

For Immediate Release

Bay of Fundy spared... this time

“We are not prepared for the impacts of storm surge plus heavy rains intersecting in the Bay of Fundy”

Halifax - Although Nova Scotia escaped the worst of Hurricane Sandy, the Ecology Action Centre believes it's only a matter of time before a similar storm tracks up the Bay of Fundy, overtopping our unprepared dyke system and causing massive damages to built infrastructure.

“The recent floods in Truro show the damage heavy rains and flooding can cause to homes and businesses built on floodplains”, says Jennifer Graham, Coastal Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre. “Imagine what would happen when heavy rains combine with a surge at the head of the Bay of Fundy, especially on a high tide. On a much smaller scale, it would be like when the levees breached in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina”.

A recently released report produced by Dr. Danika von Proosdij and funded by the province states that most Bay of Fundy dykes are too low to protect homes and roads from dyke overtopping during a 10-year storm, let alone a ‘Frankenstorm’ like Hurricane Sandy.

The report recommends that the province take action now to assess dyke vulnerability and set priorities for strengthening the dyke system. The report also states that given the high cost of rebuilding dykes, a few of our existing dykes should be moved or abandoned.

“Our near miss with Hurricane Sandy is a wake up call for Nova Scotia” says Graham. “People need to rethink building new homes in low-lying coastal areas and on floodplains. At the same time, government needs to get cracking on safety measures like coastal hazard mapping, restoring natural salt marshes as coastal buffers, and putting in place coastal and floodplain development standards to help communities stay safe during future storms”.

The Ecology Action Centre believes that coastal planning and land-use regulations to manage new developments in the coastal zone is one of the smartest and most cost-effective ways the province can prepare for climate change.

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Background
“Best Management Practices for climate change adaptation in Fundy Dykelands” <http://atlanticadaptation.ca/node/182>