



ISSN 1180-5218

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 23 September 2015

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 23 septembre 2015

**Standing Committee on
General Government**

Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2015 sur la protection
des Grands Lacs

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
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Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Wednesday 23 September 2015

Mercredi 23 septembre 2015

The committee met at 1600 in committee room 2.

**GREAT LAKES PROTECTION ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES GRANDS LACS**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to protect and restore the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant la protection et le rétablissement du bassin des Grands Lacs et du fleuve Saint-Laurent.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Good afternoon, everyone. It's 4 o'clock. I'd like to call the meeting of the Standing Committee on General Government to order. Today we're here to discuss and have public hearings with regard to Bill 66, An Act to protect and restore the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin. I'd like to welcome all members of the committee back to work, and also the members of the public who are here today and those who are making deputations.

We will be conducting business this afternoon on an order from the House. We will have presentations of up to five minutes, and also up to nine minutes of questioning. I would like members of the three parties to keep in mind that there will be a vote on the opposition day motion this afternoon; we anticipate it at closer to 6 o'clock, so I would ask everyone to be as efficient and effective in your questioning as possible.

**REGISTERED NURSES'
ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO**

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Having said that, I will ask that the first delegation come forward, from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. We have, I believe, Kim Jarvi and Tim Lenartowych with us. Welcome, gentlemen.

Mr. Tim Lenartowych: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My name is Tim Lenartowych, and I'm the director of nursing and health policy with RNAO. I am being joined by Kim Jarvi, who is our senior economist. It's our pleasure to be here this afternoon to talk about Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act. I just want to express our gratitude to the committee.

I would like Kim to go through RNAO's feedback, and I would be happy to answer questions as well.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Hi. Let me say, first of all, that we do welcome Bill 66. It's an important step forward in the protection of a healthy environment in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin. Our focus is on health, so it's the health benefits of environmental protection that motivate us. In particular, we're interested in reducing toxics and other pollutants, and the bill offers that possibility, particularly in its current form, so we're very optimistic that this can go places where we want it to go.

I am going to jump straight to our discussion of the bill itself and leave any background reading which is in our report to the committee. First, what I'd like to look at is features we liked and things that we would like to change in the bill.

The bill itself has three major elements that I'm going to address here. One is that it articulates guiding principles. It's important that they're actually in the bill itself. Those principles include an ecosystem approach, a precautionary approach and government accountability.

Secondly, and very important for us, there's language addressing pollutants now in the bill. That includes the purpose: to protect human health and well-being through the elimination or reduction of harmful pollutants. It includes ensuring the monitoring and reporting of harmful pollutants, and more generally reporting on and monitoring ecological conditions. Finally, it allows for policy tools that could require the reduction of harmful pollutants. These are all very helpful, in our view.

Third, the bill mandates a Great Lakes Strategy and the associated monitoring and reporting. That, for us, is important from the point of view of delivering transparency and accountability. From the point of view of effectiveness, the feature of targets and the preparation of plans to meet those targets is also very important.

That leads me to our first area that we would like strengthened: those targets and planning. It's very important to have them, but for the most part they're not mandatory, except in the case of the reduction of algal blooms. It would be much more powerful if the target setting and planning were mandatory.

Our biggest concern, actually, is with the change in Bill 66 that would allow for exemptions of "any person or class of persons from any provision of this act or the regulations, subject to such conditions or restrictions as may be prescribed by the regulations."

That leads us to our three recommendations. Number one, we would strongly urge the government to remove

any provisions enabling discretionary exemptions from the Great Lakes Protection Act, and that includes the removal of paragraph 38(1)(l).

Our second area of recommendations is on toxics, targets and planning. We're trying here to inject a sense of urgency into the proceedings. It's a compound recommendation:

(a) Amend section 9(1) to make target setting mandatory. As it is right now, it's not mandatory.

(b) Amend section 9(5) to make planning to achieve those targets mandatory as well.

(c) We would like to bump up the timeline on the target that is mandatory for reduction of algal blooms in paragraph 9(2) from two years to one year. We believe that one year should be sufficient time to get this going—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Oh, we're done. Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): My apologies. We're going to have to stay right on time today. Thank you very much for your presentation.

