

October 27, 2021

Dear Ms. MacNeil:

As nations around the world gather in Glasgow to determine how they can reduce carbon emissions, Rockland, Maine is promoting the expansion of its marina to accommodate fuel-guzzling megayachts for the wealthy. This project aims to provide a “safe harbor” for these toys and their owners by dredging our lovely inner harbor – disturbing marine life and shorebirds that reside there. In the process, it will forever change the experience of the local community by blocking scenic vistas, increasing boating traffic, impeding navigation, possibly prohibiting access to a popular walkway, and reminding us of the obscene gap between the extremely wealthy and the rest of us.

We are in the 11th hour of a warming planet; the Gulf of Maine is one of the most rapidly warming seas on earth. This is NOT the time for the local government and the State of Maine to be promoting and approving permit applications for such an egregious project.

My questions about this project are many but most center around the following: 1) Fuel issues 2) Dredging volume 3) No substantive benefit to the Rockland community and 4) How this project can be reconciled with Maine Can't Wait, Governor Mills' Climate Action Program to reduce carbon emissions.

One description of fuel consumption that I found (Denison Yachting) states on its website that a typical 150' motor yacht cruising at 12 knots consumes 150 U.S. gallons per hour. At current fuel prices, they estimate the cost at \$500/day or \$250,000 for 500 hours of cruising per year. And, by the way, don't forget the fuel for generators and tenders. To consume this amount of fuel for recreation while many families in the area struggle to pay heating costs and put food on the table is a display of unconscionable indifference and arrogance. And we are supposed to welcome them?

I attended a Rockland Harbor Commission meeting this month in which the engineering consultant for Safe Harbors could not adequately address questions about how the fuel requirements of these boats would be met here in Rockland. Where is the source of fuel? Will there be storage tanks placed nearby? Piping? Fumes? Noise? Generators running? Has the close proximity to Sandy Beach been considered? Do we want all this fuel activity where families with children play on the beach and picnickers stop to enjoy the beauty of the bay – if their views won't be blocked? What are the provisions in case of an accident or fuel spill? What of long-term effects?

Neither could the representative answer in any quantifiable way how the Rockland community or economy would benefit. There was a vague answer about using restaurants and shops – hardly a reason to bring a relatively few wealthy people here to degrade our environment and expect us taxpayers to take care of them, particularly if something goes wrong.

As for other environmental problems, what will be the collateral damage of the extensive dredging of the coastal wetland? This question, too, has been dismissed with answers such as “there won't be much disturbance – some seaworms.” That's not all I see on my walks: Plovers and sandpipers pecking in the sandy edges, cormorants and loons fishing, gulls cracking mussels – and so much else that is invisible. Every creature is connected in the web of life.

Finally, how is this project consistent with Governor Mills' goals for addressing climate change:

“Maine can’t wait to heed the warnings of scientists who tell us we cannot delay reducing carbon emissions to stem climate impacts, or preparing our communities to withstand extreme weather events, flooding, and warming that climate change is causing as we speak.

“We must act now to honor the legacy of Maine’s environmental stewards who bequeathed this precious place to us, to preserve our state for our children and grandchildren to enjoy as we do. . .”

I hope these and other issues raised by many others who oppose this marina expansion will be addressed by the DEP and other state agencies during the review process. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the results.

Sincerely,

Virginia E. Noble

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Rockland, Maine