



## NEWS RELEASE

(For immediate release)

### **RIVERKEEPER SCORES IMPORTANT LEGAL VICTORY But Federal government refuses to share in cost of restoration**

**Moncton, November 10, 2007** — There was another twist in the 40-year old drive to save the Petitcodiac River on Friday, as Federal authorities cleared the way for the Provincial government to build a 280-meter bridge, but said the project does not meet criteria for funding.

In an affidavit filed yesterday with the Federal Court in Fredericton (in the context of Petitcodiac Riverkeeper’s court action), the Federal government stated that “Transport Canada and DFO have now completed their regulatory review processes under the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Fisheries Act, and have decided to issue their respective approval and authorization in relation to replacing the causeway with a 280-meter long bridge.”

According to Petitcodiac Riverkeeper Chairman, Michel Desjardins, the affidavit clearly signals that the Federal government will not use the regulatory process as a tactic to stall on the restoration project. The organization had expressed some concern last August that the Feds might throw a wrench into the process by not granting the necessary permits to the Province to carry out the work. With the affidavit filed yesterday, those concerns have evaporated.

According to Desjardins, the Province now has a green light to proceed. “In essence, this development means that all technical and legal hurdles have been cleared and the Province of New Brunswick can begin the restoration project anytime,” says Desjardins.

“But our victories seem to come with a sweet and sour taste to them recently,” he adds. Desjardins was referring to a letter sent by Lawrence Cannon, Federal Minister of Transportation, to Premier Graham. It states that the Province can move forward with the restoration project, but that the Petitcodiac river project is ineligible under the Building Canada Fund (an infrastructure fund), as it does not meet the requirement of the Program.

Despite a clear legal victory, Petitcodiac Riverkeeper is expressing disappointment and frustration with Ottawa’s stance on the funding issue. “I think it shows deep contempt for the communities in this watershed and the natural environment in general. The last thing the world needs right now are governments playing petty politics with our environment. Unfortunately, legally, we can’t force them to participate financially.”

This said, Petitcodiac Riverkeeper believes the restoration project will move ahead in the next few months anyway. According to the group, the Provincial government has little choice but to start the project and find alternative ways to secure funding. “Given the circumstances, it would not surprise me to see the Province sue the Federal government for its share of the cost. After all, they have been partners on this file since the very beginning, and are both equally responsible for this mess,” he stated.

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