

Proposed hydro-electric generating station at the Bala falls

Premier Wynne, we care about:

- **Public safety**
- **Bala's economy**

Why don't you?

The Government of Ontario began this process over ten years ago, stating they would require Bala's tourism and economy to be maintained.

The developer committed they would *not generally diminish the public's enjoyment of the area for swimming or boating.*

We now know the proposed project would be deadly dangerous, and the government is not requiring the developer to:

- Provide a plan of how they think this could be operated safely.
- Present a construction plan that doesn't risk flooding Lake Muskoka.

As the developer is **reneging on safety commitments** they made, the government can **cancel this proposed project without having to pay any costs or penalty.**



Bala's economy is based on tourism



While Bracebridge and other towns have a diversified economy, Bala's is based on tourism. Anybody can wade or fish for free, bring a picnic lunch and climb on the rocks for free, even the parking and washrooms are free.

But the proposed Bala generating station would make all this water and shoreline too dangerous, and would take 94% of the water from the falls – further harming the area's economy.

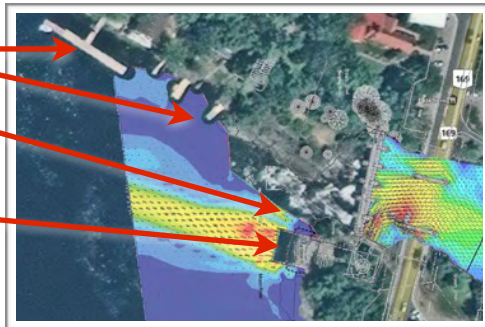
In 2008, a 16-year-old boy drowned due to the turbulent water exiting the nearby Wilson's Falls generating station – the danger is *real*.

The proposed Bala generating station would be just a few feet from the extremely popular in-water recreational areas in these photographs.

Public and private docks

Base of the Bala north falls

The fast, turbulent, and churning water exiting the proposed generating station would be just a few feet from the extremely popular in-water recreational area



Hydro-electric generating stations in the wrong place are deadly

"something ... pulled [him] under the water"

"We want to make sure it doesn't happen again"

Bracebridge
EXAMINER

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Family seeks inquest into drowning

by Karen Longwell

The family of Josue Sebastian Perez, the 16-year-old boy who drowned in Bracebridge July 26, claims that unanswered questions continue to swirl around the death.

"Sabbie" as Perez was known to friends and family, died near the Wilson's Falls generating station where he had been swimming with six friends July 26. Ontario Provincial Police found his body July 27. Perez's family says they wonder why a strong, physically fit boy perished in the river. They also want to raise awareness about the dangers of the Muskoka River.

Some reports claimed Sebastian was not a strong swimmer. Jorge Perez, Sebastian's father, said Sebastian had taken swimming lessons and was involved in sports in particular skateboarding. He had been to swimming spots in the area this summer and last year, his father indicated.

"He's very sports minded," said Perez. "I would say he was a very strong swimmer."

Perez said it is not clear at this time how the accident happened.

"One of his friends said there was an eddy or a whirlpool," he said in a telephone interview from New York.

The friends believe something – either a natural occurrence or from the generating station – pulled Sebastian under the water, said longtime family friend Alan Preyra.

Inquest sought into Wilson's Falls drowning

(Continued from front)

"It is devastating for the family," he said. Preyra has been a friend of the East York family for about 12 years.

The fund, started on July 31, aims to do two things: help Sebastian's parents Jorge and Isabel Perez with funeral costs, and help them raise public awareness of the dangers of the area around Wilson's Falls.

Contributions to the fund reached about \$2,000 as of Aug. 11.

Unfortunately, the Perez family does not have a lot of money and found it difficult to meet the funeral costs.

The family also wants to ensure other families do not have to go through a similar tragedy.

"We want to make sure it doesn't happen again," said Preyra.

He also hopes Jorge and Isabel Perez would be able to do a talk at Sebastian's school. Sebastian was a popular teen at East York Collegiate.

About 200 of his classmates attended his funeral, Preyra said.

Sebastian had just turned 16 years old in July. He has an identical twin brother and an 18-year-old brother.

Perez said the family is trying to return to regular life.

"We have to continue ...," he said. Perez said it is particularly difficult for Sebastian's twin, who had a special link with his brother.

In a website memorial to Sebastian, the teen is described as easygoing and fun-loving.

"He was possessed with an outgoing personality, a lively imagination and a mellowed

Bracebridge Generation, the owner/ operator of the Wilson's Falls generating station reported at an industry conference that **the drowning was due to the turbulent water exiting their generating station.**

The proposed Bala station would be far more dangerous, as it would:

- Have more than ten times the flow.
- Be in an area far more popular for in-water recreation.
- Start, without warning or local operator, at about noon on summer days.



Incident Review

- OPP informed us that there was a group of boys skateboarding in the area.
- They were looking for a place to swim to cool down.
- Local resident gave them directions to a public swimming area. We believe they drove past and ended up at our generation site.
- The oldest was 21, the youngest was 12. Jose was 14 years old. The 21 year old climbed over the rocks, jumped in and swam through the discharge from the tailrace and over the rocks on the falls.
- The youngest refused to go, thinking it was too unsafe. Jose was coerced by his peers into the water where he attempted to swim though the current but was overcome and didn't make it.

The Government of Ontario has cancelled proposed wind turbine projects at Ostrander Point and Thunder Bay to protect turtle and moose habitat.

Why won't the government protect people?

Why is the government protecting a private developer who is reneging on their public safety commitments for Bala?

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP SAVE THE BALA FALLS

- 1) **Subscribe** to our e-Newsletter
 - The link is at the top-right at SaveTheBalaFalls.com
- 2) Become a **Member** of SaveTheBalaFalls.com
 - Click the Membership tab
- 3) Follow us on **Twitter** at @SaveBalaFalls
 - We're also on **Facebook** at Save the Bala Falls
- 4) Learn about the issue
 - Articles are all listed in the right-column
- 5) Make a **donation**
 - The Donation tab has details on how you can receive a charitable donation tax receipt
 - We need to build up our Legal Challenge Fund
- 6) Ask your MPP why the province will protect turtles and moose, but not people
- 7) Contact us if you have any questions or comments
 - We're at info@SaveTheBalaFalls.com

