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Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia - premier@novascotia.ca

Your MLA – Find your MLA's contact details here:

<https://enstools.electionsnovascotia.ca/edinfo/>

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Executive Officer of HRM: Cathie.OToole@halifax.ca

Save Sandy Lake campaign – sandylakecampaign@gmail.com

I'm writing to you today to express my concern with the provincial Task Force on Housing's decision to fast-track planning for housing development at Sandy Lake. I disagree with this decision. The same area is part of a proposed expansion of Sandy Lake Regional Park, and is an Important Wildlife Corridor in the Halifax Green Network Plan, but those plans have not yet been implemented. The area is remarkably biodiverse and needs to stay wild to continue to be an outstanding area for nature conservation. We need to address the housing crisis, but it cannot be at the expense of the climate and biodiversity crises!

There is a wealth of information about the ecology of Sandy Lake, Sackville River, and the ecosystems that surround them. Sandy Lake is a vital lake ecosystem, and the land surrounding the lake hosts some of the last old-growth forests left in the Halifax Regional Municipality. These lands are also home to at least 16 Species at Risk, including Wild Atlantic Salmon that have been returned to Sandy Lake (thanks to years of work by the Sackville Rivers Association. HRM even commissioned a study to examine the area's ecological values, and HRM has committed to proposing an expanded boundary for Sandy Lake Regional Park based on ecological features. The decision by the Task Force is premature and is dismissive of this important work. This decision to put houses at Sandy Lake flies in the face of all of these values and processes.

Development in the area will cause us to lose the exceptional natural features that make this place a haven for people and wildlife. Developing this space is exactly the opposite of what we need from our government during a climate emergency and biodiversity crises.

I call on you to remove Sandy Lake from the "Special Planning Areas" list, and instead give the area the protection it deserves.

Thank you for your time, I will be watching this issue closely.