



November 8, 2007

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The Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Hon. John Gerretsen
Minister of the Environment
12th Floor, 135 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

The Hon. Donna H. Cansfield
Minister of Natural Resources
Suite 200, 4800 Dundas Street West
Toronto, ON M9A 1B1

Dear Premier, Minister Gerretsen and Minister Cansfield:

We are writing on behalf of our respective organizations as well as other municipal members of the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy Steering Committee (LSEMS) to request an opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss the proposed governance structure for the next phase of LSEMS and the direction that may be taken for this partnership through the "*Lake Simcoe Protection Act*" announced in July 2007.



Your government's focus on Lake Simcoe is most welcome. The lake plays a considerable role in all of its surrounding communities. Its preservation and enhancement is critical to those communities and to the province. It is critical for the legislation to reflect the reality on the ground from those who are charged with protecting the lake.

As you are no doubt aware, the LSEMS Working Group has submitted a report that makes a number of excellent recommendations, including broadening the scope of representation, providing long-term stable funding and increasing the staffing for LSEMS. The Working Group report also suggests the establishment of a new entity to support the new partnership (though it is important to note that not all members of the Working Group supported this recommendation).

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While we agree with many of the Working Group's recommendations, our municipalities and the Conservation Authority are concerned about the jurisdictional overlap, duplication and increased costs that would come with the creation of a new governing entity. At its October 24th and November 7th, 2007, meetings, the LSEMS Steering Committee took the position that it *does not* support the creation of a new entity as suggested by the Working Group and reiterated its support for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority to serve as the secretariat for the new LSEMS partnership. This is the role that the Authority has played effectively since LSEMS' inception in 1990.



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The LSEMS' approach has been successful and works well. Indeed, it was recognized this summer as one of four international finalists for the *Thiess Riverprize Award* in Australia for excellence in water management. We do not believe there is justification for the change in governance suggested by the Working Group.

The impact of the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act*, both in the region and more broadly as a precedent, will be significant. Thorough discussion and consideration is essential to ensure it achieves its intended objectives. Because we are not entirely clear on its status nor the government's intended timing, we hope that you will be available to meet soon. We will make every effort to accommodate a schedule that works for you.

Chair Hackson's office will be in touch with your offices in the coming days to answer any questions and, hopefully, set a date.

Sincerely,



Councillor Virginia Hackson
Chair, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Dick Hibma
Chair, Conservation Ontario

Bill Fisch
Chairman and CEO
Regional Municipality of York