

Ministry of the Environment,  
Conservation and Parks

Ministère de l'Environnement,  
de la Protection de la nature et des  
Parcs



Office of the Minister

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Mr. Mitchell Shnier  
Email: Mitchell@Shnier.com

Dear Mr. Shnier:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposed hydro-electric generating station at Bala Falls.

I appreciate being made aware of your concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed dam on recreational activities. I am aware that you and John Laforet recently met with David Donovan, my Director of Policy, to discuss this matter, and appreciate this opportunity to respond to your concerns.

I am advised that, as part of the ministry's review of the project, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) staff were satisfied that the Project met the requirements of the Electricity Guide for assessing potential impacts to the surrounding water flows and levels.

As part of the review of the elevation requests and the appeals, MECP staff liaised with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), which was satisfied that the operation of the Project would not significantly impact lake levels and that flows of Lake Muskoka would continue to be in accordance with the requirements of the Muskoka River Water Management Plan.

Furthermore, ministry decisions were made with the understanding that MNR would be responsible for ensuring Swift River Energy Limited is in compliance with its standards, and that Swift River Energy Limited would be required to obtain Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act approval for the Project. Also, it was understood that Swift River Energy Limited would be required to prepare an amendment to the Muskoka River Water Management Plan for inclusion of the hydroelectric facility, prior to the Project proceeding to implementation.

Should you have any concerns in regard to the above, I encourage you to contact Dan Duggan, District Manager, Parry Sound District, MNR, at (705) 773-4236 or [dan.duggan@ontario.ca](mailto:dan.duggan@ontario.ca)

Mr. Mitchell Shnier  
Page 2.

I understand that the area immediately downstream of the North Bala Dam is currently designated as a "no swimming" zone due to its proximity to the North Bala Dam, and that it was designated and signed as a "no swimming" zone prior to the Class EA for the project. New signage is proposed for the areas around the North and South Bala Dams to advise the public of these dangers and to restrict the public from certain areas. Other nearby areas, such as Diver's Point will continue to be unaffected by the project operation and will continue to be a safe location for recreational activity.

In order to protect public and boating safety, high velocity areas will be restricted by safety booms, signage and/or fencing, and will be inaccessible by boats.

Transport Canada stated that the conditions at the municipal dock will not be significantly different from current conditions with respect to boat embarking and disembarking, and therefore it is satisfied that the project will not negatively impact the surrounding environment from a navigational perspective.

Finally, I am advised that MNRF will be reviewing the public safety plan prior to operation, and that the company has also committed to making this plan public once it is finished.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rod Phillips", with a long, sweeping underline.

Rod Phillips  
Minister