

## APES IS NOT A CONSERVATIVE CONSPIRACY

As Vice-President of the Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore, I have been asked by many of its members to comment on the claims, made by our constituency's NDP MLA, Jim Boudreau, that the resistance to open pen salmon feedlots on the Eastern Shore is nothing more than a Conservative effort to discredit the NDP.

A few years ago, just before the last provincial elections, Mr. Boudreau and Mr. Dexter came to our home for an unsolicited visit. They came to ask me not run for the Green Party, as I had done in the past, nor to work actively as the Deputy Leader of the Green Party of Nova Scotia. Their rationale for this request was that I needed to give the NDP a chance to govern, not to split the progressive vote. They would prove that they were an environmentally responsible party who would respect our forests, our coastal waters, and make Nova Scotia more sustainable. I was not entirely reassured by their answers to my various questions about their future performance once in power, but I, like many others, thought they deserved a chance to govern. I will not say how I voted in that election, but I did not actively work for the Green Party of Nova Scotia.

Before February, when we, in Sheet Harbour, learned of the Scottish subsidiary, Snow Island Salmon's application for licenses in three of our Bays and Harbours here on the Eastern Shore, open pen salmon farming was not on my radar screen. Some of my fishermen-neighbours' requested that I help them to organize and express their opposition to the imposition of an industry that would threaten their wild catch fishery. I carried out very intensive research online on the scientific assessment of the impact of open pen salmon feedlots on coastal waters. The consensus in the international scientific community is that open pen fin fish feedlots are very deleterious to most other creatures in the benthic environment.

I then called a friend whom I knew to be close to our MLA, Jim Boudreau, to ask her to speak to him about this. She did so and got back to me saying that he had said he was totally for it, it was environmentally safe, and would create jobs. A draft of an article I later wrote about salmon feed lots in which I stated the Mr. Boudreau was in favour of salmon feed lots but that if he actually lived here might have second thoughts about it started to circulate on the internet. This resulted in a phone call from Mr. Boudreau in which he threatened to sue me and suggested I had no right to speak on this issue because I was just a CFA who wanted to preserve her real estate value. Because I do not have the time or resources for law suits, I backed away from further discussion with Mr. Boudreau. Indeed, it appears that I am not the only member of his constituency that Mr. Boudreau has threatened to sue for arguing with him about his position on open pen salmon feedlots in our neighbourhood.

I did, however, ask for a meeting with Tom McInnis, President of the Sheet Harbour Chamber of Commerce. I discussed with him the research that I had read and encouraged him to do some of his own which I gather he did. I was subsequently invited to the Chamber of Commerce to address the membership on this issue and invited them to the founding meeting of the Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore.

I must say that at no time have I had the impression that the Chamber of Commerce is a Conservative collection of citizens. If Mr. McInnis agreed to serve as the President of the Association of the Eastern

Shore, it was at the urging of the membership of APES due to his ability to lead and to make the necessary connections for us to meet with politicians of all persuasion on this matter. I believe that the rules of the Chamber of Commerce, on which I now serve, are that political affiliation and aggression have no place in the room. I am able to say for certain that neither the board nor membership of APES is a group of people defined by any particular political stripe whatsoever.

However, it may well be the case, that many members of APES, many citizens of the Eastern Shore, as they face the possibility of a Boeing 747's volume of fish excrement and plumes of lethal chemicals for every cycle of 500,000 farmed salmon, contaminating their waters and shores, destroying their environment, their quality of life, and their extant industries, such as the lobster fishery and tourism, are somewhat jaundiced in regard to the NDP and their NDP MLA, Jim Boudreau, who refuses to defend their interests, however many of us have asked him to do so.

The Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore is not affiliated with any political party.

Marika Finlay

Vice-President, Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore