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The Honourable Donna Cansfield,  
[dcansfield.mpp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dcansfield.mpp@liberal.ola.org)  
The Honourable George Smitherman,  
[gsmitherman.mpp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:gsmitherman.mpp@liberal.ola.org)

Dear Ms. Cansfield and Mr. Smitherman,

In the last few days, I have seen OPP Officer Larry Butterfield warning swimmers and boaters to stay away from hydro-electric generating stations. This announcement, currently running on various Ontario TV stations, is also sponsored by OPG. At one point Officer Butterfield says the water may not be safe even a **kilometre** from a power plant.

I believe that the OPP and OPG have teamed to make and televise this safety warning because there is validity to what the commercial is saying. It says, "Stay Away." Those two parties have had too much experience with numerous incidents, some resulting in death, when the waters close to power generating plants are mixed with recreational uses.

Based on the experience of the OPP and OPG, it is dumbfounding to me that our Premier wants to put a hydro-electric generating plant in the heart of a well established water recreational area. It is also dumbfounding that your Ministries and the Legislature are going along with his dangerous plan. You are the ones that released Bala Falls as an available site for power generation. Swift River Energy Limited is only the proponent that is planning to do the actual construction and, of course, reap the guaranteed financial rewards.

Historically, there was a power plant beside the Bala North Falls. According to Lorne Jewitt in "Bala, The Way It Was", the dam was built in 1924, closed down in 1957 and demolished in 1972. The Falls were still an attraction back then but the plant was much smaller than the new proposal. The old plant had much less impact with water intake and outflow.

Since 1957 when the plant was shut down, the recreational activity around the falls has increased dramatically. Bala Falls is now a well established recreational swimming and water play area. The waters below are a well known and well used fishing area. People fish both from the shore and from boats. Recreational boating is well established both above and below the falls – within feet of the current falls. Any given day you can see boats cruising and docking at residential docks, a commercial dock and at two government

docks within meters of the falls. These docks and their uses are well established and well known.

The area right beside the falls is the portage route for campers and canoeists on their way to Georgian Bay. This canoe route and its portage have been used for hundreds of years, as documented by artefacts found, and they have historical significance in the area. There is no other good area available to portage from Lake Muskoka to the Moon River.

It is amazing to me, a year round Bala resident, to hear how far some people travel to visit the Bala Falls. I am lucky to have them in my own backyard and I appreciate their beauty and opportunities. However, others travel from all over Muskoka and even from the GTA and farther for a days outing in Bala Falls. This is **not** an obscure bit of water.

I am writing at this time because every time I see Officer Butterfield on the TV telling us to stay away from a power plant, he screams at me that putting a power plant in the Bala Falls is a stupid idea. The ad just says STUPID over and over. I could use a more refined word like unwise or foolish or ill-advised but I think you understand stupid. This site should be made an unavailable site just as it was made an available site.

I would appreciate responses to my concerns. I do not want the usual dialogue about the required Environmental Assessment that Swift River Energy must do to pass the regulations. To me, that is “passing the buck”. I would appreciate hearing that YOU care about the lives of the residents of Bala. I would like to know if YOU care about the existence of a small tourist community that thrives because of its natural beauty and natural attractions. Tell me if YOU care about the multi-generations of folks who want to continue to use the Bala Falls, the Moon River and Bala Bay as the recreational area they have come to appreciate. Some families have been using the area since the 1800’s. Are the folks who have bought more recently because of the recreational opportunities at their doorstep to be trampled over?

I hope you will listen to the **OPP** and **OPG** and keep the power generation away from a well established, well used and well loved water playground. They (OPP and OPG) already know the dangers such a move could create. Respect the lives of the citizens you are elected to protect.

Yours truly,

Patricia Gidley

c.c. Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier (fax 416-325-3745)

c.c. Norm Miller, MPP

Norm, would you be kind enough to deliver a copy of this letter to the Premier’s office as I don’t know if my emails reach him. Thank You.

c.c. Tony Clement, MP