



## Chapter Highlights

### Chapter 4: Environment – Environmental Assessments

#### Overall Conclusion:

- Poor monitoring of approved projects increases risks to NS environment and makes terms and conditions less useful

#### What is an Environmental Assessment?

- Process to identify impacts on the environment of certain types of proposed projects
- Approved projects have terms and conditions (T/C) to be met
- 53 of 54 projects with an environmental assessment were approved (2013-2016)

#### Approval of Projects

##### Conclusion on Project Approvals:

- Development of T/C of approvals needs improvement to better manage identified risks
- Projects approved in line with legislative requirements

##### Examples:

- T/C often missing key details, for example, deadlines and reporting requirements
- T/C for 11 of 22 projects reviewed given to owners without inspector review
- T/C involving other departments not cleared with these departments prior to approval
- For 10 of 22 projects reviewed, T/C not adequately reviewed with project owners
- NSE not following up with reviewers when feedback on proposed projects not received
- Applications have required information and proper details given to Minister for approval

##### Recommendations

3. T/C should be developed with input from inspectors and include key details
4. T/C should be reviewed by relevant departments before approval
5. Should meet with project owners on T/C at approval and during the project
6. Process for using reviewers to assess applications should be defined and followed
7. Document review of project information before sending to Minister for decision

#### Monitoring of Projects

##### Conclusion on monitoring:

- Poor monitoring of T/C on approved projects
- NSE hasn't determined if T/C are working to reduce risks to the environment

##### Examples:

- Department unsure if 23 of 53 T/C are met
- 4 of 22 approved projects not in tracking system
- Tracking system to monitor approved projects not used well
- Not determining if impacts are reduced by T/C
- Minimal monitoring of T/C prior to 2015

##### Recommendations

1. Enter approvals into the tracking system and monitor T/C to ensure they are met
2. Assess whether T/C are effective at addressing risks to the environment

### 5 Questions Nova Scotians may want to ask:

1. The Department's response indicates all recommendations will be implemented by 2018-19. What process does the Department have in place to make sure they meet these timelines?
2. What is the status of entering approvals including terms and conditions into the Department's tracking system? How many are still not entered and therefore not being tracked?
3. What is the Department now doing to hold companies accountable for the terms and conditions associated with that approval?
4. What can the Department say to Nova Scotians to address their concerns that known environmental risks associated with these projects are not being properly monitored?
5. Since the audit, is the Department aware of any instances in which terms and conditions were not met resulting in environmental damage?