

REES' Pieces

Solving "Water Woes"

Things are "a happening". The doldrums of winter have passed and now we are rushing at full speed. Building contractors and all trades are at capacity in spite of an uncertain economy; farmers and field crop specialists are working from dawn to dusk.

Let's hope we have good growing weather. Hopefully, we will avoid the intense drought experienced last summer. Climate change is certainly causing us to do things differently, which if we are to adjust successfully, we need to stop and plan our approach.

Speaking of drought, each timer I drive through Lower Truro it has amazed me to often see line-ups of people waiting to fill their jugs at the water source on Hwy 236. The site is now closed and soon will be decommissioned. Citing safety concerns and concerns by property owners, the lease was not renewed, on what has been a popular source of good potable water for hundreds of area households.

When the closure was announced, the municipality assured residents, closure would not happen until an alternative water source was developed. In its wisdom Colchester partnered with Town of Truro to supply water from a new site in the Fundy Discovery Site.

Don't get me wrong. The previous and new source of good potable water is like a mandatory requirement for hundreds of home owners, but in reality, it is a short cited "BandAid" solution. Colchester is doing an admirable job at providing "free water" considering their hands are tied because of provincial regulations which mandate that whatever is below ground (oil, gold, coal, water, etc) is property of the province.

Particularly with water, it irks me to no end that commercial water bottlers, like Sparking Springs, Big 8 and others, have a captive monopoly in partnership with the province to source water, bottle it and then sell retail.

It's not that I am against bottled water being available at the supermarket, but rather my frustration those same bottlers obtain all the water they want or can haul with the consent of the provincial government by purchasing an annual \$200.00 permit.

That's correct. If you want to be successful, start a water bottling plant. The provincial government will encourage / ensure success by asking for \$200.00 annually for your entire feed-stock inventory. It is not fair rural residents, if they need a new well, must spend thousands of dollars to source potable water, when commercial bottlers get a free ride from municipalities, which have good water sources.

Who in government has close family connections to large water bottlers?

The sourcing of water (sewer fields updates too) is so problematic municipalities have been forced to develop financing programs whereby the cost of a well or new septic field is added to your tax bill, and becomes a lien on the property. If the public servants within the provincial government were permitted to think outside the box, or were challenged to do so, I believe an equitable process could be developed to provide a solution to a worrisome problem to rural residents facing a crisis of no water.

Colchester provides "FOR FREE" multi-millions of litres of water annually to several commercial bottlers in addition to filling water pipes to deliver water to residents connected to the municipal system. I've looked and studied the high volume users.

Here's my version of a template to solve "water woes" not only in Colchester, but provincially. If commercial bottlers regardless of where they sourced water, even their own or leased wells, were charged five cents per litre many province-wide problems would be solved.

If shared on 50/50 basis a royalty of 5 cents per litre from Colchester wells would generate approximately \$18-20-Million per year. The province could use their 50% share to provide a province-wide program to partially assist those whose wells have run dry, while the municipality would use its share on solving water woes internally, bettering programs, or reducing taxes.

A huge shout-out of approval and thank you to Colchester 4H leaders and club members for stepping forward to organize and run the 2026 Provincial Exhibition. From years of previous participation, they know what NSPE should deliver to the public.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Dear editor: Why Are Workers Not Allowed to Choose?

Canadians hear constantly about affordability, housing costs, inflation, and helping working families. Yet one issue rarely receives attention: why do workers have so little control over portions of their own compensation?

Many employers require participation in pension plans, benefit plans, and other programs that automatically deduct money from employees' earnings. While these programs may be valuable to some workers, they may not be the right choice for everyone.

What is often overlooked is that many families are struggling today.

For a worker trying to make a mortgage payment, buy groceries, pay down debt, support children, or build an emergency fund, an extra few hundred dollars per month could make a significant difference. Yet those workers are frequently told that their

money must instead be directed toward future benefits or retirement programs.

Many workers are also questioning whether the future value of those benefits will justify the sacrifices being made today. After decades of inflation, there is legitimate concern about how much purchasing power those future pension payments will actually provide when they eventually become available.

Consider a worker carrying significant debt while trying to support a family, make mortgage payments, and keep up with rising living costs. Every dollar directed toward debt repayment not only reduces the balance but also reduces the interest being charged month after month.

