



**SECOND REPORT
OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE
ON CLIMATE CHANGE
AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

Second Session
Sixty-first Legislative Assembly
of the
Province of New Brunswick

June 11, 2026

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. J. LeBlanc, Chair
Ms. Sodhi, Vice-Chair
Mr. M. LeBlanc
Ms. Vautour
Ms. Wilcott
Hon. Mr. Herron

Hon. Mr. LePage
Mr. Cullins
Ms. Conroy
Mr. Russell
Ms. Mitton

June 11, 2026

To The Honourable
The Legislative Assembly of
The Province of New Brunswick

Madam Speaker,

I have the pleasure to present herewith the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship.

The report is the result of your Committee's deliberations on a review of the content and operation of the *Clean Water Act* and its associated regulations and rules.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish to thank those individuals and organizations who appeared before the Committee or provided written submissions. In addition, I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the Committee for their contribution in carrying out our mandate.

Your Committee begs leave to make a further report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. J. LeBlanc, MLA
Chair

June 11, 2026

To The Honourable
The Legislative Assembly of
The Province of New Brunswick

Madam Speaker,

Your Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship begs leave to submit this, their Second Report of the session.

On February 18, 2026, the Committee met and agreed to invite stakeholders either to present or submit written briefs to the Committee to share their recommendations on improving the *Clean Water Act* (the “Act”) and associated regulations and rules. The Committee agreed that, after the completion of this process, it would report to the House with a summary of the issues raised and recommendations made by participants, along with its own recommendations.

Coinciding with the Committee’s work, the Government of New Brunswick announced its review of the same Act on October 6, 2025. The Department of Environment and Local Government (the Department) held public engagement sessions in October and November 2025, an exercise that was conducted independently of the Committee’s review of the *Clean Water Act*.

The *Clean Water Act*, enacted in 1989, provides the framework for protecting surface water, ground water, drinking water sources, and watersheds. It regulates activities that can alter or impact water, establishes permitting and compliance tools, and authorizes ministerial interventions when water quality or aquatic ecosystems are at risk.

The Committee received three written submissions and heard from nine organizations in person on May 5, 7 and 12, 2026, on how the Act should be modernized.

The Committee met again on June 9, 2026, to consider the input received during the consultation process and to formulate a report with recommendations to the House.

Anticipating that the government will take this report into account when drafting amendments to the Act for presentation to the House, the stakeholders’ recommendations are organized below by theme according to the Department’s review guide. Recommendations or key considerations that fell outside these themes are integrated into the stakeholders’ summaries or listed under “Other Recommendations.”

The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the individuals and organizations who appeared at the public hearings or provided written submissions.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick

The Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (“UMNB”) is an association that advocates on behalf of 60 local governments of varying sizes. It emphasized that local governments require transformational financial and technical support to mitigate the pressures put on their at-capacity, aging water and wastewater infrastructure from unprecedented growth and development and new and emerging contaminants brought on by climate change.

It urges the province to work in collaboration with local governments to analyze capacity, supply and needs to support evolving regulatory requirements, especially as populations and housing developments grow, and to work with the federal government to fund infrastructure improvements and corresponding qualified technical support proportional to the rate of housing development to ensure long-term sustainability. The lack of funding to correct this infrastructure deficit is a barrier to making the improvements needed to save residents from increased service fees and interrupted drinking water services.

Climate impacts, such as an increase in droughts and below-average snowpack and precipitation, are increasingly threatening public and private wellfields. UMNB recommends that local governments receive the necessary resources to establish and comply with the testing protocols of relevant jurisdictions using qualified, trained staff with flexibility built into the resource allocation system to accommodate the varying scale of wellfields in the province. They emphasized that local governments do not currently have the resources to properly protect wellfields, drinking water safety, and affordability for New Brunswickers in a way that honours conservation efforts.

East Coast Environmental Law

East Coast Environmental Law is a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental law reform and public education in Atlantic Canada. It focused on the need to enshrine a substantive right to clean water and healthy freshwater ecosystems in the Act with corresponding procedural rights and an express purpose and principles provision to guide the implementation of the Act and regulations for current and future generations.

