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December 9, 2013

Honourable Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario and Minister of Provincial Parliament, Don Valley West  
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Dear Premier Wynne:

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

Thank you for arranging for the Ministry of Natural Resources to respond to my September 11, 2013 e-mail to you.

### **Responsibility for Public Safety**

In the MNR's October 22, 2013 response I was **shocked** to read that it would be solely the **responsibility of the proponent** to operate the proposed station safely. This would be an **impossible task** as the proponent's signed agreement with Ontario Power Generation **requires** the proposed Bala station to start operation at about noon during the summer, exactly when children and other visitors would be in the water **just feet away**.

With no standards for such public safety, and this for-profit shell of a company (it has no assets, no operations, and no employees) now trying to **sell itself** and the approvals they have received, it is clear that rather than serving the public's interest, the only beneficiaries would be a few private and greedy investors who live elsewhere and who refuse to negotiate to provide scenic flow over the falls or even to let us know the appearance of their proposed concrete structure at the beautiful Bala falls.

### **Apologies, Regret, and Change**

Premier Wynne, there has been much press lately about apologies – such as for many aboriginal issues, by Toronto's Mayor Ford, and your own statements concerning the costs of the cancelled gas generating stations. Regret and apologies are only meaningful if they include change for the future. You now have this opportunity.

Encouragingly, your own statements on CBC's *Ontario Today* last week showed your commitment to "get this right". The large number of postcards sent to your office and the Thanksgiving Rally at the Falls shows that the residents and Township would not be a "willing host". It is **not right** to locate the treacherously-turbulent water exiting this proposed hydro-electric generating station at a popular and important in-water recreational area.

The MNR's suggested alternative of swimming at Jaspen Park just won't work. People don't and won't come to Bala to see the non-descript and difficult to access beach at Jaspen Park that is sometimes closed due to bacterial contamination. The proponent can't make people go to there. **Touching the water at the Bala Falls** is what draws people to Bala.

From the many environmental issues that the Ministry of the Environment has chosen to ignore it is clear;

- This is past being an environmental issues, it is a political issue – that you can solve.
- The environmental approvals were politically-motivated, therefore meaningless and mostly for the run-of-river project which the proponent has since abandoned – and not for the current cycled proposal.
- That your government's rush to implement renewable energy at all costs is unfortunately blind to the drowning dangers this project would be create.

As anyone in the hydro-electric business will confirm, every site is different. In this case, **Bala is unique** that;

- All through the summer people are in the water within feet of the proposed tailrace.
- The area businesses depend on the tourist draw of the falls, which the proposed station would destroy.

Your government's demonstrated approval of everything proposed is just not right.

### **An Opportunity to “get this right”**

Premier, my last letter to you closed off with “Please respond with what actions you will take to ensure the safety of vacationing families”. The MNR's only response is they would pass this impossible task to the proponent. Rather than magically solving the mess created by the environmental approvals which have apparently been granted for political reasons, this would be irresponsible and irrational and create an embarrassment.

Premier, please do “get this right” by ensuring public safety – and Bala's economy – is actually protected by ensuring there are no more politically-motivated approvals, such as the MNR's Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act *Plans and Specifications* process.

Sincerely,



Mitchell Shnier, on behalf of SaveTheBalaFalls.com

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