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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Halifax Waste-Resource Society Disappointed by Provincial Decision to Allow Reduced Operational Standards at Otter Lake Landfill

HALIFAX—Approval by the Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change Minister of the Halifax Regional Municipality–Mirror Nova Scotia application is a major disappointment to the Halifax Waste-Resource Society.

“The decision to effectively relax the standards that have safeguarded the Otter Lake Landfill’s operation since its inception in 1999 is short-sighted with potential negative consequences for one of the fastest growth areas within the Halifax Regional Municipality,” said Scott Guthrie, Chair of the Halifax Waste-Resource Society.

The areas that stand to be most affected are the communities within a five-mile radius of the Otter Lake Landfill – Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea and the Hubley area and environs.

The decision allows HRM, the owner of the landfill, and Mirror Nova Scotia Ltd., the operator, to deactivate the landfill’s front-end processor. The processor opens all residential garbage bags to check for and remove organic material, hazardous waste, and recyclables such as flyers and plastic containers before the remaining waste is sent for burial. The decision also permits deactivation of the waste stabilization facility, which stabilizes the organic matter retrieved from residential garbage, in order that it can be buried in the landfill without causing odour or attracting scavenger bird and rodent populations. These developments pave the way for all residential waste to go straight from the curb into the landfill.

The approval can be viewed as a betrayal to our communities on a couple of fronts. In 2013 we were assured by a resolution of support from the Progressive Conservative Caucus that was passed unanimously by the Nova Scotia Legislature. The resolution directed the Environment Minister of the day to “reject any requested changes to the Otter Lake Waste Management Facility operating permit that would remove the requirement of front-end separation and waste stabilization.”

Further, this stance flowed from the endorsement of HRM’s legal commitments to the affected communities that the caucus maintained must be upheld. The only reason HRM was able to locate the landfill at Otter Lake was because the communities in the vicinity were assured, through a legally binding agreement with HRM, that only “acceptable

waste” would enter the landfill. That acceptability was guaranteed by the operation of the front-end processor and waste stabilization facility.

“These changes to the operation of the landfill have not been approved by the communities or by the Halifax Waste-Resource Society, the group set up in 1999 to represent their interests in the landfill’s operations,” said Mr. Guthrie.

The Halifax Waste-Resource Society is currently reviewing the decision and will meet within the next couple of weeks to consider the options available and next steps.

For further information contact

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