



National Farmers Union - NB
Union nationale des fermiers - N.-B.



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Glassville, NB – The National Farmers Union in New Brunswick (NFU-NB) is concerned about a request for proposals for potash exploration.

The Government of New Brunswick recently issued a request for proposals (RFP) for potash exploration in the Salt Springs and Cassidy Lakes areas, noting the RFP covers 26 350 hectares and the land is mostly privately owned.

This exploration and potential resource extraction will occur on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of Indigenous Peoples who should have stewardship over the land and water.

The NFU-NB is concerned about impacts to farms during exploration and long term effects to farmland should extraction proceed. As we noted this spring while leading concern about Bill-75, mining exploration can cause significant damage to farms before permission from landowners is required or any large equipment is brought onsite. We also do not want to see further agricultural land lost in New Brunswick in the future.

Although potash is primarily used in fertilizer for its potassium, most of what used to be extracted in New Brunswick was shipped overseas. This potential extraction will likely have little benefit to the farms and people of New Brunswick, in part because potash mines today require few new employees to run.

Farmers are already concerned about New Brunswick's water tables and water management with the recent drought in 2020 and other climate impacts. Potash extraction uses and damages this precious resource; the former potash mine extracted average of 11 million litres of water from the Penobscis aquifer each day. An Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment conducted by the Royal District Planning Commission in 2012 reported that groundwater from Grand Lake to the Bay of Fundy is vulnerable to contamination.

60 homes in Penobscis reported losing their water supply after the mining activities began. Penobscis residents and farmers also dealt with subsidence (displacement) of buildings and land, productive fields became too wet to farm, and they expressed concerns over the proper treatment of mining wastewater. Furthermore, properties devalued, sinkholes appeared and questions raised about human health concerns were never addressed.

The NFU-NB strongly believes that all input use must be reduced; we must stop the “more” attitude and recognize that limits are critical guardrails that can prevent our civilization from crashing by devastating the biosphere upon which all people and economic activities depend. Resource exploration and extraction significantly impact the farmers' use of land for food production both through the land taking and the disruption of farm operations and management practices. For a self-sufficient New Brunswick the NFU-NB calls on Government to explore alternatives to resource exploration and extraction.

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The National Farmers Union in New Brunswick is one of two accredited general farm organizations in the province. Our organization represents and fights for farms of all sizes and commodities.

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