The right to clean water should obligate the province to provide safe drinking water within its jurisdiction, permit the continued exercise of Indigenous rights and cultural practices related to water use, support a healthy fishery, and sustain natural ecological processes and biodiversity. The recommended procedural rights include rights to access information, participate in decision making, and seek recourse when the substantive right is infringed.

East Coast Environmental Law suggested that the province should formalize its commitment to public engagement by expanding the Land and Water Advisory Committee’s membership to include representation of Indigenous peoples and other non-governmental groups and mandating that its activities be public. Citizens should be able to request investigations of alleged violations of the Act, unless the request is frivolous or vexatious or the conduct complained of is unlikely to

cause harm to the environment or human health or wellbeing. Under a revised Act, New Brunswickers should have the right to initiate environmental protection actions in court to enforce the Act if the province fails to act on alleged violations, which could deter non-compliance and is a tool that exists in the federal and other provincial jurisdictions to improve accountability and access to justice.

J.D. Irving, Limited

J.D. Irving, Limited (“JDI”) is a forest products company representing approximately half of the sector in New Brunswick with additional operations in shipbuilding, retail, transportation, construction, and equipment.

As New Brunswick is the most forestry-dependent province in Canada, JDI emphasized that forestry policy effectively acts as economic growth policy for the province. JDI anticipates that any changes to the *Clean Water Act* will significantly affect the province’s economic growth strategy. In JDI’s view, no major changes are needed, as the Act in its current form allows industry to implement comprehensive approaches to managing environmental outcomes. According to JDI, the Canadian forest products sector experiences constrained access to fibre due to provincial policies (implementation of buffers, implementation of wildlife habitat, and implementation of protected areas) that inhibit reaching the sector’s full economic potential. It therefore called on regulators to ensure that the province adequately balances its conservation and industrial needs.

With regard to the permitting and authorization process, JDI asked regulators to consider applying compliance measures uniformly among industrial, agricultural, and private landowner operations.

In recognizing the importance of sustainable conservation and silviculture practices to protect the landscape, JDI recommended that the province include wetlands, watersheds, and wellfields as part of its conservation objective to increase protected land from 10 per cent to 15 per percent, provided there is no impact on the forest products sector.

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, New Brunswick Chapter

The New Brunswick Chapter of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (“CAPE NB”) is a nonpartisan network of physicians who advocate against environmental practices that harm human health, focusing on the health of vulnerable populations.

CAPE NB recommended that the Act be amended to establish a process and timeline for updating the *New Brunswick Drinking Water Quality Guidelines* whenever federal guidelines change. When federal protocols are updated, a process should be triggered in New Brunswick to review the science underlying the changes and determine monitoring feasibility in the province for the purpose of implementation. Provincial guidelines have lagged behind federal updates, which has resulted in, among other things, a gap in monitoring perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) exposures in certain areas of the province.

CAPE NB called for regulators to recognize environmental discrimination, which is the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on vulnerable people. This discrimination

is typically based on socioeconomic or physiological status: rural populations (users of private wells) are more susceptible to industrial disturbances affecting their water and are left without established governmental monitoring systems to remedy the issue; and children, seniors, and pregnant people are generally more sensitive to elevated toxins due to health sensitivities, as are Indigenous peoples in Canada, who experience a 26 times higher than average rate of waterborne illness. CAPE NB recommends that the Chief Medical Officer of Health be empowered to launch health inquiries when there is an obvious statistical cluster of health events as observed through the Department's water monitoring activities.

Conservation Council of New Brunswick

The Conservation Council of New Brunswick ("CCNB") is a charitable environmental nonprofit organization established in 1969. It promotes and advocates for a healthy, shared environment through research, education, and engagement with communities, industry, and government. CCNB recommends that the revision of the Act reflect current science, address future community needs, and that the province honour its conservation commitments despite growing industrial and commercial pressures. The Act should ultimately be grounded in prevention and long-term stewardship.

To streamline conservation efforts and reduce duplication and inefficiencies, they recommend that the province plan in the medium term to integrate New Brunswick's *Clean Environment Act*, *Clean Water Act*, and *Clean Air Act* into a single, modern Act, to fully implement the province's *Water Strategy, 2018-2028*, and to expand watershed governance.

