

Subject: Minister McKenna and the Never Forgotten National Memorial

MR Fekete,

I read with interest Minister McKenna's remarks regarding her decision to renege on the Parks Canada's commitment and support for the Never Forgotten National Memorial. Over the last 4 years, under the leadership of former Parks Canada CEO, Alan Latourelle, an overseer, Ed Kennedy, was appointed to shepherd the project through the rigorous environmental and indigenous MEKS reports which were then submitted to Parks Canada for scrutiny. Parks Canada had already permitted drilling at the site and the Stantec DIA along with the Mi'kmaq MEKS Report were accepted.

The Green Cove site had a village from the mid 1800's to the late 1930's expropriation. It has been dynamited several times to build the iconic Cabot Trail. There is a paved parking lot, a memorial bench and a short trail with a boardwalk on this so-called pristine, wilderness area. The Green Cove site, because of its low ecological integrity, has been assigned a Designation 4 – recreational and education use – the same as the golf course, the camping grounds and the entire length of the Cabot Trail by Parks Canada.

Minister McKenna has absolutely no awareness of the Management Plan for the Cape Breton Highlands National Park which has as part of its cultural mandate to preserve and present the cultural heritage and their stories for the eastern side of the CB Highlands. This part of Canada has made an overwhelming contribution to the Armed Forces in the time of Canada's greatest need. This has been a part of the Park Management Plan since at least 1985.

Minister McKenna is being persuaded by a small group of "back to nature" former Parks Canada employees who manipulated the Minister to reject this honourable proposal to welcome home the more than 114,000 veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for Canada. This group is led by Nikita Lopoukine former Director General of Parks Canada and current Conservation Director for CPAWS. He endorsed Catherine McKenna's candidacy and I see this political interference by the Minister as payback for his support. They have conspired to throw this noble enterprise under the campaign bus so that they may use this rejection as a precedent to halt any development in the National Parks of Canada. They have selfishly used this not-for-profit homage to our fallen Veterans in an attempt to stop commercial development in Banff and Jasper.

In a recent article in the Ottawa Citizen, Gerald Butts (PM Trudeau's BFF and chief advisor), while talking about the political arena, had this to say: "This is a business that's dominated by people who make quick, and in my view, rash decisions." This is one of those rash decisions!

The Minister did not even have the courtesy to meet with the Never Forgotten National Memorial Foundation on this issue. She completely ignored the 1700 members of the local group "The People North of Smokey Who Agree to Having Our Monument at Green Cove", 10 petitions from across Canada, hundreds of postcards from loved ones of Veterans and the 4 years of hard work put into this enterprise. Shame on her!

Ray Stapleton