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Ms Charlene Johnson  
Minister of Environment and Conservation  
P.O Box 8709  
St John's N.L  
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Dear Ms Johnson:

I hope everyone has a safe and happy new year. I read your Dec 03/2010 letter in reply to my concerns about the George River caribou crash and other environmental issues. I certainly hope for the sake of future generations your multi pronged approach works. The safety of the George River herd and its long term health is the priority here. Like the Buffalo of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cod and capelin stocks of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our modern technology has turned what used to be a harvest into a massacre. Our modern technologies should be used with as wide a safety margin as possible. We have strip mined the Grand Banks and our land creatures with blatant arrogance. The problem these days Charlene is many people have no sense of connection or involvement to the land, sea and its creatures. Our school system is in dire need of an overhaul. It's very important to teach our kids how to read, write and do a bit of math, however if they are ecologically illiterate many of the environmental problems of the day will just be repeated in the future, granted some schools are doing better than others on issues of environmental awareness. When I was a very young child I had a sense even then, that wilderness and the woods offered me life skills and a type of education and connection I couldn't resist. Most of my peers thought bio diversity was something you found at the zoo and my passion for wilderness was a mystery. The pictures of indiscriminate dumping I have given you in our remote wilderness areas are very real. They are as real as the massacre we are letting unfold on our Grand Banks as I right you this letter. Some of the 21<sup>st</sup> century garbage in my pictures and what I have witnessed is garbage some people dumped right along side their cabins or along side the roads on the way into a remote wilderness area. With all the environmental evidence and case histories in your hands and Crown Lands, to allow even the slim chance of remote cabin development and 21<sup>st</sup> century garbage in a place like Clifty Pond is a massacre. I climbed to the summit of the Long Range Mountains last fall and asked the question, why would anyone want to bring their 21<sup>st</sup> century garbage and rabbit shacks into a place as beautiful as this? The answer is simply, no sense of connection and involvement to the land. To let these issues slide would be a complete lack of due diligence on my part. The next time government wants to issue remote cabin permits in places like Clifty Pond maybe they should rethink the words buffalo, cod, capelin, extinction and how distorted societies concept of wilderness

is becoming. It's perplexing to think that almost 800,000 caribou could plummet to a mere 70,000 animals in less than 20yrs with no significant reaction till now. With all the ecological disasters to date Cliffty Pond and the George River caribou is just another potential notch out of space ship earth. I wouldn't issue a permit for an out house in Cliffty Pond or the Long Range Mountains from what environmental damage I witnessed some folks indulged in. They're just not connected to wilderness and that's a fact. We must be aware of the ugly side of human nature here or there will be nothing left for future generations. I was in Cliffty Pond the other day and looking at the shacks in the woods, I thought of the history of our cod, caribou and the buffalo, again just another massacre everyone thinks they have the right too, and again another double standard that is sickening. Given the evidence to date maybe government should rethink their approach to Cliffty Pond and wilderness because it's just simply wrong. The truth is Charlene your multi – pronged approach should have been implemented years ago when our caribou, cod, and capelin were on the beginning of a decline. Not when the gut has gone out of the eco system. With so many aspects of environment interconnected, if one flounders it poisons the rest. Given the time frame and problems involved to clean up our rural communities from dump sites, indiscriminative dumping, and car wrecks we should really think again about not spreading this diseased attitude to our remote wilderness areas. Government must see the dangers of our past mistakes and given the astounding evidence say no to more Cliffty Ponds becoming a victim of 21<sup>st</sup> century garbage and disconnection. Who in their right mind wants Cliffty Pond to be a dump site or an ecological disaster like some folk's back yard and possibly George River Labrador a lifeless barren. It's preposterous!

On a positive note you are trying to implement change with various stakeholders on the George River caribou issue that's great. However let's leave places like Cliffty Pond and George River in peace. Remote cabin development and human encroachment will never work. Caribou and our precious wildlife need all the room they can get. Given the fact some folks are a danger to themselves let alone to our sensitive eco systems. Limited access is the only way to preserve what wilderness and wildlife we have left. Can we do what is right for our sons and daughters? Cliffty Pond and the George River herd are just two of many ecological examples that government should ethically do justice before it's too late. Hopefully your multi- pronged approach works. Let's bring and end to this massacre and address the issue of George River and remote cabin development equally for all things in wilderness are connected. It's in our attitude. Good Luck

Yours in Conservation Tony O'Leary

Cc: Premier Kathy Dunderdale  
Mr. Shane Mahoney  
The Compass  
The Evening Telegram  
The Newfoundland Sportsman  
E.P.O Tammy Mc Donald  
The Herald