



NEWS RELEASE
(For Immediate Release)

Province must release restoration project details
Provincial budget does not go far enough, says Riverkeeper

(Moncton, March 26, 2008) – The Provincial government tabled the 2008-2009 budget in the legislature last week, but Petitcodiac Riverkeeper is not satisfied with the progress of the Petitcodiac causeway file and plan to continue with its legal action.

“Unfortunately the budget falls short of our expectations,” said Petitcodiac Riverkeeper Tim Van Hinte. “Petitcodiac Riverkeeper was quite clear in our submission to the Province concerning the 2008-2009 Budget: preliminary work to open the causeway gates must begin without delay and that details of the restoration project must be released,” he added.

In July 2007, Petitcodiac Riverkeeper filed an application in Federal Court demanding that the Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans take all necessary measures to force the owner of the Petitcodiac causeway, the Province of New Brunswick, to allow for the unimpeded passage of fish in accordance with Article 20 of the Fisheries Act. In January 2008, Petitcodiac Riverkeeper temporarily suspended its legal action to allow the Province to release its 2008-2009 Budget and details of the restoration project.

“Our current legal action is not a lawsuit. It is a mandamus that simply asks the Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to exercise his powers under the Fisheries Act,” explains Van Hinte. “We decided in January to ask the Federal Court to suspend our application until July 17th, 2008, to

give the Province a fair chance to announce project details and specific funding in the Provincial Budget,” explains Van Hinte. “However, the Province chose to be vague, which does not bode well. So our current mandamus continues. In addition, we are exploring other legal options, including a full fledged lawsuit against the Province,” he added.

In a letter to Premier Shawn Graham and Finance Minister Victor Boudreau submitted in January 2008, Petitcodiac Riverkeeper urged the Provincial government to stand behind their commitment to remove the causeway with concrete action in the 2008-2009 Provincial Budget. The organization recommended that this year’s budget include:

- Specific financial commitments to begin preliminary design and construction activities;
- Clear project timelines for implementation including major milestones and deadlines for project activities; and
- Specific details related to the Petitcodiac River Trust Fund.

“If the Province does not announce specific start and finish dates, major milestones, and terms of reference for the project before July, we will file our brief,” said Van Hinte. “The federal government has lifted all regulatory impediments, the Environmental Impact Assessment has been approved, and the communities in our watershed support the project. What is the hold up? Do we have a project or not?” asks Van Hinte.

Petitcodiac Riverkeeper will be holding its Annual General Meeting tonight at the Empress Theatre in Moncton starting at 6:30pm.

-30-

INFORMATION:

Tim Van Hinte
Petitcodiac Riverkeeper
Tel. (506) 388-5337
Cell (506) 961-4676

P.O. Box 300, Moncton, NB E1C 8K9 Tel: (506) 388-5337 Fax: (506) 382-0786
www.petitcodiac.org

timvanhinte@petitcodiac.org
www.petitcodiac.org