

# Coalition sought to oppose biosolids in Nova Scotia

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The Nova Scotia Environmental Network is seeking to form a coalition of groups opposed to the use of biosolids in the province.

The coalition would include environmental groups, concerned citizens, aboriginal organizations, farmers and possibly some medical groups, said Marilyn Cameron, chairwoman of the network's biosolids and wastewater caucus. "The battle goes on," she said Saturday.

Cameron has made presentations to several municipal councils around the province and has presented the provincial legislature with a petition — bearing 2,800 names from Kings County — which asks for a moratorium on the land application of biosolids.

Cameron said she has received letters from some groups expressing their support and has 70 letters from farmers who are opposed to biosolids use.

The coalition would be called Biosolids Free Nova Scotia. "We want to put more pressure on the government to consider a moratorium," she said. "People are telling me they would like to see a moratorium."

Opponents fear there are thousands of chemicals in the treated sewage sludge from Halifax Regional Municipality that is applied to some area fields, including pharmaceuticals and industrial waste.

Kings County council attempted to get a moratorium from the province last fall to allow the county more time to study the issue. But the NDP government denied the request, saying it does not have the power to restrict the use of approved products or prevent land use activities in specific counties of the province.

Instead, it devised a list of guidelines for the use of biosolids. Environment Minister Sterling Belliveau has regularly defended their use, saying that they are safe. "We have some good, strong science that will confirm that," he said in a recent interview.

"We're monitoring the issue," Richard Melvin, president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture said in an interview Friday.

"From a farmer's point of view, we follow the regulations as they exist in the province. We follow very strenuous food safety protocols in terms of appropriate use of that product and we follow the regulatory guidelines from the Department of Environment."

Biosolids are used mostly for growing grain and corn for livestock feed, Melvin said.

"The product is used in other jurisdictions across Canada and the U.S. We're certainly not the only ones in North America who are using it," he said.

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