We will start with the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate you being here today and sharing your deputation. When you considered your recommendations that you shared with us today, have you gone outside of your organization, just to pulse check to see what is already going on in terms of Great Lakes protection?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Yes, we consulted with the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance. We reviewed their submission and we've endorsed it. We actually mention that endorsement in the submission.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. Have you met with or had any correspondence or discussions with source water protection committees?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: No.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Have you met, discussed or exchanged correspondence with any watershed organizations, to discuss the initiatives that they're involved in?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: With the exception of working through the GLPAA, no. Our interest is chiefly in pollutant reduction. That's our expertise.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: As is everyone's.

Have you discussed or shared any correspondence or tossed around ideas with organizations like the Ontario Federation of Agriculture?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: No.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Interesting. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good afternoon. Kim, you were this close to finishing. Had you more time, what was it you were about to read into the record?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Thank you very much for the opportunity. We would like to add a paragraph to make at least one pollution reduction target mandatory within the first year. We would add that we'd urge the government to make all of those targets ambitious.

Finally, we would like to add a reference to the principles of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to the bill.

I want to thank you very much for that opportunity.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Just following what Ms. Thompson had asked about other organizations you may or may not have consulted with, have you ever in the past or will you in the future be working with, say, conservation authorities when you come to speak, say, about algae blooms? They also have some serious concerns; maybe you could work together on that.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: I think we would be prepared to work with a broad range of groups. Again, our focus and expertise is in the area of toxics and pollutants.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Have you, through the nurses' association, pointed any fingers at any group or organization that you feel is more to blame or more the cause of any algae blooms that we've seen in recent years?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: We haven't addressed that in our material.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Do you see it as more of a holistic approach, then?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: It's an issue of nutrient loading, and so obviously it's something that I think that you'd have to work on with all stakeholders on the margins of the watershed.

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Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Hatfield. We'll move to the government side. Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Mr. Jarvi, for being here today. As you said in the beginning of your presentation, Bill 66 is an important step forward. I really appreciate the work your organization has been doing for such a long time. You and your organization have been a strong advocate for increased environmental protections. We all understand that the Great Lakes are an essential part of our heritage and they are vital to the success of our province.

Being an economist, we also know that the Great Lakes' regional economy is the fourth largest in the world, and it contributes billions of dollars to our economy through agriculture, shipping, clean hydro power, fisheries and tourism, to name a few.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Yes.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: As we move forward, can you suggest how the government can involve your organization, the organization of nurses, and what value do you see for their involvement?

Mr. Kim Jarvi: Again, where our expertise lies is in the human health effects of the environment. So in any consultations when it involves pollutants and toxic control, that's where we would have the greatest value added.

Mr. Tim Lenartowych: And if I can add as well, just in follow-up to the feedback that we've provided in terms of advancing targets and providing at least one target within the first year, I think that would be a very great

opportunity for nurses to be able to provide feedback on what that target should be and how it can be measured.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So what you're trying to say is that the Great Lakes Strategy sets out Ontario's road map—right?—so regular review and reporting would be important.

Mr. Kim Jarvi: It's absolutely essential, yes. That's true of any major environmental initiative, but I think that's an important feature of the bill.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, gentlemen, for coming forward and sharing your views. We appreciate that.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next on the agenda, from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, we have Kim Perrotta with us as the executive director. Welcome. You have five minutes.

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Thank you very much. First of all, I'd just like to introduce myself. I'm new in the position of executive director with CAPE. I've only been in the job two or three months now. But I've got a master's degree in health science, and I've been working on environmental health issues for 30 years for organizations such as Toronto Public Health, Halton Region Health Department and the Ontario Public Health Association. What you're going to hear from me today represents kind of a public health focus. What we'd like to do is paint a picture for you today.

CAPE, or the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, is a non-profit organization. We have about 6,000 members across the country. We were established 22 years ago and we are run by a board that is composed primarily of medical doctors.

