



Blomidon Naturalists Society  
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[www.blomidonnaturalists.ca](http://www.blomidonnaturalists.ca)

March 19, 2021

TO: Hon. Iain Rankin, Premier  
CC: Hon. Keith Irving, Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Hon. Chuck Porter, Minister of Lands and Forestry

Dear Premier Rankin,

I am writing on behalf of the Blomidon Naturalists Society to express our strong support for the new Biodiversity Act, Bill #4.

Blomidon Naturalists Society, with a current membership of 150 and an active board of 12, has recently experienced a higher level interest from the general public. We have 1000 people following us on our Facebook site and higher attendance on our field trips. It is partly due to the pandemic, but the public is showing a renewed interest in getting outdoors and experiencing nature. Along with this goes a heightened awareness of the grave situation we face with the world-wide biodiversity crisis. Based on the interest and concern that we see "on the ground", we believe that the Biodiversity Act is supported by a majority of the Nova Scotia public.

It has been very disturbing to see the disinformation campaign against Bill #4 from some within the forestry industry. They should be well aware that unlike an earlier version, this new bill gives protection to private landowners to opt out of government programs and does not allow for expropriation of land. Furthermore, as the government proceeds with developing regulations, the Act requires further consultations with the public.

On June 5<sup>th</sup> of this year, World Environment Day, the UN will launch its Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. We urge the government to pass the Biodiversity Act and be ready to see itself as a genuine participant in this important day. In taking the lead, we are fortunate that we still have publicly owned wilderness areas, although many have been degraded over the years, mainly from clearcutting forestry. These areas should be surveyed and data collected on their level of biodiversity and then conservation areas can be increased, with designation based on the science. This is just what the Biodiversity Act will give us, along with guidelines for management and regulation of biodiversity zones. This is a much needed accompaniment to the Endangered Species Act, and also to the recommendations of the Lahey report which we hear will be implemented very soon.

In conclusion, we congratulate you and the cabinet on this positive step forward to protect the environment. We urge you not to give in to vested interests but to do the right thing for the greater public good because the public good ultimately rests on the support and survival of nature.

Sincerely,  
Soren Bondrup-Nielsen  
President, Blomidon Naturalists Society