



April 11, 2025

The Hon. Susan Holt
Premier of New Brunswick
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Re: Urgent Call for Transparency and Accountability in the Woodstock Diesel Spill

Dear Premier Holt:

I am writing to express deep concern over the major diesel spill at the Irving gas station in Woodstock and the troubling lack of transparent communication surrounding this incident. Recent reports confirm that approximately 174,000 litres of diesel leaked from an underground storage tank—an alarming figure far exceeding earlier estimates.

The leak, reportedly caused by a cracked pipe, went undetected until diesel contaminants were found in the well water of a nearby Tim Hortons. This contamination was only discovered after customers complained about a fuel smell—raising serious concerns about early detection, regulatory oversight, and public safety protections.

Despite the scale and risk of this environmental disaster, the public has received little direct communication from the government. Many people learned about the true extent of the spill only through a freedom of information request. New Brunswickers deserve clear, timely, and proactive updates, not silence or vague assurances. They want to hear directly from their government. They want to know that their elected officials are as alarmed by this incident as they are, that the government is investigating how this happened, and that firm action is being taken to ensure it never happens again.

Regular public updates are essential to demonstrate that the government is taking this issue seriously, actively managing the situation, and is committed to full transparency throughout the response and recovery process. Public trust depends on knowing that our leaders share our concerns and are taking action in the public interest—not behind closed doors, but in the open.

While the government's April 8 news release acknowledging the diesel spill was a welcome step, it unfortunately represents a case of too little, too late. The scale of this environmental disaster demands much more than a single media statement. New Brunswickers expect meaningful leadership in action—clear timelines, transparent investigations, accountability for those responsible, and strong preventive measures. The Minister and your government must do more to demonstrate that this issue is being treated with the seriousness it deserves.

I have met with several members of your Cabinet—including Minister Herron, Minister LePage, and Minister Legacy—and emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability, and meaningful public engagement. These principles are not simply best practices—they are essential to restoring confidence in government, particularly following a previous administration that was widely criticized for its lack of openness. Your government now has an opportunity and the responsibility to lead differently, and this moment calls for that leadership.

As part of this leadership, I urge you to ensure that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change meets with the press or issues a detailed public statement outlining the seriousness of the situation and the concrete steps his department is taking in response. This should include an update on the investigation, the government's expectations of Irving Oil, measures being taken to prevent future spills, and how the public will be kept informed going forward.

New Brunswick law rightly places the responsibility for cleanup and damages on polluters. However, the public must be assured that this principle is being upheld and that your government is doing everything it can to protect our environment and communities.

I respectfully recommend your government:

1. Ensure the Minister of Environment and Climate Change addresses the public directly through a media appearance to demonstrate leadership and rebuild public confidence;
2. Communicate clearly and regularly about the steps being taken to clean up the spill, prevent future leaks, and improve oversight;
3. Release a full public report on the incident, including its cause, timeline, and environmental impact;
4. Hold Irving Oil fully accountable for the damage, cleanup, and any public health or environmental consequences;
5. Strengthen monitoring, inspection, and reporting protocols for fuel storage systems across the province.

This is a critical moment to demonstrate that your government stands with the people of New Brunswick in demanding accountability, protecting the environment, and building a stronger, more transparent public service. I hope you will respond accordingly.

Sincerely,



Beverly (Bev) Gingras
Executive Director
Conservation Council of New Brunswick,

CC: The Hon. Gilles LePage, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Corey Robichaud, CCNB Director of Communications