

# 2015 Industrial Approval for Northern Pulp Nova Scotia

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is an Industrial Approval?**

Before certain industrial activities can begin in Nova Scotia, such as the operation of a pulp mill, owners must have an industrial approval from Nova Scotia Environment to address environmental issues such as water usage, wastewater effluent, hazardous waste, air emissions, etc. An approval, once issued, will list the terms and conditions the operation must meet in order to mitigate potential risks to the environment.

### **How long does an Industrial Approval last?**

Industrial approvals are usually for 10-year terms. With Northern Pulp, approval terms have been shorter as the department worked to develop stricter limits. The 5-year term makes the new performance requirements clear to the company and provides a reasonable timeframe for achieving the expected results. The duration of the approval does not impede our ability to enforce compliance.

### **Why is the department issuing a new approval to the mill, if the company isn't meeting the terms and conditions of the existing approval?**

The mill's existing industrial approval expired on January 30, 2015 and the company applied for a new one. Despite compliance issues that resulted in the department issuing a Ministerial Control Order to address problems with the precipitator, the mill is meeting other approval requirements. Significant reductions in particulate matter emissions are expected once the mill's new precipitator is operational in May. The new industrial approval requires strict adherence to tighter limits for water usage, wastewater effluent and air emissions.

### **How was public input used in shaping the new Industrial Approval?**

Written submissions received through the public consultation process were reviewed and considered by staff before the industrial approval was finalized. Key considerations reflected within the approval include:

- no increase in production limits,
- limiting the approval period to no more than five years,
- continuous emissions monitoring,
- increased stack testing requirements on the recovery boiler and power boiler (more than twice a year)
- using existing data to establish the benchmark for water reduction targets

Staff also considered information from industry experts and other jurisdictions on what similar mills across North America can achieve. The end result is an industrial approval that includes much tighter limits than the mill's previous approval.

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### **How does the final approval compare to the draft?**

Like the draft, the final industrial approval focuses on improvements in three key areas – air emissions, water usage and wastewater effluent. The direction is the same, but some elements have been refined or adjusted to bring the limits in line with what is accomplished by other similar mills in North America.

However, the best comparison is between the new approval and the previous one. The previous industrial approval placed no limits on water use or wastewater volumes. With the new approval, daily maximums will now be imposed on water use and wastewater effluent which will result in about a 34.5 per cent reduction in water use and decrease the volume of wastewater flowing into the Boat Harbour treatment facility by about 25 per cent over the next five years.

The new approval also includes a significant reduction in particulate emissions from the recovery boiler. The new limit is five times lower than the previous approval limit. The approval also includes an annual facility emissions cap and stack testing must be done quarterly rather than twice a year.

### **How will the department ensure compliance?**

Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the industrial approval will be addressed by the department's inspection and compliance staff. Our compliance response is proportional to the violation and the impact it is having on the environment. Over the last few years, compliance issues have been addressed through directives and a Ministerial Control Order. The new industrial approval makes performance requirements and our expectations clear to the company.

### **What if the mill does not agree to the terms and conditions of the new industrial approval?**

Northern Pulp has the option to appeal the terms and conditions of the industrial approval within 30 days of its effective date. The Minister of Environment would then have 60 days to make a decision. If Northern Pulp does not agree with the Minister's decision, mill operators can appeal it to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. If there is an appeal to the Minister or the court, the industrial approval in place as of January 30, 2015 will remain in effect until the Minister's decision or a court ruling is known.

### **What if members of the public do not agree to the terms and conditions?**

A person who is aggrieved by a decision of an administrator may appeal to the Minister within 30 days of the decision. The Minister of Environment would then have 60 days to make a decision. If the person making the appeal does not agree with the Minister's decision, that person can appeal it to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. If there is an appeal to the Minister or the court, the industrial approval in place as of January 30, 2015 will remain in effect until the Minister's decision or a court ruling is known.