

DATE: _____

Legislative Building, Centre Block [706 Queen St], PO Box 6000, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5H1

Dear MLA _____,

SUBJECT: BAN ALL HERBICIDE SPRAYING OF OUR PUBLIC FORESTS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

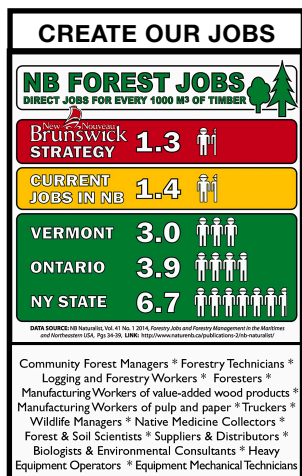
"Food sources are gone after spraying. Wildlife dies off due to this. It is a massive loss of food, diversity, cover and habitat. I've gone hunting and there is no life after they sprayed. Sprayed plantations are not forests." (Luc Albert, New Brunswick resident)

Our public forests are in trouble. Citizens of all ages who live in our rural communities, hunters and fishers, foragers, bird watchers, ATVers and snowmobilers, and hikers and campers have witnessed over the last several decades the loss of wildlife, fish, and birds in our forests. Clearcutting and herbicide spraying of our public forests destroys the forest habitat for our animals and fish. Heavy machinery disrupts the soil and fine roots during clearcutting. The loss of our mixed forests is directly related to the loss of wildlife, fish, and birds that need intact mixed forests.



New Brunswickers are making their voices heard about this habitat loss. During the 2020 provincial election, every political party in New Brunswick, with the exception of the PC party, promised elimination or a phase-out of glyphosate and other similar herbicide spraying on Crown forests, which is 50% of New Brunswick's forest land-base.

Forest birds are a key indicator that our forest habitat is in trouble; these birds are literally the *"canary in the coal mine"* for our New Brunswick forests. And we now have proof that action is needed as quickly as possible. In 2022, peer-reviewed research was published which looked at how our forests have changed over the last several decades using satellite data together with the loss of bird populations in our forests over the same period. Dr. Matthew Betts concluded in his research that intense forest management in New Brunswick in the period of 1985-2020, with extensive clearcutting and monoculture plantations, is driving habitat loss for the 54 most common forest bird species in our forests. **The net forest bird declines of the 54 most common species is 33-104 million birds over the last 35 years.**



Deer, of course, are the other *"canary in the coal mine"* for the health of our forests. Our deer population is now a quarter of what it was 30 years ago; **New Brunswick's deer population has plummeted from 270,000 to 74,000 over the past 3 decades.** Data comparing New Brunswick, Maine and Québec show that the deer harvest numbers in New Brunswick have decreased to 15% of 1985 levels, whereas numbers are up 300% in Québec and have remained stable in Maine. And to add insult to injury, the number of wintering deer yards were cut by half in 2012, and again in 2014. So deer yards in New Brunswick are actually 1/4 of what they once were.

Québec stopped forest herbicide spraying in 2001 because their MLAs listened to their citizens. While developing their forest strategy, Québec conducted 3 rounds of extensive public consultation between 1988 and 1997. For the last 2 decades, Quebec has successfully managed their public forests without herbicides, but instead managed them with manual silviculture. Their forest strategy is ecosystem-based, has an auction system (so does Maine), plants larger seedlings, and includes careful logging around advanced growth (CLAAG, or CPRS in French).



Both the economy and the environment benefit from this approach. Compared with New Brunswick, Quebec has a much higher job creation per 100,000 hectares of forests. The combination of manual silviculture and selective cutting will decrease and minimize the net amount of carbon dioxide loss when growing and harvesting. And healthy mixed forests also provide an important natural wildfire defence around our rural communities and city suburbs. Hardwood, broadleaf trees such as aspen and birch have a higher moisture content than softwood conifers so they burn at a lower intensity, providing greater protection of homes and businesses from catastrophic wildfires.

QUESTION 1: WILL YOU PUBLICLY SPEAK UP FOR A BAN ON ALL HERBICIDE SPRAYING ON OUR PUBLIC FORESTS and NB POWER CORRIDORS?

QUESTION 2: WILL YOU WORK HARD TO CONVINCE YOUR PARTY THAT THIS NEEDS TO BE A PRIORITY?

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I look forward to your answer to my two (2) questions.

Sincerely yours,

Signature: _____ Print name: _____

Address: _____