

Nurse Practitioners Playing Key Healthcare Roles

When Parrsboro residents need medical care, many rely on Nurse Practitioner Alyson Pickard. From her Advocate Harbour clinic, she regularly provides primary care to hundreds of area patients who range in age from newborns to seniors, representing every life stage in the area.

"As a Nurse Practitioner or NP, I work as part of a healthcare team and have access to doctors, specialists and other professionals when I need them. But I love working independently too," says Pickard, who grew up in the area and loves that she can serve her community.

"I run my own operation helping patients everyday, ordering tests, writing prescriptions or whatever they need. Medicine is a learning job and it's never the same thing, always trying to solve a puzzle," adds Pickard. She began her healthcare career with a science degree and a nursing degree followed by several years' experience working as a nurse in the emergency department and intensive care unit at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre in Amherst, before earning her NP credentials in March 2024.

She enjoys her rewarding NP career that allows her to visit family regularly living in a beautiful place that she's always called home.

Bass River's NP Kristi Withrow, originally from Nova Scotia, returned to the

province and her family three years ago. She'd spent 21 years away nursing in Northern Ontario and she too very much enjoys the rewarding NP career that allows her time with Nova Scotia family and friends that she couldn't swing from a time-zone away.

"I looked to return home to Nova Scotia before NPs were regularly practicing here, but it just didn't work out. Now, there are more NP opportunities, and the role has become more recognized and regarded as a key member of the healthcare team."

She adds, "In my experience, NPs are especially important in rural areas, where often healthcare services can be more difficult to access."

Nurse Practitioners (NP) are nurses with advanced education and nursing experience that are licensed to prescribe medications, order and perform testing or medical procedures and more. The role is one of many healthcare professions currently in high demand in Nova Scotia. Paid upwards of \$110,000 annually, NPs work within clinic settings providing primary care to community populations and within hospitals and long-term care teams too.

A new advertising campaign is running across the province promoting healthcare careers with the slogan "Make Life Your Life's Work" aiming to highlight the job opportunities in the healthcare sector available within both urban and rural settings.

For more information about how to become a NP, see: <https://actionforhealth.novascotia.ca/your-lifes-work>



Pickard travelled to Central America volunteering as part of a medical mission caring for patients in Guatemala. Here she is taking a break with a new friend at the Guatemalan clinic. (Contributed)

Groups Demand Rejection of the Windy Ridge EA

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turbines in Guysborough County.

The Windy Ridge project is one of several massive wind turbine initiatives proposed for Nova Scotia to supply wind energy to hydrogen production facilities in Point Tupper. Plans are to use Nova Scotia wind and resources to split millions of litres of water for hydrogen, then convert hydrogen to ammonia, then ship it overseas, and then to convert ammonia back to energy for use in the petro-chemical industry. This process wastes up to 80% of the wind energy first collected through massive energy intensive and in-efficient processes.

Global hydrogen and energy experts, such as but not limited to, Michael Liebreicht and Paul Martin, agree that no wind energy should be exported until the Nova Scotia grid is free of coal and fossil fuels. Close to 50% of power on the NS grid currently comes from fossil fuels.

Nova Scotians want to do the right thing and support cleaning our grid of fossil fuels. Unfortunately greenwashing is confusing the issue as our government paves the way for wasteful projects such as Everwind Fuels Windy Ridge Wind Project that directly compete with renewable energy projects for our electrical grid.

Wind projects planned for the Nova Scotia grid are being bought and switched to export projects which slow us from reaching our climate and emission targets. Tim Houston's government and proponents of so-called 'green' hydrogen are greenwashing these industrial energy export schemes by using words in their marketing, such as; 'clean', 'sustainable', 'green', 'low-carbon', 'climate leader', 'carbon neutral' and 'net-zero'. Government and proponents use these words with no supporting evidence that meet any adequate or proper testing.

Recently passed Federal anti-greenwashing Bill C-59 makes it illegal to engage in these deceptive and misleading tactics. It needs to stop now.

Green Nova Scotia First, Protect Wentworth Valley and other groups argue the Windy Ridge project cannot be properly reviewed until improvements to the EA process promised by the Houston government are made. The decision for Windy Ridge was expected Thursday, July 25.

The Cumulative Impact of this project in the proposed location has been minimized in the EARD and not appropriately considered. There are 3 approved and one other proposed wind turbine projects near Windy Ridge. When com-

pleted these projects will result in the placement of 108 massive industrial turbines in a relatively small area.

