

Proposed Bala Falls Power Station

THERE IS TOO MUCH WE DON'T KNOW



Proposed Bala Falls Power Station

still

THERE IS TOO MUCH WE DON'T KNOW

- Same presenter
- Same venue
- Same title
- Same unaddressed concerns
- Two years later!

We all agree renewable energy is best

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- We agree renewable “green energy” is the best source of power
 - But not at **any** cost
 - And not as proposed by the proponent
- The only question being asked:
 - Is this particular proposal (vague as it is) and this particular proponent acceptable

Some of what we don't know ...

Proponent's Environmental Screening Report

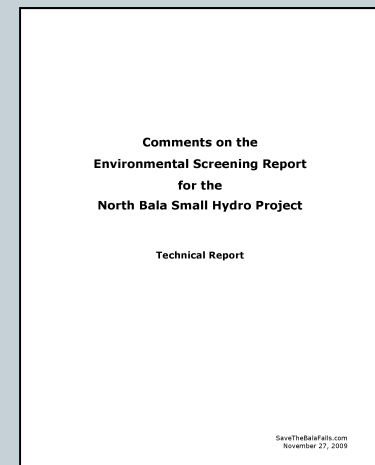
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- Proponent's 600-page environmental screening report did not respond to our concerns

**SIGNIFICANT
UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS**



- Our 60-page response requested 69 issues be addressed
 - Reasonable requests about serious issues
 - A year later, 67 issues remain outstanding
 - ✦ Let's look at a few of them ...

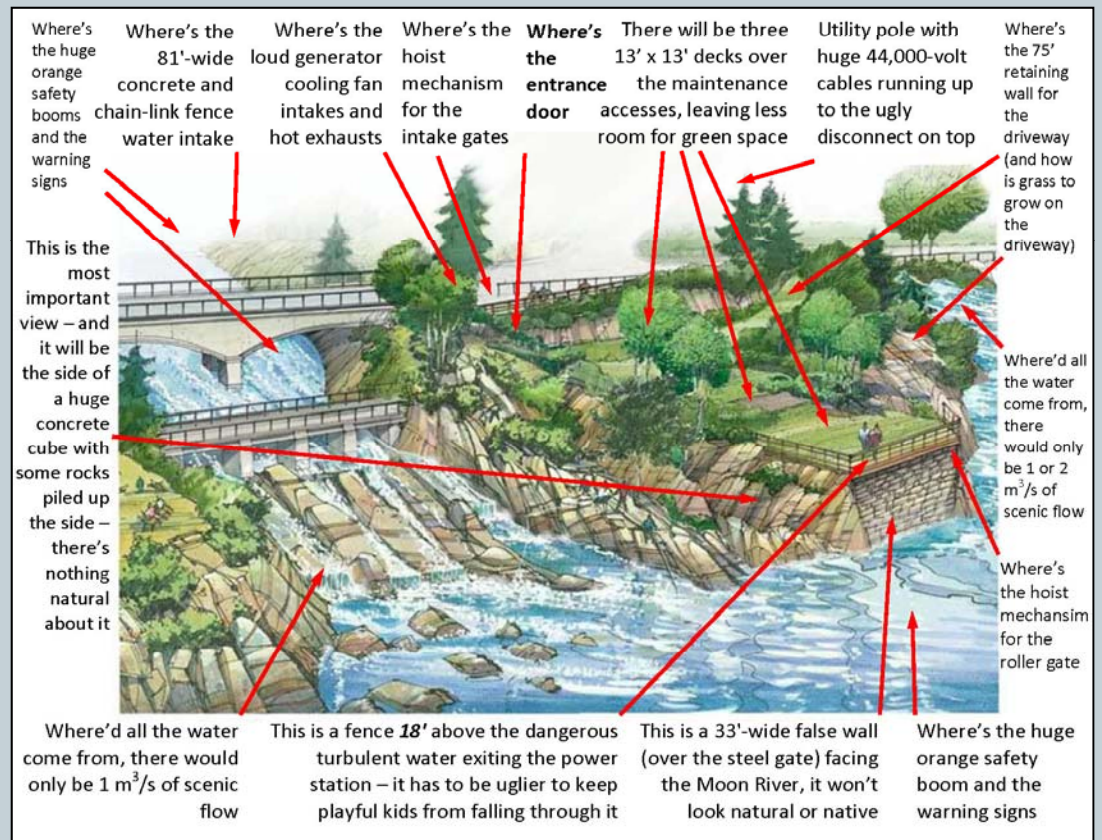


Appearance

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- If the appearance would be acceptable
 - Why do they refuse to provide any detail of this
 - ✦ After 2 years of asking

