

# Stop Plan B Fact Sheet

## What Is Plan B?

Plan B is a 6 km rerouting of the Trans Canada Highway from Bonshaw to New Haven, PEI. It was announced suddenly by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, Robert Vessey, on December 20, 2011, after a vigorous public outcry against three earlier options.

## Why Are People Opposed to the New Highway?

The public is against the new highway for many reasons:

they don't think the new highway is necessary and believe the existing route can be improved at much less cost

they think the new highway will be an environmental disaster. It will cut through the unique wooded and farmed hillsides of Bonshaw and New Haven. A very old pine and hemlock grove will be largely ruined; five beautiful ravines and numerous streams and watercourses will be altered. Officials estimate it will take at least 100,000 truck loads of shale to fill in the ravines to meet grade requirements.

they don't think the PEI Government should be spending more than \$12 million on 6 km of road when other roads need upgrading; cutbacks are being made in many other areas including health care, education, and social services; and PEI has a deficit this year of nearly \$100 million and a debt of \$2 billion.

they don't think the Government has consulted in a meaningful way with the public about Plan B.

## What Will Plan B Cost?

The province will pay at least \$12 million and any cost over-runs. The Federal Government will contribute \$8 million.

## How Much Public Consultation Has There Been About Plan B?

There has been no public consultation about the Plan B route. Nor has there been any discussion about ways to make the existing road safer such as more turning lanes, better lane marking, more cats' eyes, better signage or even modifying certain turns.

### **Why does the Government Maintain It Is Necessary to Build a New Highway?**

The Government claims that this stretch of the highway is very dangerous with 50% higher accident rates than any other portion of the TCH. However, it refuses to release detailed accident data that would enable independent assessment of the number of accidents and their causes.

### **Is the TCH between Bonshaw and New Haven dangerous?**

There has been one fatality on this stretch of road in the last 10 years and it is not clear what factors contributed to this accident. Experts say that road design is responsible for only a very small percentage of accidents (usually around 3%) because drivers tend to slow down when sight lines shorten. More common factors are excessive speed, driver impairment, and driver distraction.

### **What Have People Done to Try to Change the Government's Mind?**

Petition Feb. 2012: More than 3,000 signatures

Rally at Province House April 26, 2012

Plebiscite: 91% of 4,281 people who voted opposed Plan B June 2012

100s of Letters to the Editor in *The Guardian*, *Eastern Graphic* and *Journal Pioneer*

100s of Emails to Cabinet Ministers and the Premier

Art Show and Concert Aug. 2012

Protest Video by Darin Soukles and Song by Nancy White

2 documentaries on You Tube (available on Stop Plan B website)

### **Why Doesn't the Public Accept the Conclusions of the Environmental Impact Assessment?**

While environmental officials say that an EIA for a project of this size would normally take about a year, this EIA was a rushed job which appears to have been more concerned with finding ways to enable the Government to proceed as it wants to. Little attention was paid to mitigation of the extensive damage that will occur to the Bonshaw Hills and the West River Watershed.

## What Groups Have Spoken Against Plan B?

Environmental Coalition of PEI: *this major construction project would cut a deep, wide wound through ... one of south-central PEI's few remaining undeveloped natural spaces with spectacular wooded ravines and an old growth hemlock forest ecosystem.*

Island Nature Trust: *... there are significant environmental costs associated with this project.*

Gary Schneider, Manager of Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project: *If Plan B was something the Island really needed, there might be some justification for destroying habitat and expropriating people's properties. But this clearly is not the case ... To ruin these rare habitats simply to take advantage of federal funding is indefensible from an ecological perspective. ....It somehow has become acceptable to lose part of Bonshaw's beautiful hemlock stand and leave the rest chopped in two. The ecological integrity of that stand will certainly be destroyed. The mixed hardwood stand on the steep slope that is part of the Crawford property ... is an ecological jewel, a forest habitat that I rarely if ever see in the province .... The steepness of the slope, the height of some of the trees, the seep and small stream, all make it a unique area. This is another unique and precious habitat, one that again everyone should have a hard time seeing destroyed.*

Central Queens Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation: *... the proposed realignment goes counter to the vision for the watershed, developed by the communities within it and advocated for by the Board. .... Before any upgrades to the Trans Canada Highway are undertaken, it behooves those funding the work to have a clear vision for the highway that respects the landscape, environment and the communities scattered along it ....*

**For more information, check out the Stop Plan B website at [HYPERLINK "https://sites.google.com/site/stopplanbtchbonshawpei/"](https://sites.google.com/site/stopplanbtchbonshawpei/) <https://sites.google.com/site/stopplanbtchbonshawpei/>**