

March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## **Statement to Saint John Council Public Safety Committee from the Conservation Council of New Brunswick**

Dear Public Safety Committee,

We understand that you will be hearing from Liveable Saint John on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, regarding the public safety risks of a potential reopening of the American Iron and Metal (AIM) facility on the Port of Saint John. We have prepared this brief statement to complement the concerns raised by local residents. We understand how challenging this incident and its aftermath has been for all Saint John residents, and indeed your council, city staff, and especially first responders. We stand with you in working to prevent such incidents in the future.

It is important to acknowledge, as was detailed in the task force report, that the September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, incident, while severe, could have been much worse had it not been for the fortunate presence of additional firefighting capacity within Saint John Harbour. Further, given the history of incidents at the AIM Port of Saint John facility it is unsurprising that AIM was seemingly unprepared for such an incident.

In short, we know that the operation of the AIM facility, especially the September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 fire, has resulted in significant pollution to air, water, and soil, affecting many residents of the Saint John region and the lands and waters of the area that serve as habitat to a large number of species. Gardeners, children, anyone with respiratory or other health challenges, and animals are left to deal with the

consequences, not to mention the first responders who put themselves at risk to battle the fire.

We are heartened, as we imagine you are, by recent statements by the Province suggesting AIM is unlikely to reopen its Saint John location, though given that the issue is still before the courts, we cannot yet be completely certain. We urge your committee and council to explore the options available within city jurisdiction and influence to prevent future activities by AIM or other entities that threaten or harm the residents and ecosystems in and around Saint John. We would be happy to offer our assistance with this effort.

Further, we encourage your council to continue it's calls for AIM's license to be revoked. We are well aware that AIM was able to disregard commitments made through the provincial Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for years. Therefore, we encourage you to advocate for a more robust EIA, monitoring, and enforcement process within our province. This will help prevent both recurring issues, such as explosions at the AIM facility, and major incidents, like the fire on September 14th, 2023, from occurring in the future at the AIM or other facilities.

Thank you for considering our comments. We would be happy to engage in further discussion and offer assistance to the city during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Beverly Gingras  
Executive Director



Matthew Abbott  
Marine Program Director