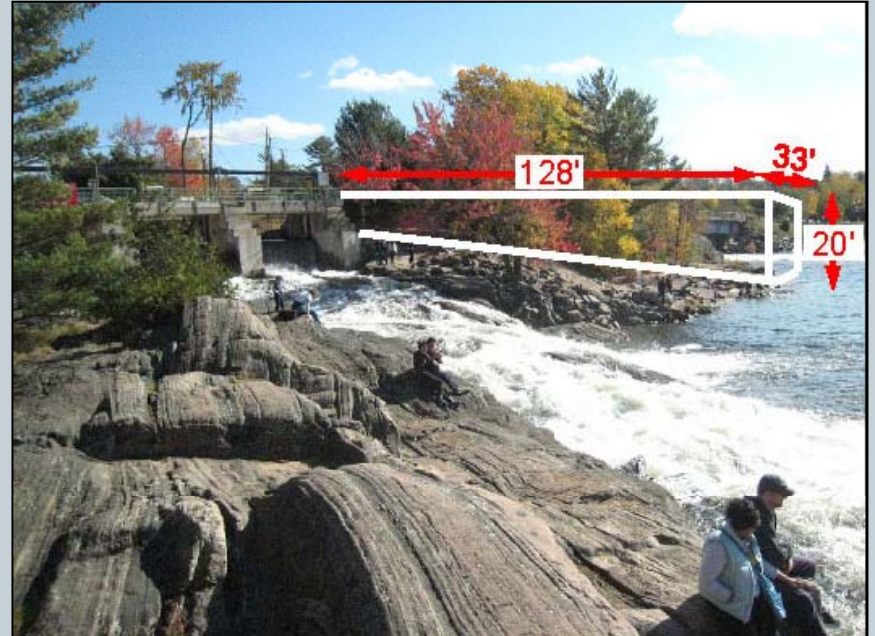
SIGNIFICANT UNANSWERED QUESTIONS



Plant is not “buried” or “underground”

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- The proponent repeatedly states the proposed power station would be “buried” or “underground”
 - Yet it would be 20' above the Moon River, 33' wide, and 128' long
 - ✦ Same as a 4-unit, 2-storey row townhouse
 - And directly in view from the most common vantage point



**CONFLICTING
INFORMATION**

Operating Noise

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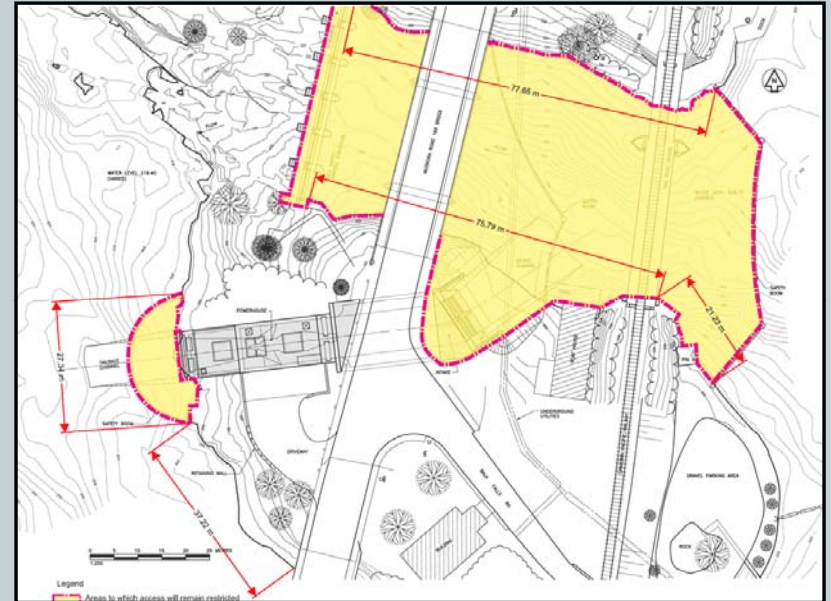
- **Proponent's noise calculations:**
 - Include only 2 of the 5 noise sources
 - Assumes listeners would be over 100 m away
 - ✦ The public would actually be directly adjacent
 - Assumes 8"-thick solid concrete walls
 - ✦ But there would be large openings for fans – which would themselves make noise