The revised Act must consider water quantity as well as quality due to climate change and industrial impacts by choosing the correct protected areas in partnership with local governments and Indigenous Nations with available technologies, such as geospatial mapping. Much as water quantity was not considered in 1989, regulators should recognize that currently unforeseeable energy and technological shifts will emerge to challenge conservation efforts. As such, flexibility to deal with unknown threats to future human and ecosystem health should be built into the Act.

CCNB invited regulators to consider a paradigm shift when balancing conservation efforts with industrial demands. Healthy humans cannot exist without clean water. Since the economy requires humans, economic activities require healthy water. This outlook should be the lens with which regulators consider revisions of the Act and industrial practices.

Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik

Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik emphasized that the review of the *Clean Water Act* is an opportunity to modernize the province's approach to protecting New Brunswick's waters and ecosystems, and to recognize Indigenous rights relating to consultation and water use as prescribed by Peace and Friendship Treaties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In its view, the deterioration of waterways translates as a deterioration of Indigenous identity that requires, but is not limited to, the right to fish for food, harvest plants and medicines, access safe

and clean drinking water, navigate waterways, and maintain cultural and spiritual connections to water. It recommended that the Act enable the province to enter into co-governance agreements with Indigenous Nations and that the Department take every opportunity to foster sustained dialogue with them, from an advisory committee stage to permitting approvals, all with prior informed consent. A nation-to-nation approach in managing waterways will ensure that the revised Act's outcomes match its intended purposes.

Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik emphasized that the Act should support education, stewardship, and community engagement regarding watershed connectivity, ecosystem health, and community-based monitoring. The Department should give special attention to children's environmental stewardship, as they are the ones who will bear the consequences of the revised Act's outcomes.

In reviewing the Act, regulators should question presumed definitions and potential conflicts; they should consider built-in conflicts within departmental oversights, whereby a single department is responsible for both conservation and natural resource development, clean water and mining, green energy and nuclear waste. The foundational word "clean" should be defined in part as productive and bountiful.

The St. John River Society Inc.

The St. John River Society Inc. is a nonprofit, community-based watershed and river organization that aims to protect, enhance, and promote ecological health, cultural heritage, and the sustainable use of the Saint John River system. In its view, the Act should aim to protect public health, ecosystems, and communities for current and future generations. As part of its recommendation to strengthen wetland, watershed, and source-water protection, it called on the province to address commercial and other land-use impacts and improve enforcement with stronger tools and a polluter pays model.

It recommends closing regulatory gaps to mitigate measurable risks to drinking water and ecosystems affected by elevated nutrients and turbidity found in tributaries draining agricultural lands. Terms used in agricultural operations (e.g., grazing, tilling, seeding, land clearing, and draining modification) should be defined for the purpose of regulating such operations in the vicinity of source-water protection zones, wellfields, drinking water catchments, riparian buffers, and wetlands, as clear definitions will allow for fair and consistent regulation and enforcement. It also recommends larger buffer zones to reduce nutrient runoff and premature buffer erosion. In the forestry sector, the same measures are needed to ensure that industrial practices contribute to a sustainable system, in which the trees in riparian zones help prevent runoff from going into the water.

The Act should also be amended to require financial assurances for high-risk activities to ensure that restoration and remediation can be carried out if needed. The polluter pays principle requires producers of pollutants and waste to bear responsibility for the costs they impose on society. These fines and penalties should be directed to the province's Environmental Trust Fund for restoration, monitoring, and educational programming.

Hammond River Angling Association

The Hammond River Angling Association is a nonprofit watershed and conservation organization established to protect, restore and steward the Hammond River watershed through science, education, monitoring, restoration, and community engagement. It presented its working implementation tool titled “Variable Riparian Buffer Framework” that can be used to determine appropriate riparian buffer zones using a points system based on watercourse and wetland protection, water classification, source-water protection, cumulative effects, climate adaptation, Indigenous knowledge, public transparency, and landowner stewardship.

Under the Act, buffer zones currently extend 30 metres from watercourses and wetlands. The Association recommends replacing the one-size-fits-all model with a structured, risk-based system designed to reflect real watershed conditions. Under this model, all regulated watercourses would begin with a standardized minimum buffer and from there, the required buffer would be adjusted based on a weighted combination of environmental sensitivity, disturbance intensity, watershed vulnerability, and the relative environmental significance of long-term climate and cumulative risk factors. The end score would then place the site within a defined buffer category range, creating a final buffer requirement that is directly tied to measured risk instead of applied uniformly across all landscapes.