For that worker, using additional take-home pay to eliminate debt may provide a greater financial benefit than mandatory contributions to a pension plan that cannot be accessed for decades.

I am not arguing that pension plans or benefit plans should disappear. Those who value them should absolutely be free to participate.

However, I do question whether workers who are struggling with today's costs should be required to participate in order to sustain those programs. If a pension or benefit plan is valuable, workers should choose to join because they believe it serves their interests, not because participation is mandatory.

Workers who would rather use that money to reduce debt, pay a mortgage, support their families, build emergency savings, or pursue their own investment strategy should have the freedom to make that decision for themselves.

The issue is not whether pensions should exist. The issue is whether workers should be forced into them regardless of their own financial circumstances and priorities.

In a country that values

personal responsibility and individual freedom, perhaps it is time to ask whether workers deserve greater control over the money they earn.

Workers deserve a choice.

Sincerely,
Evan J. Hilden, NS

OP-ED

Etsy's planned fur ban is forcing Indigenous communities and Canadian artisans to look to new business platforms

By Doug Chiasson

A month has passed since I sent an open letter on behalf of the Fur Institute of Canada to Etsy, the popular e-commerce platform for small-scale artisans and creatives. In my letter, I urged Etsy to reconsider its ban on the sale of fur products. I have not heard anything in response—and as far as I know, neither have any other concerned parties, including the Yukon Legislative Assembly, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), and the FurTakers of America.

On Etsy's part, this shows an utter disregard for the artisans, craftspeople, and Indigenous communities who rely on selling fur products to earn a well-deserved and much-needed income based on an equally legitimate and real demand from Canadian consumers.

On April 2, Etsy announced that a revised animal product policy

would take effect in August. The policy would ban selling items containing "fur from animals killed primarily for their pelts, regardless of age or origin." In an email to sellers, Etsy described the move as part of "ongoing biodiversity efforts".

Seasoned observers of the fur trade knew that Etsy's new policy was aimed not at biodiversity, but at placating the anti-fur group harassing it. Many retailers, designers, and even governments have already folded in the face of such brazen intimidation. We saw this with BC's blanket ban on the mink industry, which left many farmers and their families devastated, as well as with the EU seal ban, which continues to harm Indigenous and coastal communities that depend on a legal, sustainable trade.

For the anti-fur lobby, e-commerce companies are the latest target.

Etsy's small-business owners and Indigenous artisans are especially vulnerable, as they make up the platform's niche market. Many of these sellers live in remote areas. Several are part of Indigenous communities whose economies are inextricably tied to the harvesting of wild furbearers. Ironically, many of these individuals are also on the front lines of conservation—playing a key role in protecting the very biodiversity that Etsy claims motivates it.

Consider what Etsy has in common with many retailers that have bowed to the anti-fur lobby, such as Fairmont Hotels, Condé Nast, and Canada Goose: its "animal product policy" is intentionally vague and self-serving.

For such a policy to sound convincing, it must appear to take wildlife conservation seriously. Etsy achieves this by citing the US Endangered Species Act and the Con-

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The Shoreline Journal

Here's where to find us:

BASS RIVER:

Bayside Pharmacy
Dominion Chair Factory Store

BIBLE HILL:

C.W. Fraser Pharmacy
MacQuarries Pharmacy
Kennedy's Deli - Ryland Ave

DEBERT:

Debert Mini-Mart

FIVE ISLANDS:

Masstown Market Five Islands

GLENHOLME:

Double "C" Truckstop

GREAT VILLAGE:

Wilson's Gas

MAITLAND:

Frieze & Roy General Store

MASSTOWN:

Masstown Market
MTM Retail Gas (Petro-Can)

MILLBROOK:

Super 8 Motel
Hampton Inn & Suites

NORTH RIVER:

Grant's Grocery

PARRSBORO:

CrossRoads Co-op
Ken's Grocery
Wright's Pharmasave

TRURO:

Atlantic Superstore
Best Western Glengarry
Holiday Inn
MacQuarrie's Pharmasave (Esplanade)
Rath Eastlink Comm Centre
Colchester East Hants Health Centre - Coffee Shop

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