation has been staggering. Numerous studies in Canada and New Brunswick show that industry-hired experts, aiming to secure project approvals, will often produce biased reports that downplay impacts on environmental and public health concerns, which are then often accepted by regulators. This project is a classic example. Regulatory bypass initially occurred when neither NB Power nor the provincial government came to the community to discuss viable options prior to contracts being in place and has continued throughout the project. Overlooking defects and misinformation in the regulatory review processes, ignoring the falsification of the project equity partnership, expediting timelines because of fabricated contractual constraints, attempting to bypass financial accountability to the rate payers, and preventing a real comprehensive environmental assessment process to take place to name a few.

To date, our opposition to this project has garnered the support from literally hundreds of our province's leading professionals in the fields of academic sciences, health care providers, environmentalists, and social welfare organizations. Yet our government have obfuscated, brushed aside, or manipulated the system to not even allow open dialogue before the destruction began to make way for the Centre Village RIGS project here in Tantramar.

### ***Health Impact and "Do No Harm"***

What is at the core of this issue is NB Power's misdiagnosis of its own problem. Real research from environmental and health professionals strongly shows that their solution will adversely affect New Brunswicker's health through the exposure to unnecessary illnesses and premature deaths.

Let's be clear. Direct deaths attributed to rolling blackouts in Canada are extremely rare and are far more preventable even during blackout events. Conversely, studies strongly indicate that fossil fuel power generation significantly contributes to burden of illness and deaths caused by air pollution in hundreds-of-thousands of incidents in North America alone each year.

On a global scale, millions of illnesses and deaths occur yearly due to fossil fuel power generation emissions, notably NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The World Health Organization estimates that combined ambient and household air pollution (largely driven by burning fuels) is associated with 7 million premature deaths annually.

In Canada, Health Canada estimated that 14,600 to 15,300 premature deaths per year were associated with ambient air pollution exposure. Peaker plants, although operate less frequently by design, in the US are significant contributors to the 91,000 annual premature deaths. Approximately 33 million Americans live within 3 miles of a Peaker plant. Short-term exposure to their concentrated emissions during peak demand is linked to immediate respiratory and cardiovascular issues, including asthma and heart attacks.

In addition, a 2024 analysis indicated that continuing to rely on gas-fired Peaker plants adds millions in health costs annually due to these negative impacts, with broader studies suggesting PM<sub>2.5</sub> may be responsible for a significant portion of these deaths. One study estimated that more than 38,000 premature Canadian deaths in 2018 were attributable to particulate pollutants specifically from the oil and gas sector.

The historical record of Peaker plants to date, whether older or newer technology such as this new plant, even operating at a low-capacity factor of 7%, is well documented and determinative. They all pollute and do significant damage to both the environment where they are located and significantly threaten human quality of life, both in the short and long term.

Even with low annual capacity, fossil fuel burning Peaker plants typically operate during times of high energy demand, which often coincide with poor air dispersion conditions. This allows for concentrated localized emissions of pollutants, including fine particulate matter and NO<sub>x</sub>.

A study in 2021 carried out by Harvard University in collaboration with the University of Birmingham, the University of Leicester, and University College London on fossil fuel air pollution noted that even lower-operating-rate plants contribute to a significant global burden of disease, with fine particles from fossil fuels responsible for 1 in 5 deaths worldwide.

NB Power has frantically tried to rush this project implying that the need was so strong that they had to accelerate and overlook both established regulatory procedures and public accountability because our grid will collapse, bringing New Brunswick to its knees.

### ***Far Reaching Impact***

What is of even greater concern is the Tantramar diesel/gas plant is just the beginning of a much larger regional and national strategy. Currently, there are identical or similar initiatives being proposed throughout the Atlantic Region. PROENERGY initiatives for facilities are being considered not only in our neighbouring community of Scoudouc, but also in Prince Edward Island and 2 more in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. In addition, there is a push for an AI data centre in the Lorneville area of Saint John, NB which will not only require the development of a facility there, with its own fossil fuel generation, but will be demanding additional energy from NB Power's overall output.

All these proposed projects are not occurring in isolation. It is extremely concerning to know that the initial drafts of a new National Electricity Strategy, scheduled to be announced soon, may be strongly influencing NB Power's fatal remedy as a viable solution for all Atlantic Canada.

### ***Where Are Our Leaders?***

Who has been conspicuously absent in this important public discourse has been our local MP the Honorable Dominic LeBlanc. He has not yet voiced a position in support or against this project in the community he represents. Yet, he may have the biggest influence on whether all these projects move forward.

NB Power bypassed the consultation of the local and indigenous communities before finalization of site selection and the issuance of a contract to PROENERGY. They intentionally hid and undermined the important need for serious debate over any real environmental and health risks associated with this project. They were even warned by their own internal oversight committee to not skip this step.

To add insult to injury, rather than our federal and provincial government holding them accountable through the Environmental Impact Assessment process, they instead chose to truncate and deny any important comprehensive review. The NB Government then decided to immediately issue permits under the guise of water testing, which allowed NB Power to develop the main access road into the site, destroying huge tracts of ecologically sensitive habitat before they have even been given final approvals on the project.

***Where Does This Leave Us?***

Why are the well-being of communities and the local environment being discarded and ignored? Vulnerable populations which include children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those with pre-existing respiratory or cardiac conditions are now at extreme risk in my community without protection by our government, but rather because of its actions. How is this not violating the very principal our government is supposed to be guided by in their decisions, the ethical obligation to "do no harm" or to minimize harm?

For individuals like me who live with heart failure, or my wife who is a cancer survivor, the recommended buffer distance from a new diesel/gas Peaker plant to minimize health risks is generally considered to be at least 1-3 miles (1.5- 5kms) with greater distances up to 5-10 miles (8-16kms) being slightly safer. This radius encompasses Tantramar, parts of Strait Shores, Cap-Acadie, and Memramcook, into Cumberland County, NS.

Real science and true analysis leave me with no ground for compromise. This project simply cannot proceed. My health, my family's health and my community's health are too important. The Chignecto Isthmus and its wildlife populations, the viability and integrity of Atlantic Wildlife Institute and the many other environmental, social and health organizations that will be affected by this fossil fuel plant should not be the victims of this "**fatal remedy.**"

**Bad Science - Bad Math - Bad Governance.**

Sincerely,



Barry Rothfuss  
Executive Director

cc: NB Premier, Susan Holt; Minister of Energy, Rene Legacy; Minister of Health, John Dornan; Beausejour MP, Dominic LeBlanc; Tantramar MLA, Megan Mitton; Tantramar Mayor, Andrew Black; Tantramar CAO, Jennifer Borne; NB Power CEO, Lori Clark, Minister of Local Government Aaron Kennedy; Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Gilles LePage