The Association recommends that the final approved framework include five specific implementation supports: the framework should be co-developed with Indigenous Nations and interdisciplinary stakeholders, be accompanied by standardized training and certification opportunities, use pre-mapped riparian sensitive layers to make the framework predictable, be uploaded to a Public Water Information Registry showing Watercourse and Wetland Alteration approvals, and be incentivized using conservation easements, tax recognition, and stewardship agreements. It also recommends that the framework be used to provide information to local governments to guide them in their planning decisions and that it be used within the wetlands permitting process.

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, New Brunswick Chapter

The New Brunswick Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) has been active in the province since 2004 as a branch of a national charity dedicated to the effective long-term protection of ecologically and culturally significant land, freshwater, and ocean areas. It recommends that the revised Act contain a comprehensive climate-resilient watershed-based framework, where water policy governance includes land protection in the whole of the watershed.

CPAWS suggests aligning the *Clean Water Act* with the *Protected Natural Areas Act* by recognizing that the most critical portions of drinking water watersheds and wellfields, such as headwater forests, wetlands, and ground water recharge zones, serve dual roles as both water infrastructure and ecological assets. Today, the protected drinking water watersheds in New Brunswick are not formally integrated into the province’s protected areas framework, which has created a policy gap between water protection and biodiversity conservation. The Act should address the need to conserve the forest and wetlands that produce and protect the quality and quantity of the water.

CPAWS suggests that watersheds should be organized in a tiered model, where the first tier is a core protection zone for areas as designated under the *Protected Natural Areas Act* and managed for ecological protection; the second tier is a managed buffer zone with surrounding areas remaining subject the Act with strengthened controls; and the third tier encapsulates broader watershed planning areas governed through integrated planning frameworks.

CPAWS emphasizes the need to strengthen ecological safeguards for wetlands, peatlands, headwaters, and coastal habitats. Specifically, the province’s peatlands, which are recognized globally as significant carbon sequestration areas, are insufficiently protected under the current “no net loss of function” approach. It urges the Department to view peatlands as irreplaceable carbon reserves and biodiversity strongholds and recommends removing the exemption of peatlands projects from the *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Regulation* and replacing “no net loss of function” with a “no net loss of area” standard for provincially significant wetlands. Modernizing the Act without addressing peatland extraction on Crown lands would leave the single largest source of wetland loss in New Brunswick unregulated at the watershed level.

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

The Committee received three written submissions, all emphasizing that the *Clean Water Act* requires modernization to address the protection and conservation of water within new climate realities.

Addressing the knowledge deficit and the lack of accessible data emerged as key priorities. It was therefore recommended that the province address its resourcing gap and establish a detailed inventory of current freshwater habitats, such as wetlands, floodplains, and river headwaters to support the operation of the Act. Data should be fully accessible to the public, with a roadmap or online guide that offers a step-by-step walk-through of information to find the guidelines and related Act, regulation, or policy that applies to every water-related scenario. The lack of clear communication thwarts compliance efforts by making it difficult for people and industry to act responsibly around water.

The Act should explicitly state a goal of achieving no net loss of wetlands by requiring the application of a wetland mitigation hierarchy that prioritizes avoidance, then minimization, and finally compensation for unavoidable impacts at a minimum of twice the area lost. All temporary wetland alterations should be followed by mandatory on-site restoration to return the wetland to its original structure and function, and the wetland mitigation hierarchy is only activated in cases where full on-site restoration is not possible. The revised Act should also differentiate managed wetlands from other regulated wetlands and explicitly recognize a clear regulatory pathway that enables necessary conservation management activities to occur without triggering full alteration permitting requirements while maintaining appropriate oversight.

The *Clean Water Act* and associated Acts and regulations must be updated with scientifically sound terms and concepts. For example, the *Water Quality Regulation* under the *Clean Environment Act* references discharge points, which is an outdated concept that prioritizes the “end of pipe concept”

instead of the health of the receiving environment. Another example requiring revision is the *Water Classification Regulation* under the *Clean Water Act*, which references waters that are “naturally occurring”. This language is, according to one submission, biologically and legally indefensible as used. Ambiguities in the regulatory language must be clarified. Contributors also recommended expanding the definition of “provincially significant wetlands” in the *New Brunswick Wetlands Conservation Policy* to include small wetlands, as their cumulative loss diminishes the substantial ecological and hydrological benefits that they provide. The policy should be included in the Act itself, with reference to the different types of wetlands found in the province and with mandated enhanced protection to reflect their importance.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the key considerations contained within the above summaries, what follows are the key considerations proposed by stakeholders on the Committee’s review on the content and operation of the *Clean Water Act* and its associated regulations and rules.