We would like to express our support for this bill today, and the reason we're doing that is because we believe it has opportunities to protect human health. I'd just like to kind of remind us—everybody in this room understands the importance of the Great Lakes. They are the source of drinking water for 10 million Ontario residents. They're a source of food for our tables. We use their waters for 25% of our agricultural production in the country. We use their water for washing our dishes, bathing and watering our gardens. We use the Great Lakes for recreation: for cottages and swimming and for fishing and boating. We use the water to support 75% of Canada's manufacturing sector, for generating electricity and as a receptacle of our waste water. So the Great Lakes are central to our health, our economy and our way of life in Ontario.

For us as health professionals, we try to look at all those different ways in which it's being used, and for us, this is why it's so important that the Great Lakes be properly managed, monitored and controlled, because we have a number of uses that are actually quite contradictory, if you think about it, such as putting your waste-

water in the same place that you're taking your drinking water from. They have to be managed carefully.

As an organization run by health professionals, we look at environmental issues through the lens of health. When we look at this proposed act, we think of the different ways in which watershed management is important to the health of residents. We think about how dependent we are upon a reliable source of clean and safe water. We think about the ways in which human health can be adversely impacted by the chemical and biological agents in our water systems.

I'd just like to give a few examples, and then I've completed.

As Walkerton reminded us, water supplies can be contaminated, with deadly consequences, by livestock manure under the wrong circumstances. In Walkerton, it was the combination of a poorly managed water supply, livestock manure surrounding the wellhead, and an exceptionally hard downpour that created tragic outcomes.

We know that blue-green algae blooms that can develop in water systems that are overwhelmed by nutrients such as phosphorus are toxic to humans. We know that people can be exposed to the toxins associated with these microscopic organisms by drinking the water, by bathing in it and by swimming in it.

We know that there are many households and communities in Ontario that are dependent upon well water for their drinking water. It's not uncommon to hear about households that must truck in their water because their artesian wells have been drawn dry by golf courses, quarries or other heavy users of water.

We also continue to be concerned about the toxic substances that can enter the watershed as emissions from industrial processes, such as something like chromium; commercial operations, which could include things like dry-cleaning fluids, gasoline or mercury from dental offices; waste water—that can be things like pharmaceuticals that go down into the sewage system, or microbeads; and also residential uses of consumer products, such as flame retardants that are used on many of our electronic devices.

Some of these substances present harm to people when ingested as drinking water. Others present a concern to human health by disrupting the ecosystems upon which we are dependent. Neonic pesticides are a good example of that. By disrupting pollinators, it disrupts our food supply and our ability to provide food for ourselves. Others still present harm to humans by accumulating in the food chain when they're consumed by people, and mercury is the best example. It gets into the food chain and then people are harmed, and it causes brain damage to children who are exposed prenatally or early in life.

With all of these water-related health concerns in mind, we'd like to express our support for the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act. We understand that this act provides legal tools that can be used to monitor, manage and control the watershed issues that may not be adequately addressed with existing legislation. With this in mind, we'd like to endorse the September 2015 sub-

mission that was prepared by the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance.

I'm not a lawyer, but I will say that my experience working in public health for 30 years tells me that often environmental health problems fall between categories. You can't usually solve a problem with just one piece of legislation. You often need to look at it from many different angles because often the sources of pollutants that are entering something like the Great Lakes are coming from many different places.

