

# **A new EIA Reform Caucus created**

## **Report of the Environmental Assessment Workshop**

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It was shocking to all of us to realize the state of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The October 25 workshop scanned both the federal and provincial law and then took a close look at 5 case studies in the province. Many more assessments were referred to over the course of the day. Simply stated, all the assessments were different, and all the assessments were the same. The rules of the game changed, but the outcome remained. And the outcome was not positive for either the environment or the involved communities.



An outstanding revelation was that both nuclear power facilities and incinerators that import hazardous waste are screened out of the process, but the restoration of the Petitcodiac River is having to undergo it's third EIA. Something is badly skewed.

As a result, a new EIA reform caucus has been created. Some of the ideas that were generated for EIA reform include: improving Schedule A, guidelines for screening out, remove politics, independent process funded by the proponent, intervenor funding, precautionary principle, power of local communities to determine what developments are allowed through planning, an appeal process, published reports.

There was also discussion about the usefulness of the EIA. It was agreed that calling for an EIA is not a good strategy for stopping a project. It can be used to: 1) stall for time 2) get access to information about a project 3) to make sure the project is the best it can be through mitigation measures.

Participants called on the NBEN to organize another workshop to address how to stop a project and move your community out of the "Sacrifice Zone". Topics could include setting up a Waterkeeper program and community planning. A committee was

established to guide this workshop. All NBEN members are invited to join this committee or submit ideas for workshops.

It was a great workshop! Many thanks to the resource people: Louise Aucoin, Janice Harvey, Jerry Cook, Denis Belliveau, David Thompson and Daniel LeBlanc. Presentations will be posted on the NBEN website and available to all members. Great job one and all.

Presentations:

- Does EIA mean Environmentally Irresponsible Agriculture?, [Jerry Cook & Denis Belliveau](#)
- Un Outil parmi d'autres, [Louise Aucoin](#)
- Salmon Aquaculture Development, [Janice Harvey](#)