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For immediate release:

Anti-Biomass Petition Tabled

Nearly 30,000 people signed an on-line petition asking Stephen McNeil to stop burning biomass to generate electricity. Not good enough, said the Premier - hard copy signatures are required. So, to prove their point, petitioner and concerned scientist Helga Guderley, PhD of Boutilier's Point and her peers in the Healthy Forest Coalition (<http://healthyforestcoalition.ca>), an informed group of concerned citizens and organizations, went out and got a thousand more hard signatures for Mr. McNeil. Their petition will be presented Tuesday, November 1st in the Provincial Legislature by Truro-Bible Hill MLA Lenore Zann. Clearly, Nova Scotia's forest policy is quickly becoming a hot election issue.

"Clear-cutting for electricity generation is the lowest end use of our forest resources," says Guderley. In response to the Coalition's advocacy and the overwhelming support for her petition, a few months ago the government eliminated the Point Tupper boiler's "must run" status. Small potatoes," observed noted Nova Scotian biologist David Patriquin, "this did little to solve the problem. It's now recognized that forest biomass burned to produce electricity releases much more CO₂ than coal and it can take 100 plus years for forest regrowth to re-capture it. Clearcutting only compounds the problem. Yet in Nova Scotia more biomass electricity plants are in the works and the clearcutting continues. This is not green energy."

For Guderley and the Healthy Forest Coalition, the biomass issue is but the tip of the iceberg. The McNeil government has now eliminated on Crown lands the need for FSC Certification, the gold standard for enlightened forestry. In Western Nova Scotia Crown lands, they have handed the keys to a consortium of mills and put former industry managers from the collapsing pulp industry in charge of the Department of Natural Resources. They have approved clearcuts right up to the Keji Park boundary. They have eviscerated the province's Natural Resource Strategy and its commitment to reduce clearcutting. And once again, in an effort to wipe out hardwoods and create a more marketable monoculture of softwoods, they have approved widespread spraying of our forests with glyphosates, which, according to the World Health Organization, are "likely carcinogens."

"This is not an action of a few eggheads and tree huggers," says Guderley. "The petition's signatories represent thousands of everyday Nova Scotians from all walks of life and every corner of the province, people willing to put their names on the dotted line, people outraged at the mismanagement of our precious resources. Many are from swing ridings and eager for a chance to make their views known."

For more information, please contact:

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