



Digby Neck, Nova Scotia vs Mega-Quarry, SPP and Atlantica: Struggling to Maintain a Small Scale Sustainable Economy in Face of Imposed Extractive Economy

By Janet M Eaton, PhD.

The Sierra Club's Corporate Accountability Committee joined a dozen environmental groups, several local organizations and hundreds

of individuals to highlight Digby Neck, Nova Scotia to stop the incursion of US Cement Company Clayton Concrete, that obtained a permit to extract basalt for aggregate from the mountain range that runs through this peaceful tourism paradise.

In the Sierra Club's PowerPoint entitled "Basalt Assault" two kinds of economies are contrasted—the existing small-scale, sustainable, localized economy and a mega-quarry extractive economy linked to a large-scale, industrial, unsustainable globalized economy. (see www.sierraclub.org/CAC). The present economy is characterized by:

- Community development
- Sustainability
- Small—scale and local
- Participatory
- Eco-tourism
- Retirement area
- Small-scale fishing
- Marine research
- Learning, discovery
- Intermediate technology emphasis

The kind of economy exemplified by a large scale mega-quarry stands in stark contrast :

- Globalized economy
- Industrialization of unique bio-region
- Undemocratic imposition on local community by foreign corporations and governments
- Derailing of local sustainable development by introduction of large-scale, unsustainable industry
- Cumulative impacts as more industries are attracted

by deep sea port

The Sierra Club is concerned because Clayton Concrete would contribute to suburban sprawl and is an extension of the unsustainable fossil fuel economy. It is also concerned because of corporate abuse of power which interferes with the ability of communities and nations to protect the environment. Finally it is concerned because Clayton Concrete derails the transition

to a sustainable economy and furthers corporate economic globalization. This model of the extraction economy assumes that economic growth is an end in itself; that a natural area is "wasted" if not developed for profit; and that all environmental costs are externalities—all of which are major causes of global environmental destruction.

We challenged the permitting of this quarry for both local and global reasons. Local reasons included environmental, cultural/spiritual, political and economic. Global reasons included the failures of corporate globalization as evidenced in many reports, studies and books, and the unsustainable nature of the existing global economy as evidenced by so many collapse scenarios—peak oil; collapse of the US economy; collapse of the American Empire; collapse of the climate system(global warming); collapse of ecosystems; and numerous studies which provide dire warnings of the collapse of civilization. James Howard Kunstler, peak oil writer, in an interview with the author of this article, further reinforced our claims that Digby Neck is a model, small-scale economy for a post-peak oil future and should not be subjected to a mega-quarry with the potential to destroy this pristine small-scale fishing and tourism model.

SPP vs Local Economies

It became obvious that the NAFTA Plus Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) and its north eastern Atlantic cross-border geographic area, Atlantica, threaten small-scale community economies like Digby Neck. First of all the SPP, like NAFTA before it, manifests the hallmarks of corporate globalization: privatization; de-regulation; trade liberalization and assault on the public sector; putting corporate rights above those of citizens and sovereign governments at all levels. Secondly, NAFTA has failed the environment and weakened our capacity to protect it under existing legislation. NAFTA Plus, as the SPP is

Digby Neck – Model Economy

Digby Neck & Islands Present Economy:

- Tradition of community economic development
- Sustainable
- Small Scale, localized
- Community based
- Participatory
- Eco-tourism
- Retirement area
- Small scale fishing
- Marine research
- Learning, discovery
- Intermediate technology emphasis

known, is much worse. Under the SPP the extractive economy is continued and furthered by a natural resource pact where energy and natural resources are becoming more deeply integrated across the three North American nations, Canada, the US and Mexico. This is leading to: a) added exploitation of the tar sands of

Alberta from one million barrels per day up to two million barrels per day for US national energy security, with projections as high as 5 million barrels per day; b) higher levels of uranium mining and exports from Saskatchewan; and c) high rates of mineral, aggregate and coal extraction on both sides of the border. There is a continuing emphasis in the SPP on extraction of fossil fuel resources and other unsustainable coal, tar sands, and uranium—all sources of unsustainable energy.

The SPP is part of a global economic system fostering global economic relations with China with all its negative implications for food and product safety, global greenhouse gas emissions, outsourcing and loss of manufacturing jobs. This model has led to a global hyper-growth economy with super-container ships built in China, carrying large numbers of containers into super ports built in all three countries to connect with super corridors along which super trucks will carry goods to the hinterland. Research shows that coastal super quarries and mega quarries are a solution for low-cost aggregate for infrastructure demand in time of rapid global economic integration.

According to Mander and Cavanaugh writing in

Alternatives to Economic Globalization, "Global transportation infrastructure built to service the global economy brings a multitude of negative consequences."

This past June the Environmental Assessment Panel for the Digby Neck Mega Quarry held its final hearings and the author made a presentation examining the impact of the



quarry on the Bay of Fundy, the issues around NAFTA and implications around the SPP and Atlantica for further quarries. We also noted the vulnerability of the entire North Mountain Range if this quarry goes ahead.

Concerned citizens fear that quarry creep will be inevitable as demand for aggregate will increase given the emphasis on SPP and Atlantica super-corridors documented in a recent CCPA report on Atlantica and other US and Canadian sources.

The panel is expected to bring down its verdict soon. The evidence is so overwhelming that this quarry was wrongly permitted and it was so highly opposed by local residents and the coalition of environment NGOs, which have lobbied strongly against it, that most people in opposition feel it would be difficult for the panel to rule in favor of going ahead with the quarry. But then again, we have an environmental assessment system in place largely for purposes of mitigation of impacts—not for stopping proposals for extractive industries. And the federal and provincial governments involved do not have to listen to the panel if they choose to dig in their heels. Both the 'conservative' provincial government and the current federal so-called 'New Conservative Government of Canada' have been doing this a lot of lately. It is therefore imperative that we bring to light the environmental consequences of NAFTA and the more severe impacts of the SPP.

When it comes to small-scale sustainable versus large scale industrial extractive models for rural areas it is obvious that, just as in Digby Neck where the rallying call became Preserve Digby Neck Stop the Quarry, that globally the time has come to foster smaller-scale restorative economies and "Stop the globalized extractive economy!"

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Powerpoint urls: www.sierraclub.org/CAC click on Basalt Assault and http://www.sierraclub.ca/atlantica/programs/economies/digbyquarry/Digby_Neck_Hearings_July_07.pdf

Digby Neck & Islands Citizen Concerns

Ecosystem Impacts

Environmental Impacts

Local Economic Impacts

Soil and Soul

Cultural / Historical Impacts



graphic: kjersten Jeppesen