

June 18, 2020

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Wilkinson,

The *Save Little Harbour/Owls Head* Facebook group is a grassroots movement of over 3000 concerned citizens and scientists, passionate about saving the ecologically significant property known as Owls Head Provincial Park.

We are writing to thank you for your role in transferring the federal parcel of land (PID: 00555284) adjacent to Owls Head Provincial Park, Little Harbour, Nova Scotia, to Environment and Climate Change Canada. We appreciate your commitment to honour the best and highest use of these lands.

Owls Head is a biologically diverse property with coastal heathlands, salt marshes and bogs, a freshwater lake, estuaries, beaches, and a rugged coastline. As a 268-hectare coastal landscape on the Atlantic Flyway, Owls Head is an important habitat for native bird species and a refuge for migratory birds. It is bordered by offshore eelgrass beds and is home to several species of conservation concern, including a “globally rare” Broom Crowberry (*Corema conradii*) ecosystem. Scientists from Saint Mary’s University have been studying the plant communities of Owls Head for 15 years, and emphasize that it needs our protection.

Owls Head has a “Tier 1” (top priority) conservation rating based on extensive consultations with citizens, environmental organizations, industry representatives, and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs. Even a private real estate valuation commissioned by the prospective developer declared that the “highest and best use” for the property would be ‘conservation’ or ‘recreation’ (such as hiking and kayaking).

In March of 2019, the Nova Scotia government secretly removed Owls Head Provincial Park from the pending protection list of the 2013 *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan*, in order to sell it to an American developer. Despite the property’s 45-year history of protection, the government delisted the park without consulting with – or notifying – the public.

We are thrilled to hear that the federal land at Owls Head will be protected under the stewardship of the Canadian Wildlife Service, with their focus on migratory birds, species at risk, and habitat protection. We are grateful to Environment and Climate Change Canada for recognizing the importance of this representative coastal ecosystem. We want to thank you personally for the steps you are taking to protect this ecologically significant property. Now that the federal property has been transferred to Environment and Climate Change Canada, we look forward to that parcel receiving federal legal

protection in the near future. Could you please provide us with details for the designation process, as we are keen to participate? We look forward to hearing back from you with clarification on this point.

Sincerely,

Save Little Harbour/Owls Head Nova Scotia From Becoming Golf Courses