**SIGNIFICANT
UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS**

Shoreline would be too dangerous for access

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- The proponent's own drawings show that the proposed project would make hundreds of metres of the only publicly-accessible shoreline in the area too dangerous for the public to get near
 - Then why does the proponent call this FICTION



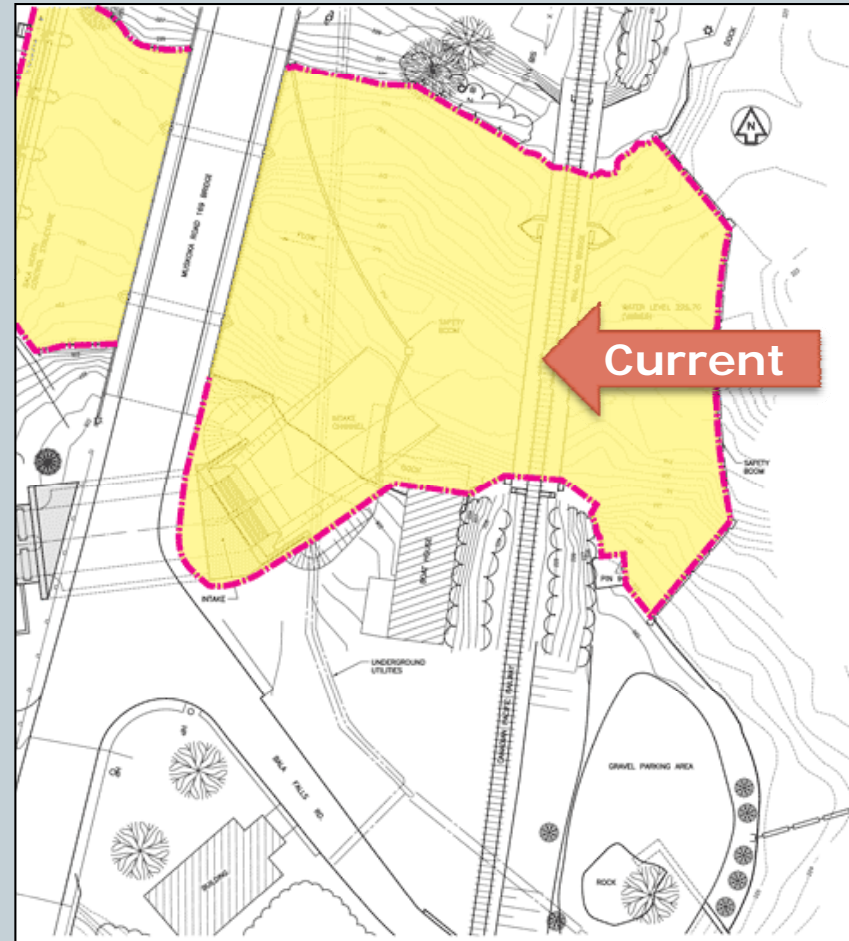
**CONFLICTING
INFORMATION**

Safety boom is dangerous

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- The upstream safety boom is a known dangerous design
 - Yet the proponent considers it safe
 - ✦ Transport Canada has not responded to our concerns
 - ✦ Apparently, we need to do our own “approvals”

