Comments on Digby Neck and Islands *Valued Environmental Components*, as addressed in Bilcon’s White’s Point Quarry and Marine Terminal Proposal Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Members of the Joint Review Panel:

As one of the authors of the list of VEC’s submitted for your consideration in January 2005, I am disappointed and offended that so few of the heartfelt concerns expressed therein have been addressed by Bilcon in their Environmental Impact Statement.

and I attempted in our original compilation to describe aspects of this place that we cherish, to convey a sense of the feelings for Digby Neck and Islands that residents and visitors alike experience and attach a great deal of value to. Granted, feelings are intangible, as are many of the other components specified by friends and neighbours when we asked for their input. However, that doesn’t mean they are any less real than more concrete aspects such as aquifers and lobsters (about which we are also very concerned, obviously). In choosing to ignore our very real anxieties about how the quarry will affect our fundamental sense of place, in opting to disregard our very real feelings of dread at the prospect of losing the things that we find most precious, the proponent underscores the impression that we, the residents of Digby Neck and Islands, and our very genuine worries, are as “insignificant” as they claim the effects of their project will be.

I request that the proponent address the following VEC’s, all included in our initial submission but not responded to in their EIS, and reassure me that these invaluable aspects of the place we make our home will not change. If they do change or disappear, how can Bilcon possibly mitigate us for their loss?

-“quiet, spiritual silence...and stillness of the air”
-“being FAR FAR far from the rat race”
-“sitting on the rocky shore line and looking for miles and feeling it all and seeing nothing but rocks and trees and sky and birds and all alone in its quiet and still...beauty.”
-“the whisper of a bird’s wings as it flies overhead – on a still day, we can hear that here”.
-“Ownership of the culture - residents have always enjoyed and celebrated the very things that ‘make them different’ from other, more ‘progressive’ areas. They have always felt they had the choice to keep things this way – ‘unspoiled’ in their eyes.”
-“the dream of living in a place which is not controlled by the corporate world”.
-“It’s restful and peaceful and natural and undisturbed here”.
-“We enjoy the unspoiled beauty of a land not ravaged by greed”.
-“It’s an area secluded from ecological and human disaster”.
-“We value our Ancestry. Many summer residents and summer visitors have family roots that go back generations. Through their genealogy they feel a very strong spiritual attachment to the area. One of the strongest contributors to this feeling of ‘connectedness’ to the past, is the fact that the area changes so little over incremental periods of ten or twenty years”.
-“I came back to my roots, both the land and the people”.
"We value the history of White’s Cove. In the 19th century, it was a dynamic community, home to several generations of six Hersey families, as well as at least four other families who were born, worked and died in the community. Archival research indicates that approximately seventy people were permanent residents of White’s Cove in the 1800’s. Destruction of this area is the destruction of all these families”.


(Note: Already the proponent has bulldozed the cellars of White’s Cove out of existence, deliberately obliterating the tangible evidence of the houses that stood there in times past.)

"White’s Cove was also the summer residence of First Nations people. The Mi’kmaq people of Bear River used White’s Cove as the base for their seasonal fishing industry. Thus, exploitation of the land for quarry operations destroys the historical linkage between the area and the First Nations people”.

"….many community members easily recall times spent at White’s Cove….To many, childhood memories include many social activities taking place in this area. To destroy it is desecration in the eyes of many”.

"We value the responsibility of the stewardship of this great natural system, which is shared internationally with the United States through the Gulf of Maine ecosystem.

"Listening to the fishermen talk about the current season, their hauls, and the price of fish”.

"Families are proud of the fact that they and their ancestors have been fishing in the same area for one hundred or more years”.

"The ‘simple life’ is not appealing to everyone, but people here would like it to remain that way”.

"We are proud that Digby Neck has been recognized by UNESCO as a paradigm of community economic development for North Atlantic communities – in its ... Management of Social Transformation Programme”.

"We value our unaltered shoreline (as stated by Gulf of Maine group)”.

"The Peace that imbues this place is elemental to our enjoyment of it. Peace that comes from an attachment to the land and the water. There is a feeling of ‘belonging’ here. Local people as well as visitors from around the world find peace in connecting to Nature in all its many forms. This place is perceived as untouched and natural”. Peace of Mind is one of our most valued VEC’S. We don’t want to have to worry about the potential disasters that could result from a mega-quarry in our midst:

- the potential for water problems
- the potential that our livelihoods will be damaged or destroyed
- the potential for irreversible damage to the unique and delicate ecosystem of the Bay of Fundy
- the dangers of transporting and storing explosives
- the potential that whales or even people will be struck by the huge ships,

and so many more concerns that people expressed at the scoping sessions.

-We value the ambience of our surroundings:

Our landscape is close to pristine. Some visitors refer to the Neck and Islands as
“Brigadoon”, or “the land that time forgot”. We are envied for this by those from more urban areas”.
-“We value that this is a non-industrialized area. That there is no heavy industry here”.
-“We value the darkness of the nights, and the multitude of stars visible to us”.
-“Sunsets viewed through dustless air, over a calm, safe, ocean”.
-“The lack of traffic, traffic signs and traffic lights”.
-“Having tourists stop to enjoy the view, take pictures, and ask a myriad of questions”.
-“We value that we live beside an ecosystem so unique, that a world-class “Discovery Centre” is proposed for the area.... We consider that this type of project and a mega-quarry are mutually exclusive”.
-“We value the land... The North Mountain, of craggy basalt”.
-“We value the creatures that share this place with us...We value the whales and dolphins and porpoise and seals. The seabirds and shorebirds...We certainly value the fish and the other creatures in the ocean”.
-“We value the bucolic atmosphere...”
-“These are just some of the components of our environment that we value. We cannot express how much”.

Respectfully submitted,