

Report claims no impact to fish stocks

NORTHERN PULP EFFLUENT TREATMENT

AARON BESWICK THE CHRONICLE HERALD

The long awaited focus report filed by Northern Pulp states that the mill's proposed effluent treatment facility would exceed stricter federal guidelines being developed for pulp and paper plants.

The report also shows that treated effluent coming out of the proposed pipe near Caribou won't be cleaner than what ultimately enters the Northumberland Strait now at Boat Harbour.

The series of studies point to better dilution at the proposed outfall four kilometres from shore at Caribou than is currently achieved where the effluent runs out of the provincial government owned treatment facility at Boat Harbour.

"Boat Harbour damn discharge into the Northumberland Strait undertaken to assess environmental impacts has concluded that existing dilution factors are low and insufficient for effluent mixing with the ambient water," reads the focus report filed by Northern Pulp on Wednesday.

"A diffused outfall near outside of Caribou Harbour in the Northumberland Strait is considered to have much less potential effluent impact on the receiving environment and represents an improvement."

The report's contents and the more than 20 studies done by Northern Pulp to create it were made public by the Environment Department on Thursday.

Like the Environmental Assessment filed by the mill in February, the focus report — created in response to a long list of questions from the Environment Department — claims that the new facility will not impact marine species in its vicinity.

The proposed outfall will be near one of the busiest fishing harbours in the Northumberland Strait.

The project is opposed by both the Pictou Landing First Nation and fishermen's associations from the

is accompanied by 40 documents compiled to inform it.

The focus report includes using a thicker — 900 millimetre — pipe than originally proposed for carrying the effluent treated at a new facility to be constructed adjacent to Northern Pulp.

Its route was adjusted slightly to move it to the far edge of the Highway 106 right-of-way. As well, the new plan sees it travelling under water across Pictou Harbour rather than being attached to the Pictou Causeway.

"The thicker-walled pipe increases the design safety factor over operating pressures," reads the focus report.

"This, coupled with a modern leak detection system using advanced detection technologies that can detect very small leaks, provides a robust system design that can be operated with confidence."

Fishermen associations and the group Friends of the Northumberland Strait, which had sought the release of studies as they were completed rather than getting them as lump sum, are now reviewing their contents.

They, along with the rest of the public, now have 30 days to comment on Northern Pulp's revised plans.

Then Environment Minister Gordon Wilson will have 39 days to decide whether to allow the proposed project to go ahead.

three Maritime provinces bordering the
Northumberland Strait.

The 245-page focus report



An aerial photo of the Northern Pulp mill and Boat
Harbour in Pictou,