**CONFLICTING
INFORMATION**



OPP/OPG's Stay Clear, Stay Safe Rules

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- The proponent claims that all dams are dangerous
 - But the OPG literature specifically says it is the unannounced changing water flow that is the danger
- Proponent has repeatedly stated plant would be run-of-river
 - But their own meeting minutes confirm they would need to cycle the plant off and on daily during the summer in-water recreation times



**CONFLICTING
INFORMATION**

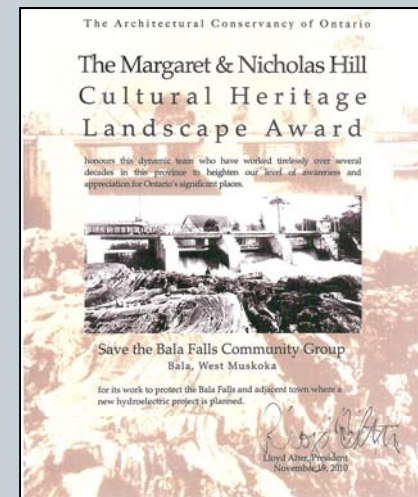
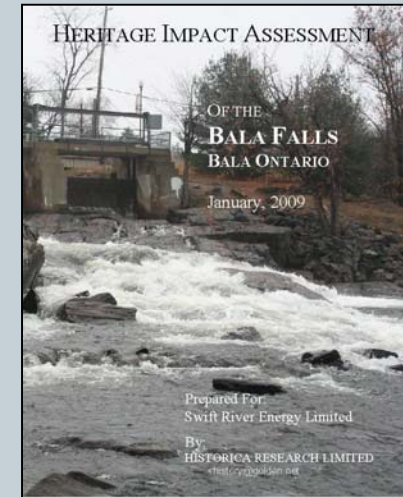
Heritage Impact Assessment

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- The proponent concluded there would be no heritage impact
 - Then why did the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario award SaveTheBalaFalls the *Cultural Heritage Landscape Award* for our “work to protect the Bala Falls and adjacent town”

It's not just about the falls

CONFLICTING INFORMATION



Economic Impact Study

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- The proponent states “Conclusions from the study state that the project’s economic impacts will be positive”, yet the study says:
 - “...there is no information ... to indicate how many tourists visit each year, ... and how much they spend on average
 - “impacts to local business ... have not been estimated

CONFLICTING
INFORMATION



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Distribution

Independent Economic Impact Study of the North Bala Sm all Hydro Project concludes “Economic Benefits Of The Project Are Significant”

Toronto, ON – November 4, 2018 – The Independent Economic Impact Study prepared by the Centre For Spatial Economics (CSE) is complete. This study investigated both the short and long term economic impacts of the SREI’s proposed Bala Falls Small Hydro Project, including surveying over 100 local businesses. Conclusions from the study state that the project’s economic impacts will be positive. Highlights of the Study’s conclusions include:

- Many Bala businesses are in a position to provide products or services needed during the construction phase of the project.
- Over the construction phase the District of Muskoka stands to benefit from \$3.6 million of additional labour income, 63 person years of work and \$155,000 in municipal revenues.
- Local spending in the District of Muskoka is estimated to be \$10.8 million, generating an additional \$5.5 million in GDP in the region.
- Over the operational phase the District benefits from an annual increase in labour income of \$372,000, the creation of 7 new jobs and annual municipal tax gains of \$75,000.
- The Province will gain an additional \$7 million in GDP over the construction phase and an additional \$2.6 million of GDP annually over the operation phase.

“In other words the economic benefits of the project are significant”.

The study finds that there is potential for the Bala Community to share in these economic benefits both:

- Directly through participation of local businesses in supplying goods and services to SREI, in both construction and operational phases of the project, and
- Indirectly through the cascading effects that increased construction-induced business would have on other business activities in the area.

SREI would like to thank all the local businesses that participated in the survey and the Township of Muskoka Lakes and the Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce for their assistance with the development of the survey and business list.

SREI remains committed to working with the community on this new wide energy project that will help Ontario realize its goals under the Green Energy Act and help to stimulate the local economy. The Green Energy Act is the single largest green house gas reduction initiative in all of North America.

