SuNNS Press Release

April 14th 2020

SuNNS urges Minister of Environment to approve Regulations passed by the Municipality of the County of Colchester regarding the Protected French River Water Area

Sustainable Northern Nova Scotia (SuNNS) is calling on the Minister of Environment Gordon Wilson, to approve the Municipality of the County of Colchester Regulations, regarding the French River Protected Water Area. The Regulations were passed unanimously by Mayor Christine Blair and the Council, January 30, 2020. The approval of these Regulations will provide for the highest form of protection for the French River Watershed under the Environment Act.

SuNNS is also asking the Minister to honor the 1,000 signature petition, calling on the Provincial government to protect the French River Watershed and cancel the Warwick Mountain gold mining project. The petition was presented to the Nova Scotia legislature by Colchester North MLA Karen Casey in March 2019.

Background

The process of seeking Designation for the French River Watershed initially began two and a half years ago when local citizens raised concerns with the Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Committee. Citizens became aware that the sole source of water for the Village of Tatamagouche was at risk of contamination if an open-pit Cobequid Hills gold mine were to be developed. The citizens organized as the Sustainable Northern Nova Scotia Society and began to educate themselves while participating with the Municipality in seeking ways to protect this essential water source. The likelihood of gold mining polluting the French River Watershed was documented in the thorough research conducted by Dr. Ann Maest, a highly respected hydrogeologist. She noted Acid Mine Drainage and the disturbance of arsenic, antimony and mercury in local rock formations are common risks to local water sources in which gold mining activities occur. SuNNS members agreed gold mining in the Cobequid Hills would create a high risk of contamination to what is the sole source of water for one of Nova Scotia’s thriving villages. After extensive public consultations, including three well-attended public forums, the Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Committee and subsequently the Municipality of the County of Colchester also indicated the danger to the French River Watershed represented an unacceptable risk to the water supply. Short-term economic gain associated with gold mining was not seen to be sufficient to put a growing village, a robust tourist industry, and the water used by vital village infrastructure such as the hospital, seniors’ residence, regional high school and local businesses in harm’s way.

In Summary

Sustainable Northern Nova Scotia (SuNNS) is calling on the Minister of Environment to quickly approve the Regulations sought by the Municipality of the County of Colchester and area citizens. SuNNS members look forward to receiving the Minister’s announcement of the Approval under the Nova Scotia Environment Act. We are confident the Minister will act to protect the sole source of water for the Village of Tatamagouche.

Media Contacts

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