

# CMC Chair’s February Update on Proposed Changes to the Otter Lake Landfill

An estimated 96.6 percent of HRM’s 713 survey respondents, situated within a five km. radius of the Otter Lake Landfill, expressed misgivings about the HRM-Mirror Nova Scotia Ltd. application to swap prevention for mitigation measures at the landfill.

Their concerns related to waste collection and vehicle traffic, litter, odours, groundwater and surface water quality, attraction of birds, and honouring the 1999 agreement between HRM and Otter Lake area residents that allowed the landfill to be sited in the community.

Results of the Nov.3-Dec.6, 2021 survey were submitted to the Department of Environment and Climate Change Jan.24 to complete the HRM-Mirror Nova Scotia application, and they have been posted online at [Halifax.ca/Otter Lake](https://Halifax.ca/OtterLake).

The CMC sincerely thanks all the survey participants, especially those within the critical 5 km radius of the landfill. The results echo the community’s reaction in 2013 when it overwhelmingly rejected another set of proposed changes to the landfill’s operation. We were tremendously heartened to note too, in this latest consultation, that 94.5 percent of the 1,192 HRM survey respondents, widely dispersed beyond the five km. radius, also raised concerns. We are grateful for the support.

However the current battle is not yet won.

## Help Us Help You

You can reinforce our message of opposition to the HRM-Mirror Nova Scotia application, by sending a brief email or letter *this month* to Tim Halman, the Nova Scotia Minister of Environment and Climate Change: ([minister.environment@novascotia.ca](mailto:minister.environment@novascotia.ca) / PO Box 422, NS B3J 2P8) and cc Premier Tim Houston ([premier@novascotia.ca](mailto:premier@novascotia.ca) / PO Box 726, Halifax, NS B3J 2T3).



The front-end processor, tagged by HRM-Mirror Nova Scotia for deactivation, diverted this newsprint from the landfill and precluded it from taking flight and littering the community

Ask the minister to use his discretion under 52 (2) of the *Environment Act*, to reject the HRM-Mirror Nova Scotia application on the grounds that the location of the landfill and the potential adverse effects from the proposed discontinuance of the front-end processor and waste stabilization facility (FEP/WSF) could make it unacceptable to those living and working in the vicinity of the landfill.

Explain, from your viewpoint, the potential adverse consequences you perceive and how they could affect you, your neighbourhood, home, or business. Lower property values? Loss of business? Health, environmental, or other issues?

## Recapping the Issue

HRM, the owner of the landfill, and Mirror Nova Scotia Ltd., the operator, are seeking permission from the Department of Environment and Climate Change to shutdown the FEP/WSF that have kept raw organic waste, as well as newsprint and hazardous materials from being buried there. At the present time, only organic material made inert via the waste stabilization facility is accepted for disposal with other residential garbage at Otter Lake.

HRM’s 1999 promise that only “acceptable waste,” guaranteed by the

FEP/WSF, would be buried at Otter Lake convinced area residents to consent to the landfill. The FEP/WSP ensured there would be no nasty odours, litter problems or large scavenger bird and rodent populations that afflict other landfills. HRM is now determined to renege on that contractual agreement.

As the only urban waste disposal operation in the country, Otter Lake’s standards have always exceeded Nova Scotia’s norms, written with rural-sited waste operations in mind. However, HRM and Mirror Nova Scotia now argue lower standards are good enough for Otter Lake and its surrounding communities, with a population on par with Truro and growing. The CMC believes it isn’t worth the risk to swap prevention for mitigation measures when we know the preventive measures of the FEP/WSP are working well.

## Keep Up-to-Date

Follow the CMC on Facebook for more news on the survey results, CMC’s request to fill in three blacked out sections in its copy of the 2015 HRM-Mirror operating agreement, and other developments in the Otter Lake Landfill issue



**Scott Guthrie**  
Chair, CMC Board of Directors