April 1, 2019

Dear [Name],

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (File # NR-26-2019)

On March 4, 2019, the Department of Natural Resources received your request for access to the following records/information:

**Wood Stoves Considerations Information Note from January 2019.**

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the Department of Natural Resources, confirmed by the Deputy Minister, to provide access to the requested records. The records are attached.

We are providing access to the most information possible but have made redactions in accordance with Sections 29(1)(a), 34(1)(a)(v), and 35(1)(g) of ATIPPA, 2015 as follows:

29. (1)(a) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal advice, proposals, recommendations, analyses or policy options developed by or for a public body or minister;

34. (1)(a)(v) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose information to an applicant if the disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the conduct by the government of the province of relations between that government and the following or their agencies: the Nunatsiavut Government;

35. (1)(g) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information which could reasonably be expected to disclose information, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to prejudice the financial or economic interest of the government of the province or a public body.

Please be advised that you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the processing of your access request, as set out in section 42 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act). A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner.

The address and contact information of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner  
2 Canada Drive  
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A  
St. John’s, NL. A1B 3V8  

Telephone: (709) 729-6309  
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309  
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act.

Please be advised that this letter will be published following a 72 hour period after it is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the letter posted to the Office of Public Engagement’s website within one business day following the applicable period of time.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 709-729-0463 or rhynes@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

Rod Hynes

Rod Hynes  
ATIPP Coordinator
Information Note
Department of Natural Resources

Title: Wood Stoves Considerations

Issue: To provide background information on wood heat policy development considerations

Background and Current Status:
- NR’s Electricity and Alternative Energy Division is working to support the Minister’s mandate, including by strategically leveraging federal funding and working to reduce/eliminate diesel generation in the province’s off-grid diesel-reliant communities.

- Below are wood heat policy development considerations, including:
  - Wood Stoves in Rural and Remote Communities
  - Renewable Energy Plan
  - Forestry Sector Work Plan
  - Leveraging Federal Funding
  - Minister’s Mandate Letter and EOI

Analysis:
Wood Stoves in Rural and Remote Communities
- NL has 20 regulated off-grid diesel generation systems that used approximately 15 million litres of diesel in 2017. Given the cost of electricity and heating oil, many homes in these communities use firewood heating. Available data suggests many of the stoves are old and inefficient. New high-efficiency units can reduce firewood consumption and chimney smoke.

- NR has discussed these issues with stakeholders, including other provincial and federal government departments, as well as Indigenous governments and organizations. Discussions indicate a holistic, two-prong approach is appropriate for developing sustainable wood heat in the off-grid communities, built on: (1) a reliable wood supply chain and (2) high-efficiency appliances installation and maintenance.
This also supports the Minister’s mandate to seek out opportunities to develop diversified energy in communities isolated from the power grid.

**Renewable Energy Plan**
- GNL recognizes the significant opportunities renewable energy presents in terms of economic development and environmental progress.
- Currently, over 80 percent of NL electricity is from renewable sources and this number will increase to 98 percent once the Muskrat Falls Project comes into service in 2020.
- *The Way Forward III*, published April 24, 2018, commits to working with industry and other stakeholders to develop a renewable energy strategy in 2019 focused on creating employment opportunities and further positioning the province as an energy hub.

**Forestry Sector Work Plan**
- In March 2018, Premier Ball announced that mining, forestry and community sectors were the next areas of focus for economic development in the coming year. Development work on the forestry sector included commitments to work in partnership with the NL Forest Industry Association to develop a diversification plan for the forestry sector.
- Terms of Reference the committee adopted in June 2018 note the group’s purpose is to develop a Forestry Sector Work Plan with actions focused on diversification and efficiency. These actions will be aimed at enabling business growth, stimulating new business activity, and creating and maintaining private sector jobs for NL residents.
- NR is participating in plan development and may help implement plan actions including:
  - Exploring opportunities to convert existing infrastructure from fossil fuel to biofuel;
  - Exploring the potential for greater use of wood for heat in NL’s off-grid diesel-reliant communities, including the use of high efficiency wood stoves; and
  - Exploring biofuel technology in developing the Provincial Renewable Energy Plan.

**Leveraging Federal Funding**
- Finding reliable, cost-effective, renewable energy solutions in these rural and remote communities is a key priority for the Province.
- The 2018 federal budget included clean growth economy funding that built upon related budget announcements in 2016 and 2017. The Green Infrastructure Program committed $21.9 billion through various funding programs relevant to NR, including the CERRC fund. Under CERRC, NRCan committed up to $220 million over six years starting April 2018 to reduce diesel in rural and remote communities through clean energy solutions. The program has a continuous intake process until all funding is allocated.
- DNR is supporting proponents, including Indigenous governments, in leveraging funding opportunities for renewable energy projects in off-grid systems.
Mandate Letter and EOI

- The Premier’s January 2019 mandate letter directs the Minister of NR to encourage more diverse distributed energy generation by seeking opportunities to develop wind farms and small scale hydro, and prioritizing communities isolated from the primary power grid, such as coastal regions of Labrador.

- To advance this mandate, NR will be issuing an Expressions of Interest (EOI) seeking to input from industry for potential renewable energy solutions in 15 of the province’s regulated diesel-powered electricity systems. NR is collaborating with NL Hydro in the EOI process.

- Consultation and partnership with local communities, governments and Indigenous organizations will be at the forefront in any decision making process. Their energy concerns and preferred solutions will be considered in identifying the best opportunities for renewable energy solutions.

Action Being Taken:

- NR will continue to progress its work towards wood heat policy development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Prepared/Reviewed by: S. Brewer / L. MacDonald / C. Snook / J. Cowan

Ministerial Approval:

January 14, 2019