



APR 24 2017

MNR6446MC-2017-501

RECEIVED APR 26 2017

Norm Miller, MPP
Parry Sound-Muskoka
1-165 Manitoba Street
Bracebridge ON P1L 1S3

Dear Mr. Miller:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituents regarding the Bala North dam small hydro project. I would like to provide you with the following information to address the concerns summarized in your letter.

Swift River Energy Limited (SREL) completed the requirements under the *Environmental Assessment Act* for the Bala North dam small hydro project. The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) provided SREL with the authority to proceed with the project subject to conditions of the environmental assessment approval and any other applicable approvals and permits.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) has finalized and issued a Licence of Occupation under the *Public Lands Act* and a work permit with authorization under the *Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act* (LRIA) to SREL. These documents allow SREL to begin Phase I construction on the associated Crown lands. At this time, there are no additional MNR or MOECC approvals required by SREL to begin Phase I site preparation and pre-facility construction activities as identified in the plans provided with that application. SREL has submitted an application for a work permit under the LRIA for Phase II activities, including construction of the facility. This application is in the final stages of review by MNR staff.

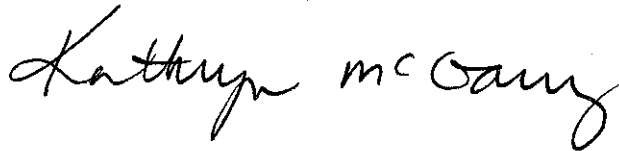
If you would like to know the status of all applicable approvals related to this project, please visit www.balafalls.ca/approvals/.

With regard to concerns about public safety around the dam and waterpower facility, my ministry has been very clear that areas above and below dams and waterpower facilities are hazardous and, therefore, not suitable locations for in-water recreation. MNR has a public safety measures plan in place for the Bala dams. SREL will be required to update this plan. The updated safety plan will be expected to identify and address potential hazards created by the dams and the operations of the facility. In addition, the proponent has addressed safety through its EA approvals and Transport Canada approvals.

Our government is committed to expanding clean, renewable sources of energy such as waterpower because we believe it is important that Ontarians have a reliable and sustainable supply of electricity in the future.

I trust that this information will be helpful to you in addressing your constituents' concerns. Thank you again for writing.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn McGarry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'K'.

Kathryn McGarry
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: The Honourable Glen Murray, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change