

*Conservation Council of New Brunswick News Release*

*For Immediate Release*

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## **Conservation Council wants Environment Minister to Wait for Federal EIA**

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick is calling on Environment and Local Government Minister Brenda Fowlie to await the outcome of the federal environmental assessment of the incinerator under construction in Belledune before she issues an approval to operate.

Federal Minister of Environment David Anderson ordered a federal environmental assessment of the incinerator project in Belledune on Friday May 21st following receipt of a technical analysis he had requested from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. In that analysis, Health Canada concluded that the data are too limited to state with absolute confidence that there are no human health concerns for transboundary communities across the Bay of Chaleur. The environmental assessment will be carried out by a federal review panel under the auspices of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Its mandate will be to examine potentially adverse transboundary environmental impacts on the Gaspé, First Nation reserves, and the waters of the Baie des Chaleurs.

“It is just plain common sense for Ms. Fowlie to await the recommendations of the federal review panel before issuing the incinerator an approval to operate,” said David Coon, Policy Director for the Conservation Council. “If Health Canada says they cannot say with absolute confidence that there are no human health concerns for communities that are more than 20 km away from Belledune, surely the same conclusion holds for local New Brunswick neighbourhoods within a few kilometres of the plant,” he said.

The Conservation Council and the Maritime Fishermen’s Union had jointly petitioned the federal Minister of Environment to consider a federal environmental review of the transboundary impacts of the project, along with petitions from environmental groups in the Chaleur region and First Nations from the area.

“When our own provincial government exempted the incinerator project from a full public environmental impact assessment, our only recourse was to petition the federal government in the hopes that a public environmental review might take place, albeit with a narrower scope” said Coon. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act permits the federal Minister to order an environmental review of transboundary environmental impacts in relation to adjacent provinces, First Nations reserve lands and federal waters such as the Baie des Chaleurs.