**REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**OF THE PSAC ATLANTIC COUNCIL**

**CONFERENCE CALL**

**FEBRUARY 19, 2018**

**PRESENT:** Roger Duffy **REGRETS:** Mike LeBlanc

Bill Kroeger Colleen Coffey

Brian Oldford

Rhonda Doyle – LeBlanc

John Ivany, Chairperson

Nancy MacLean, Staff Advisor

1. **Welcome**

Brother Ivany welcomed the committee members and thanked them for their work thus far to promote and advocate on environmental issues in the Atlantic Region. A resolution was passed to create an Environment Committee under the structure of the PSAC Atlantic Council during the 2017 PSAC Atlantic Regional Convention. This is the only Regional Environment Committee within the Public Service Alliance of Canada. There is a PSAC National Board of Directors Standing Committee on the Environment. All reports of this committee will be sent to the Standing Committee.

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

A copy of the 3 – Year Mandate and Plan for the Environment Committee was developed. A copy of the document will be posted on the Atlantic website and will be circulated to the Atlantic Membership. The Mandate and Plan will be reviewed at each meeting of the Environment Committee and feedback from the membership is welcomed.

1. **Green Jobs Calendar**

The Ecology Action Centre, Halifax, Nova Scotia, has produced its 2018 Green Jobs Calendar that is filled with inspiring stories from people within Nova Scotia’s growing green economy. The PSAC Atlantic Environment Committee supports green jobs. Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment. Green jobs help to improve energy, new materials efficiency and contributes to a more sustainable world. The PSAC Atlantic Environment Committee was inspired by the stories featured in the calendar which is a fundraiser for the Ecology Action Centre. Calendars can be ordered at <http://ecologyaction.ca/greenjobscalendar>.

1. **Green Economy Network Roundtables**

The Public Service Alliance of Canada has partnered with the Green Economy Network (GEN) to respond to the important issue of Climate change and the environment. The PSAC has actively help to organize and participate in GEN Roundtables in the Atlantic Region. We are pleased to report that GEN Roundtables have been held in each Atlantic province. The roundtables focused on the GEN’s “One Million Climate Jobs Campaign.” Additional information on the GEN is available at <http://greeneconomynet.ca>.

As a result of the roundtables, new committees or councils were formed by like-minded groups, individuals and organizations that will continue on environmental issues and advocacy. Members of the PSAC Atlantic are actively participating in each provincial committee or council. If any PSAC Atlantic member would like to participate please contact Sister MacLean who will provide you with additional information.

1. **Thirsty for Justice Campaign**

Brother Kroeger provided an up-date on the Thirsty for Justice Campaign. The campaigns focuses on the fact that more than 120 Indigenous communities in Canada are currently under boil-water advisories. The PSAC has been demanding that the government take action on the water crisis. Access to safe and clean drinking and bathing water is an absolute necessity. This is a basic human right. The Halifax Area Council 1 set up information tables last fall at the Dartmouth Farmers Market and during Labour Day to obtain signatures on letters to Minister Carolyn Bennett and Minister Jane Philpott. Also, there are a number of resolutions that will be debated at the PSAC National Triennial Convention scheduled for May, 2018. Additional information, videos, and posters can be obtained on the Thirsty for Justice Campaign website at [www.thirstyforjustice.ca](http://www.thirstyforjustice.ca).

1. **Alton Gas**

Alton Gas, a subsidiary of AltaGas, wants to flush out two giant natural gas storage caverns on the Shubenacadie River located in Colchesrer County, Nova Scotia. This project would take nearly 10,000 cubic metres of water daily from the Shubenacadie River system and pump it through a 12 km pipeline. The brine that is created will be pumped back in the estuary for release into the river system. The Mi’kmaq residents of nearly Indian Brook, members of the Sipekne’katik Bank, are opposed to the project. The Band says the river brining will destroy fish and other wildlife in the river system. Mi’kmaq Land and Water Protectors have been campaigning to defend the Shubenacadie River and surrounding area from the Alton Gas project. PSAC members are encouraged to support the campaign and the protestors. Additional information is available on the website at [www.stopaltongas.wordpress.com](http://www.stopaltongas.wordpress.com).

1. **Climate Change Campaign – Ecology Action Centre**

The Ecology Action Centre have put together a board, coalition-run campaign to establish ambitious Greenhouse Gas Targets for Nova Scotia in 2030. The coalition group met in December to discuss the campaign. The group brainstormed ideas, concerns and thoughts about the campaign. It is important that Nova Scotia not only meet but also exceed their goals for Greenhouse Gas Targets by 2030. Great discussion and vision was shared. Brother Kroeger and Sister MacLean participated in the meeting.

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

As previously mentioned, following the GEN roundtable in Nova Scotia a Climate Jobs Council was formed. The *Environmental Gas and Sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA)* is currently under review in Nova Scotia. As there is not be any public consultation meetings, the Climate Jobs Council decided to provide written submissions to Iain Rankin, Minister of Environment, Nova Scotia. The following proposals were outlined in the letter:

* Establishing ambitious climate change goals beyond 2020 for the reduction of greenhouse gases in Nova Scotia below the business-as-usual case to stimulate innovation and green economic growth.
* Update existing goals related to sectors of the economy that directly contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases, including but not limited to renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, ecosystem restoration, sustainable food systems and green building.
* Introduce a new goal that requires the measurement and verification of green jobs and green industry data in Nova Scotia. This could be achieved using metrics such as percentage of industry growth, wage bills, number of jobs, number of job created per million dollars invested, employment demographics and geographic distribution of green jobs.
* Include job creation targets for sectors of the green economy already represented by existing EGSPA goals, including but not limited to renewable energy, energy efficiency, green buildings, greenhouse gas emission reductions, sold waste diversion and local food.

We are pleased to report that the Atlantic Environment Committee supported this proposal and the PSAC – Atlantic was listed as a co-sponsor on the submission.

1. **Roundtable**

Brother Duffy spoke about how during the last Federal election the Liberal Government committed to improving several Federal Acts that improve the environment and the economy. It is important that as a Union we continue to make the government accountable for their promises.

There are a number of coalition groups in every Atlantic province who are looking for activists. The following is a list of some environmental and Labour groups: Ecology Action Centre (NS), Maritime Fisheries Union, Save Our Seasand Shores Coalition (PE), NL Common Front, Atlantic Sierra Club, Eco Justice (NS), Council of Canadians, Iron and Earth (NL), NL Fracking Awareness Network, the Newfoundland Labrador Environment Network, and Climate Watch NL (Memorial University - Grenfell University, NL).

Brother Duffy also mentioned that the Canadian Labour Congress may have an education program entitled “Environment, Economics and the Impact on the Labour Movement”. Sister MacLean will follow-up.

It was recommended that the PSAC Atlantic Newsletter be utilized to inform, promote and educate the membership on environmental matters.

**CLIMATE JUSTICE POEM**

*Climate Justice the only way out*

*Do it together, don’t leave Indigenous Peoples out*

*This isn’t a want, but an actual need*

*The government’s deaf*

*No matter how much we plead*

*But we are the leadership*

*Vision and all*

*Most effective united*

*Having a ball*

*Clear headed, committed*

*By and for folks on the ground*

*Here we go, PSAC*

*We’re green economy bound*

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Committee.

John Ivany, Chairperson

Atlantic Council Environment Committee