1. Public Access to Information

- a. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (the “Minister”) to maintain a free standardized and accessible online public register that updates all water-related information pertaining to the Act and its regulations, including but not limited to applications for a registration, permit, or approval; approved registrations and permits, and any associated terms and conditions; enforcement actions such as issuances of administrative penalties, records of convictions, and orders; and data on water quality and quantity monitoring, including industrial consumption and the supply for well flows.
- b. THAT the *Clean Water Act* and its regulations align with other provincial environmental strategies and policies, such as the *Biodiversity Strategy* and the *Coastal Areas Protection Policy*.
- c. THAT the Department provide plain-language summaries and interpretation of the raw data available on the public register.
- d. THAT the Department standardize drinking water and wastewater infrastructure planning training for local government officials and staff.
- e. THAT the Department provide improved notification of proposed projects and regulatory changes to foster opportunities for public engagement.
- f. THAT the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health expand its public health advisory communications mandate to include PFAS and any other unauthorized contamination of drinking water to affected local governments and the public in plain language, with

information on which types of exceedance occurred, what remedial action is occurring, and how citizens affected should protect themselves and for how long.

2. Permits and Approvals

- a. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to update the definition of “alteration” to include cumulative effects management and thresholds on watersheds within its alteration permitting process, as well as robust habitat assessments.
- b. THAT the Department establish a multidisciplinary review committee to refine and standardize a variable riparian buffer framework.
- c. THAT maximum concentrations of contaminants be designated and established by regulation governing the issuance of permits.
- d. THAT additional restrictions be imposed on new industrial and development proposals with intense water needs to ensure that water supplies for citizens are prioritized.

3. Monitoring, Data, and Reporting

- a. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to require the Minister to establish, in collaboration with Indigenous Nations, the Minister of Health, and the public, separate drinking water quality and surface water quality objectives that are watershed specific and include environmental flow objectives.
- b. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to require that an annual report be tabled in the Legislative Assembly containing data and accessible analysis on the state of New Brunswick’s surface water and ground water quality, quantity, temperature trends, and climate risks, including but not limited to the extent to which the Act’s water quality objectives have been met, water quality trends, information on water sources’ quality and quantity issues including industrial impacts, priorities for addressing such issues for each area of the province, and include mandatory documentation with timely follow-up where outcomes differ from expectations.
- c. THAT the *Clean Water Act* require local governments to monitor their wastewater effluent for PFAS.
- d. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to align with federal legislation to avoid regulatory gaps or conflicting requirements, purposes, and goals to account for aquatic ecosystems crossing administrative boundaries.
- e. THAT the Department aggregate its monitoring of PFAS according to Health Canada’s most recent guidelines.
- f. THAT the Department enhance the protection and testing of private water wells and strengthen the *Water Well Regulation* and *Potable Water Regulation*.

- g. THAT the Department improve its monitoring, data standards, and scientific integrity by mandating full transparency in proponent reporting for new activity proposals, including submission of raw data, methodologies, and independent verification.
- h. THAT the Department pursue a partnership with the Geological Survey of Canada to develop ground water availability mapping.
- i. THAT the Department formally recognize and incorporate Indigenous Nations, non-governmental organizations, and industry data into its monitoring systems and prepare a standard electronic data reporting template for this data.
- j. THAT the Department establish a drought index and accompanying advisory reporting system.

4. Compliance and Enforcement

- a. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to authorize the Minister to issue emergency water protection orders for disaster climate events and low flow conditions, including orders to temporarily limit withdrawals, prioritize essential human and ecological needs, and require emergency measures.
- b. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to provide for stronger administrative penalties, graduated penalties, and mandatory restoration orders proportionate to the harm caused, and stop-work orders where harmful unapproved alterations or discharges threaten water quality or quantity.
- c. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to provide for environmental bonds.
- d. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to include the polluter pays principle.
- e. THAT the Department increase its enforcement capacity to reflect the scale of regulated activities.

