

Wording from Petition tabled in the House of Assembly by the MHA for Conception Bay South on June 16, 2020

The background for this petition is as follows:

The wilderness and ecological reserves advisory council (WERAC) has put forth a proposal (A home for Nature: Protected Areas Plan for the Island of Newfoundland) that has set out 26 Ecological Reserves and 6 Transitional Reserves. These areas include some that are populated by permanent residences and others that are populated by seasonal users and cabin owners. All of which are of great cultural and economic significance to all Newfoundlanders.

This proposal was prepared and put forward to Government without any consultation with residents, cabin owners, seasonal recreational users, or locals with intimate knowledge of the proposed sites. The impact that this proposal would have on the user's way of life, traditional or otherwise seems to have been completely disregarded.

The proposal was developed without the full constituted committee of 11 members and without reasonable consultations with the parties that would be most severely impacted by these critical changes to the land and backcountry areas that for some are home and for others are an integral part of their lives. As well this proposal was brought forward in the middle of a Global Pandemic when gatherings of any significance to discuss a course of action to fight this issue would be prohibited.

Failure to follow the established principles of openness and consultation renders this proposal at the very least illegal and brings into question the validity and transparency of the entire process.

Therefore, we Petition the Honourable Members of the House of Assembly as follows:

We the undersigned, urge the government of Newfoundland and Labrador, do not accept WERAC'S proposal (A Home for Nature: Protected Areas Plan) for the Island of Newfoundland) and encourage government to do proper consultation on any further plans. Furthermore it is respectfully requested that WERAC release all data, documentation, and all research used to select these proposed reserve and transitional areas.