Contact:
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Website: www.swiftriver.ca

You can also view this News Release and the Study on our website at:
<http://www.swiftriver.ca>

Economic Impact Study

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- If the project would be beneficial to Bala, why are virtually all businesses – including the main hotel and grocery store – against the proposed project

**SIGNIFICANT
UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS**

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE
NORTH BALA FALLS SMALL HYDRO PROJECT



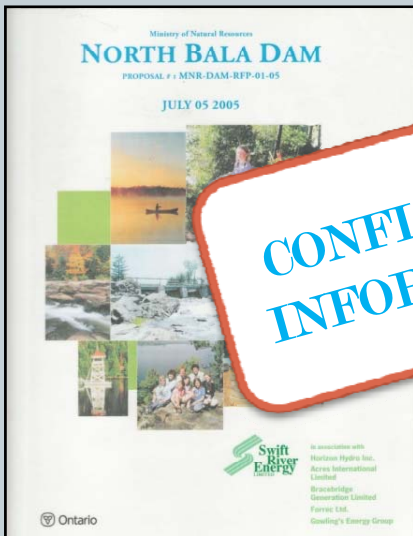
November 2010

C4SE
THE CENTRE FOR SPATIAL ECONOMICS

Original Option 1 does not fit on Crown land

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- For **over 5 years** the proponent has said their original Option 1 could be built on just the Crown land
- Yet their own drawings show this could not be done