The Project area is on **essential moose habitat** and a well known **moose concentration area**. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change must protect this habitat including wetlands and adjacent forest habitat consistent with the Province's commitments per the Nova Scotia Mainland Moose Recovery Plan. The Proponent fails to adequately identify how they will mitigate the risks that this project places on the endangered Nova Scotia Mainland moose.

The project EARD identifies **365 wetlands** within the project area, with 354 formally delineated. Of these, 11 have been determined to be wetlands of special significance. The project is expected to result in the loss (infill) of 72 acres of wetlands. Some of the wetlands in the assessment area are treed swamps, which are crucial ecosystems for biodiversity and carbon storage.

The project area lies at the heart of a **critical biodiversity corridor** between the Portapique River Wilderness Area and the Project Area Wilderness Area. The proponent has not demonstrated an ability to mitigate the harmful impacts on biodiversity, ecological connectivity, the Nova Scotia Mainland moose and their core habitat and corridor, as well as neighbouring parks and private land trust conservation properties.

Public interest organizations have long been calling for improvements to the Environmental Assessment Act and process. Nova Scotians, our water, forests, Species-at-Risk and wetlands deserve better EA's for climate change, biodiversity, cumulative impacts, diversity, equity, inclusion with independent review.

Instead, in the name of streamlining regulations for the hydrogen-ammonia industry, Premier Tim Houston's government paved the way for wind-hydrogen-ammonia-export developers as they greenwash their way to government approval.

In April 2023, Nova Scotia Legislature Sub-Committee questioned Minister Halman's decision to require only a class 1 EA for large hydrogen projects rather than a more appropriate class 2 EA undertaking.

Green Nova Scotia First, Protect Wentworth Valley and other organizations argue Nova Scotia needs a province-wide landscape level plan strategy. Without one, environmental assessments are flawed before they begin.

A province-wide landscape level plan is required to prop-

erly assess which areas are suitable for large wind energy projects and which areas need protection for land and water conservation, ecological connectivity, species-at-risk, flood mitigation, and watershed protection.

To approve the Windy Ridge Wind Power Project, Minister Halman must determine it will not have significant adverse environmental effects that cannot be mitigated. Protect Wentworth Valley and GNSF say proponent, Everwind Fuels, has failed to prove this and their environmental assessment registered documentation (EARD) does not fully address several key issues.

The groups also highlight several other gaps and misrepresentations in the EARD including the overwhelmingly negative public response to the project and the lack of transparency by Everwind Fuels during public engagement. For example, during their February 12, 2024 community presentation and Q&A session, the proponent refused to address any concerns related to using the community's resources for the project's purpose - hydrogen production for export.

The fact that Everwind Fuels refused to discuss the end use of their proposed wind project speaks volumes. If approved, this project will displace local wind initiatives that would contribute to the province's energy grid, instead of hydrogen and ammonia plants with no lasting benefits for Nova Scotians. This is just one of many instances where valuable wind energy is being

diverted to benefit large corporate interests rather than reducing the province's reliance on coal and fossil fuels.

The Windy Ridge Wind Power Project EARD claims the proponent supports the province's Clean Renewable Initiative by producing "certified green hydrogen and ammonia," but this one of many examples of greenwashing in the company's EARD and on their website. "In reality, this project will compete with other renewable energy projects needed to meet domestic targets for our prime wind resources. It poses significant risks to our environment and communities from the storage and transportation of hydrogen

and ammonia, including the very real risk of leaks," says Frame. We are also concerned that the proponent has identified that the province does not have sufficient grid or transportation infrastructure to support their mega projects and will be looking for subsidies and government handouts to fix their export scheme problems.

There are many reasons why the Minister should not approve this project, perhaps most significant, it will delay Nova Scotia from reaching our mandated climate and emission reduction goals.

About Green Nova Scotia: Green Nova Scotia First is a collective voice of citizens from six Nova Scotia counties who are concerned that the Federal and Provincial governments are

prioritizing the use of wind energy for hydrogen and ammonia exports over the decarbonization of our local energy grid. Supporting groups include Ecology Action Centre, Nature Nova Scotia, Protect Vaughan, Protect Guysborough and others. <https://www.greennovascotiafirst.ca/>

About Protect Wentworth Valley: Protect Wentworth Valley is a group of concerned citizens, permanent and local residents, and interested parties that are working to protect the natural beauty of Wentworth Valley from becoming home to industrial wind turbine development. <https://www.protectwentworthvalley.com/>

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