**REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**OF THE PSAC ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING**

**JUNE 8, 2018**

**PRESENT:** Roger Duffy **REGRETS:** Brian Oldford

Mike LeBlanc

Rhonda Doyle – LeBlanc

John Ivany, Co-Chairperson

Bill Kroeger, Co-Chairperson

Colleen Coffey, REVP – Atlantic

Nancy MacLean, Staff Advisor

1. **Welcome**

Brother Kroeger welcomed the committee members to their first face to face meeting. The committee has been receiving positive feedback on the work done thus far to promote and advocate on environmental issues in the Atlantic Region. The committee was created under the structure of the PSAC Atlantic Council during the 2017 PSAC Atlantic Regional Convention.

1. **World Oceans Day**

Today is World Oceans Day! World Oceans Day is a global celebration to celebrate our oceans. The United Nations declared June 8 to be World Oceans Day in 2002. It is a way to mobilize and unite the world’s population on a project for the sustainable management of the world’s oceans. The world’s oceans are a major source of food and medicines and a critical part of the biosphere. Grassroots action is desperately needed to protect the health of our oceans. This committee urges PSAC members to be responsible ocean advocates and to protect this incredible resource now and into the future. The seven oceans of water are as follows:

* Arctic Ocean
* North Atlantic Ocean
* South Atlantic Ocean
* Indian Ocean
* North Pacific Ocean
* South Pacific Ocean
* Southern (or Antarctic) Ocean

1. **Committee Mandate and 3 – Year Plan**

The Atlantic Council Environment Committee Mandate and 3 – year plan was developed during the February 2018 conference call meeting. The Office of the REVP is working on the development of the environment website for the Atlantic Region. The Mandate and 3 – year plan as well as the committee reports will be posted once the website is complete.

1. **Green Jobs Calendar**

The Green Jobs Calendar produced by the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax is filled with inspiring stories from people within Nova Scotia’s growing green economy. The mission of the Atlantic Council Environment Committee is *“to inspire awareness on environmental issues advance knowledge, work with and strengthen our Union and our communities now and into the future, through environmental outreach and advocacy”.* This committee feels that more work needs to be done to raise awareness within the Union movement. The Green Jobs Calendar is a way to education PSAC members on the great work that can be done to support communities and advocacy groups. Therefore, the Atlantic Council Environment Committee recommends that the Atlantic Council Education Committee makes the 2019 Green Jobs Calendar part of the participants’ kit at the PSAC Atlantic Union School scheduled for October, 2018. In addition, it is recommended that this committee have the ability to set up an information table at the Union School to provide information and to build awareness amongst the membership on the mandate and initiatives of the committee.

1. **Green Economy / Climate Action Networks**

Brother Ivany gave an up-date on the work that is being done by the Just Transition to a Low - Carbon Economy Network in New Brunswick. This network was formed following the Green Economy Network roundtable held in 2017. A similar group called the Climate Jobs Council was formed in Nova Scotia. The groups are working with grassroots community and social justice organizations to take action on climate change and to put forward a clear and targeted action plan to address the requirement and support of green jobs that will contribute to preserving or restoring the environment.

1. **Review of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act – Nova Scotia**

The Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA) is currently under review in Nova Scotia. The Ecology Action Centre has formed a committee who will being campaigning the government to ensure the goals are not just met but surpassed. The campaign goal is to ensure the Greenhouse Gas Goals (GHG) target for 2030 is at least 50% below the 1990 target. We need to ensure that a new GHG goal is included in the renewed Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act. We need to build support across individual and advocacy groups. The Committee has been meeting with Labour groups to raise awareness, deliver education and to obtain support. There will be a lobby of the Nova Scotia provincial MLAs this summer and there will an opportunity to address the issue publically during the Cap – and – Trade announcements scheduled for June, 2018.

1. **Alton Gas**

The Mi’kmaq Land and Water Protectors continue to campaign to defend the Shubenacadie River system. Alton Gas aims to destroy the river system by pumping brine back into the estuary for release in the river. The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour will be mobilizing the affiliate Unions to become more involved in the campaign. There needs to be more advocacy work done. Unions need to do more than just send financial donations. We would encourage PSAC members to support the campaign by stopping by the protest site or by sending letters of support. There is a Truck House located at the site. Truck Houses were first established in 1694. The intent was two – fold; to control trade with the Indians and to foster amicable relations among them. The Mi’kmaq territory reference to a “truck house” appeared in the *1752 Peace and Friendship Treaty*. The treaty establishes the rights of Indigenous people to the right to fish and hunt. In addition, the protestors are growing a garden. Supporters are encouraged to spend the day helping to finish the straw bale house that is being used for shelter and to help with the garden.

1. **Thirsty for Justice Campaign**

Unfortunately, the resolutions pertaining to the need for clean water in Indigenous Communities were not debated during the PSAC National Triennial Convention. However, all outstanding resolutions will be dealt with by the Alliance Executive Committee.

The PSAC will currently be moving into Phase II of the Thirsty for Justice Campaign. The PSAC is holding discussions with the Chiefs of Ontario and the Assembly of First Nations to select another Indigenous Community to highlight who has been affected by the water crisis. The Liberal Government have stated that they will put an end to the crisis within 5 years but not much has happened.

1. **Environmental Racism**

Environmental racism refers to the practice of disproportionately placing environmental hazards such as industrial sites or landfills near racialized communities. An investigation was held in Nova Scotia by the ENRICH Project that outlined the cause and effects of toxic industries situated near Mi’kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities. Environmental racism is subtle and systemic. The governments place landfills in these communities because these are the communities that don’t matter. This is a human rights issue. We would encourage all PSAC members to educate themselves on the topic of environmental racism and the impact on marginalized communities as this is not just happening in Nova Scotia.

1. **Muskrat Falls**

The Muskrat Falls project will have devastating impacts on the environment and the Indigenous Peoples in Labrador. The hydro-electric project on the Churchill River in Labrador will destroy the natural resources of land and water much of which the Indigenous people rely on for their diet source. As you know, the Land Protectors who originally protested the project were removed from the land in 2017. The project has proceeded and is nearing completion. International scientists have confirmed that the mercury from the water flood of the land will have great environmental impacts. This is another example of environmental racism. Given the progress of the project it is important that precautions be taken to mitigate the on-going impact on the environment and on the Indigenous people in Labrador. To obtain additional information please visit the following websites: [The Independent](http://theindependent.ca/2017/10/04/muskrat-falls-resistance-growing-across-canada/) , [APTN News](http://aptnnews.ca/2018/05/20/muskrat-falls-ecological-grief-resistance-became-a-profound-unstoppable-force-says-researcher/) , [Warrior Publications](https://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/tag/muskrat-falls-hydroelectric-project/) .

1. **Roundtable**

A roundtable was held to provide committee members with an opportunity to share any additional thoughts or to seek clarification.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Committee

Bill Kroeger and John Ivany

Co- Chairpersons

Atlantic Council Environment Committee