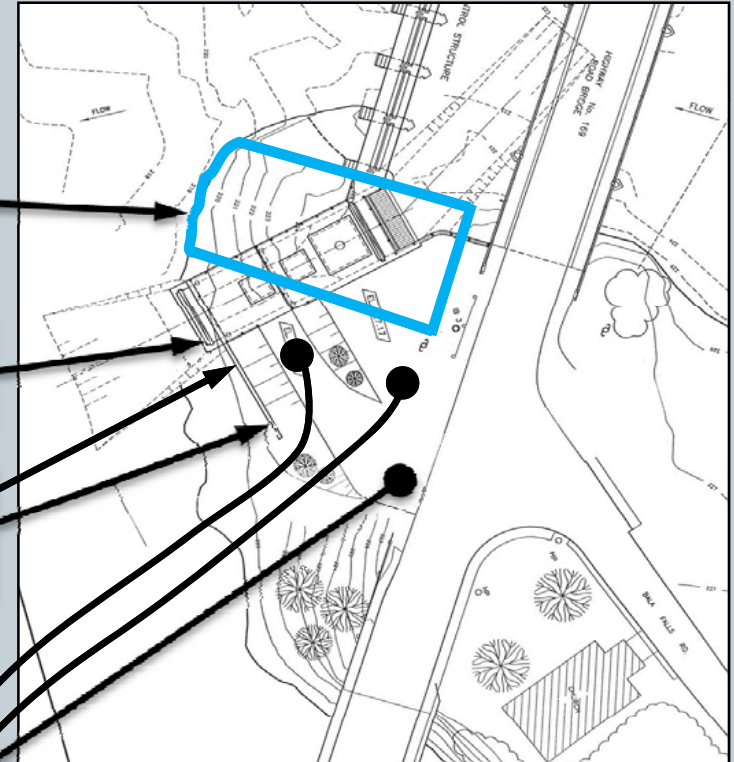
CONFLICTING INFORMATION

MNR Land

Plant doesn't fit

Retaining wall

Two-level driveway and parking

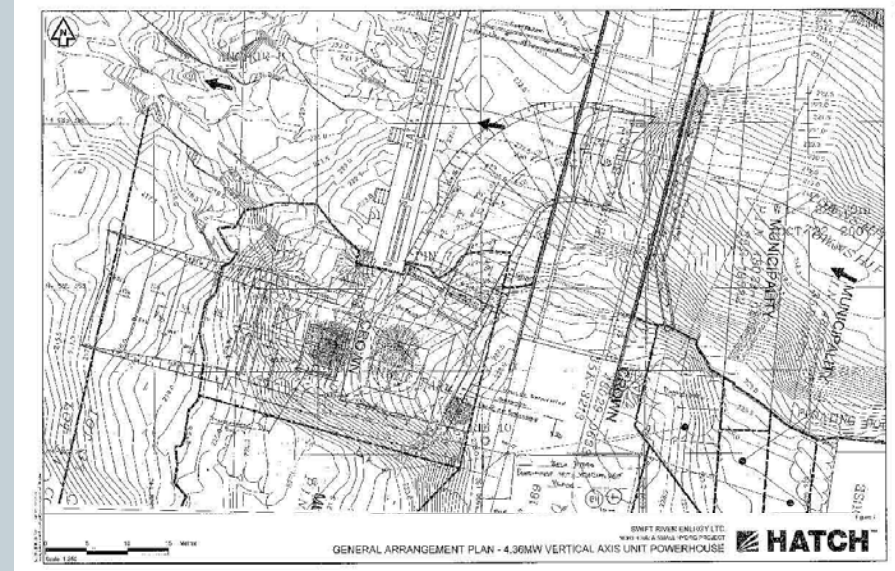


“Recent” Option 1

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- Proponent claims recent “Option 1” would not need an environmental assessment (or perhaps just an addendum)
 - But Ministry of the Environment confirms more would be required

**CONFLICTING
INFORMATION**



Scenic Flow Distribution Committee

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- Convened to receive community input on acceptable scenic flow over the falls
- More than one committee member reports:
 - Proponent's minutes from the crucial last meeting were not approved by the committee
 - Pre-agreed optional fourth meeting never held to complete work
 - Input and corrections to minutes have not been accepted
- Letter detailing member's concerns sent to MoE

**CONFLICTING
INFORMATION**

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Mr. Adam Szabo
Project Evaluator, Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch
Ministry of the Environment
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416 314-8220
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Dear Mr. Szabo,

Re: Bath Falls Hydro Project

As a participant of the Scenic Flow Committee convened by the proponent for the above project, I am writing with my concerns about our Committee's lack of completion. We had three evening meetings a week apart, but have only approved the minutes of the first two meetings. The first two meetings were mostly information input from the proponent and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

It was the important third meeting when we attempted to draw up recommendations regarding the scenic flow. This third meeting started at 6:00 pm, as usual with sandwiches provided, and finished at about 10:45 pm with most participants exhausted. (A couple of members then had to drive back to Toronto).

One Committee member came to the meeting having done research on the Niagara agreement in which the scenic flow is assigned as a percentage of the total flow. This concept was well received by a number of members. It is obviously generally accepted as it has been in place for Niagara Falls for more than 50 years, for the same purpose - the tourist draw of the falls.

However, the proponent's Ms. McOles said she would not work with that concept. She wanted a chart with allocation of specific flows for specific time periods. We started with one chart and tried to move through the year. We did not have time (or energy) to complete the whole year.

Ms. McOles was the self-appointed secretary for all our minutes and she was in charge of drawing up the charts. Spending only for myself, I was not in agreement with all her figures on the charts. It was my understanding that no minutes would be forwarded to the Ministry of the Environment until approved by our Committee as per #6 under the Code of Conduct we were given:

"6. Only final recommendations that have been passed with a Committee consensus will be released publicly (by the Chair)."

Two years later: No new information

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- **These are the facts:**
 - Proponent continues to avoid answering questions about public safety, tourism, and the local economy
 - Or provides information found to be conflicting
- **As far as we know, the proponent has not made any changes to their project as a result of public input**
 - Even Option 2 was for the proponent's benefit
 - Responses just repeat evasive answers
 - No new information has been provided

Individual Environmental Assessment

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- Only an elevation to an *Individual Environmental Assessment* allows public input
 - So the proponent will be required to respond to the community's concerns
- The proposed project would be a **40-year commitment**
 - Now is the time to get the community's concerns addressed

Thank you for your time

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- We realize this is a somewhat local issue to the Township of Muskoka Lakes
 - Our ask:

That District Council and Staff work closely with Township Council and Staff to resolve the unknowns

- Thank you for your time
- Please contact us for more details:
 - Mitchell Shnier: Info@SaveTheBalaFalls.com