5. Watershed and Ecosystem Management

- a. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to standardize watercourse and wetland delineation methods and ensure that unmapped features are recorded and appropriately protected under the Act.
- b. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to include a requirement that the Minister develop, adopt, and maintain, in collaboration with Indigenous Nations and interdisciplinary stakeholders, integrated watershed management plans for all major watersheds in the province, and that each watershed be managed for quality and quantity from its highest to its lowest ecological boundaries and include biodiversity protections that considers species at risk, habitat connectivity, and ecosystem function.

- c. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to give the Minister the power to issue orders in case of disaster events, to designate priority or stressed watersheds, and to allocate resources or ban activities according to the needs of individual watersheds to ensure the protection of viable healthy ecosystems.
- d. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to protect coastal wetland areas, including salt marshes.
- e. THAT the definitions in the *Clean Water Act* be updated and broadened to reflect modern scientific understandings, and that definitions such as cumulative effect, climate resilience, thermal pollution, environmental flow, peatlands, and headwater systems be added.
- f. THAT the *Wellfield Protected Area Designation Order* and the *Watershed Protected Area Designation Order* be reinforced.
- g. THAT the Department establish a watershed stewardship fund to sustain local monitoring and restoration activities.
- h. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to embed the *Water Classification Regulation* in the Act for the purpose of watershed planning.
- i. THAT the Department prioritize the maintenance of natural water connectivity by minimizing disruptions caused by human-made infrastructure, such as by mandating the use of existing road networks instead of creating new permanent or temporary ones, requiring the decommissioning and ecological restoration of temporary roads once they are no longer necessary, and implementing open-bottom structures where watercourses exist.

6. Drinking Water Protection

- a. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to require source-water protection plans for all public systems.
- b. THAT the Department publicly report on drinking water quality in plain language, and that these reports contain local government monitoring results, guideline exceedances, and required remedial actions.
- c. THAT the Department regularly update the *New Brunswick Drinking Water Quality Guidelines* to align with the guidelines established by Health Canada.
- d. THAT the Department provide rigorous accreditation oversight and conflict of interest safeguards for private water testing laboratories, and that testing costs meet affordability thresholds to remove barriers for citizens.
- e. THAT the Department expand the New Brunswick Drinking Water Quality Data Portal to allow comparisons between various monitoring sampling points, and historical and event comparisons.

7. Other Key Considerations

- a. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to recognize New Brunswick residents' right to clean water in both quality and quantity, to the degree that is adequate for good human health.
- b. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to include a purpose section stating that the Act and regulations shall protect and prioritize water in the public interest and the protection of waterways and watersheds, recognize the fundamentally interconnected relationship between humans and the natural and physical environment, protect both water quality and quantity, recognize the need for climate resilience, and support a regulatory shift from a reactive to a preventive approach.
- c. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to include the precautionary principle, respect for Indigenous co-governance, and climate resilience as principles guiding decision-making under the Act, in addition to the principles in the *New Brunswick Water Strategy, 2018-2028*.
- d. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to permit the Minister to enter into agreements with Indigenous Nations for the purpose of co-management and knowledge integration, including participation in governance bodies such as the Land and Water Advisory Committee and collaboration in regulation development and permitting processes, especially when there is a potential impact to a watershed or waterway inhabited or used by Indigenous peoples.
- e. THAT the *Clean Water Act* be amended to embed wetland regulations and mitigation requirements in the Act.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee wishes again to express its appreciation to all those who provided input and key considerations on the revision of the *Clean Water Act*. As a result of these deliberations on the Act's content and operation, the Committee wishes to make the following recommendation:

THAT the Department of Environment and Local Government consider the information summarized in this report when revising the *Clean Water Act* and related regulations, in order to modernize standards and strengthen rules that protect water quality across the province.

APPENDIX: PARTICIPANTS

Baird, Donald J. (Ph.D.)

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, New Brunswick Chapter

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, New Brunswick Chapter

Conservation Council of New Brunswick

Curry, R. Allen (Ph.D.)

Ducks Unlimited Canada

East Coast Environmental Law

Hammond River Angling Association

J.D. Irving, Limited

Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik

The St. John River Society Inc.

Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick