

March 27, 2017

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Dear Mr. Stephen:

Re: Proposed Hydro-electric Generating Station at the Bala Falls

Summary

According to the proponent's technical drawing currently on their web site, their proposed generating station would not comply with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's Phase 1A approval under the *Lakes and River's Improvement Act*. The result would be an increased risk of flooding Lake Muskoka and the thousands of private properties on it.

Detail

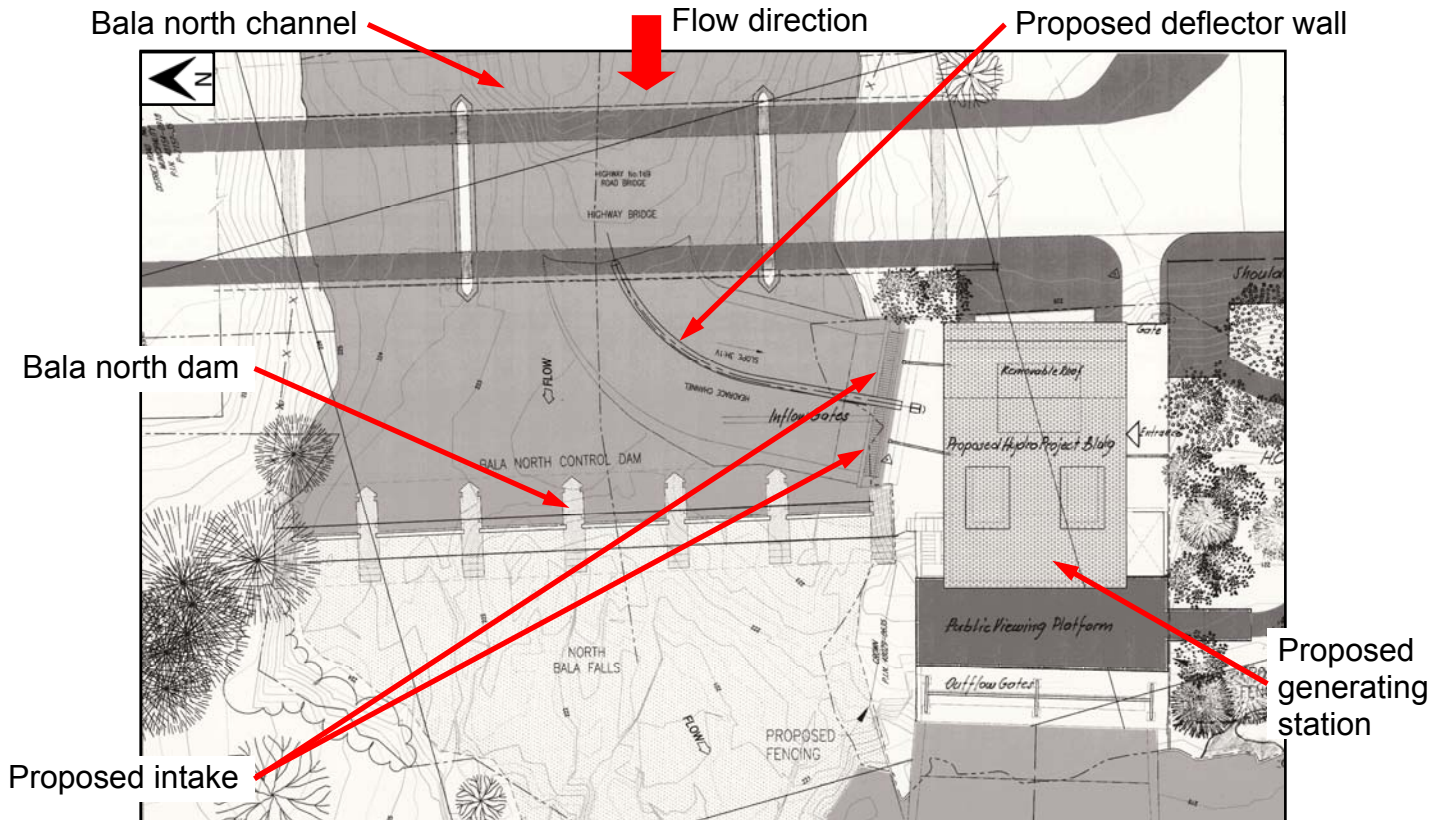
While I continue to await a response to my letters to you dated August 16, 2016 (concerning risk of the proposed cofferdam damaging the Bala north dam and the Highway Bridge) and December 3, 2016 (concerning the ability of the Highway and CP Rail bridges' ability to withstand the increased flow), another issue has come to my attention, as follows.

- Condition 13 of the MNR's *Schedule 'F' – Conditions* of the Phase 1A, Temporary Works approval under the LRIA for the proposed hydro-electric generating station at the Bala falls, dated April 17, 2015, states: "*All six (6) sluices from the north dam shall be unobstructed on both the upstream and downstream locations following an issue of a Flood Watch by Parry Sound District, Bracebridge Field Office.*"
- Sections 6.2.2.3 and 6.3.8.1 of the proponent's 2009 *Environmental Screening/Review* (2009 ESR) report states: "... *there will be no change in hydraulics in further downstream reaches ...*". Also, the proponent's drawings in their 2009 ESR and their 2012 Addendum to it show they would not create any obstructions to flow through the Bala north dam.

However, the proponent's drawings now show they would construct a concrete "*central deflector wall*" to direct flow into the intake of their proposed generating station. For example, the figure below is a section of a technical drawing the proponent currently has posted on their web site at <http://balafalls.ca/plans>

- The concern is that their proposed generating station could stop operation at any time. The proposed deflector wall would then be an obstruction to the flow through several of the Bala north dam's sluices. This obstruction would not comply with the MNR's Phase 1A approval under the LRIA.
- Such an obstruction would reduce the flow capacity through Bala, therefore increasing the risk that high flow events, such as during spring freshet, would flood Lake Muskoka and the thousands of private properties on it.

- Also, when the proposed generating station is not operating, this proposed deflector wall would cause the water to swirl at the east abutment of the District Municipality of Muskoka's Highway Bridge, causing erosion which could undermine the bridge.



Please respond how the public will be:

- Informed that the proponent's construction plans would comply with the MNRF's conditions.
- Assured that the construction of the proposed generating station at the Bala falls would not increase the risk of flooding Lake Muskoka or damage the Highway Bridge.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Shnier

Mitchell Shnier, on behalf of SaveTheBalaFalls.com

Cc: The Honourable Glen Murray, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, GMurray.mpp@liberal.ola.org
Norm Miller, MPP for Parry Sound – Muskoka, Norm.Miller@pc.ola.org
Councillor Phil Harding, Chair of the Engineering and Public Works Committee, District Municipality of Muskoka, Phil.Harding@districtcouncil.ca