That's it.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Well done. Thank you very much. We'll start with the third party. Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Chair. Welcome. If I can take you back to something you said in item number 4, "disrupting the ecosystems upon which we are dependent, for example, neonic pesticides," are you of the opinion that neonics have no purpose or use in today's Ontario?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I imagine that when they were introduced, there was considered to be a use. I think there are some studies around that suggest that they aren't needed as often as they are used. I'm not saying that they're not ever needed, but I think they're probably often used in situations when they aren't needed.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Have you ever talked, for example, to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I have not, although I have read submissions by them.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You also talked about golf courses that draw dry the artesian wells. If the wells are dry now, where do the golf courses continue to get their water from?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I don't know. Honestly, I worked for Halton region for three and a half years, and it's a major concern. The communities are actually getting water trucked in and they talk about the water supply—this isn't to point fingers at golf courses as much as saying we need to control these sources very carefully. Right now, it doesn't appear that we have all the tools in place that we need to do that adequately.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Are you aware of how much of our drinking water is taken from Ontario's lakes and streams and rivers and used by the water industry to put in plastic bottles to sell back to us?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I'm afraid I'm not. I mean, I know it's a lot, but I'm afraid I have not looked at the numbers.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Whatever the numbers are, would you agree, whatever it is, that the industry should be paying a fair share of the cost of whatever it is, the cost of administrating that process?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I think that's very fair, sure.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Would you be surprised to know that they're not paying anything close to a fair share of this one?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: As a taxpayer, I'd be very upset.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You mentioned Walkerton, but you don't have human error or poor training down.

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Well, I actually do say by a "combination of a poorly managed water system." I was kind of hinting there that I know there was human error involved and it was a poorly managed system that caused the problem, but it was also these other factors that contributed to it.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You talk about artesian wells. Have you taken a position on fracking in Ontario?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I have not. I think our organization may have taken a position at one point on fracking, but I'm afraid I'm not familiar with it.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you.

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The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to the government. Ms. Kiwala.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you very much for coming today. I have to say that I'm very impressed with the wealth of experience that you've come from. Congratulations on the new position.

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Thank you.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: You've walked into an interesting first stab at the legislative process, and I appreciate your coming here today armed with the knowledge that you have behind you, so I thank you for that.

A couple of general questions for you. Would you say, then, that the physicians for the environment, the CAPE group, is generally positive and supportive of this legislation?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Oh, absolutely, yes. We've heard the small revisions that are being suggested by the alliance, and we support that. Because we are not lawyers ourselves, we support those. But overall, we think this is an important piece of legislation that will help us to identify and address the gaps.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Okay. Also, with respect to going forward, how would you say that the province can best involve physicians, and health care practitioners as well, in the process of consultation?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: That's a very good question. I'm not quite sure how you can do that. I know sometimes the boards of health in Ontario can be a very good place to do that. The boards of health often have consultation processes that invite doctors from the neighbourhoods into the process, so it might be through that. Certainly CAPE would be happy to be involved, but we are an organization with limited resources.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: So if you were to suggest other avenues that we could explore, other stakeholders that would be involved—from somebody who's got 30 years' experience in public health, I'm really interested in finding out your views on how we can best collaborate with all of the stakeholders going forward.

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I think having multidisciplinary committees is very helpful, and if you're doing it geographically, then you do that geographically. I want to just say that the public health sector is a very important sector to involve because they get involved in all these issues from a public health perspective. So I think it's

useful to involve them and ensure that you've got people like that.

If physicians from neighbourhoods can be brought into the process, that's great. Once again, they've got limited time and resources for sitting on committees, but certainly if there are consultation processes on a geographic basis, some of them would come forward.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Okay. So you're supportive of an ongoing commitment as well in the future?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Oh, yes.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: This needs to be something that's monitored regularly?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Yes. I want to just say that when you look at the water quality reports, we've made a lot of progress in Ontario. When I look at the issues that were around when I started this work 30 years ago, we've brought PCBs way down; we've brought DDT way down. We've made a lot of progress, which, to me, speaks to the fact that policy works and that these kinds of processes work. But I think we have new challenges and that climate change is also exacerbating some of those problems by reducing water levels and that kind of thing.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate it. We'll move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much. Thank you for being here.

I found the stats in the second paragraph of your submission interesting, particularly "We use [the Great Lakes] waters for 25% of Canada's agricultural production." Can you tell me where you got that stat?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I thought I got it out of your document. I thought I got it out of the—I'm sorry. I think I got it from the Great Lakes document itself, but perhaps I'm wrong about that.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I think we need to revisit that. Perhaps there are some other deputations that will happen later that might help to clarify that.

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Okay. I'd be happy to get the reference to you, to follow up, and I apologize that's it's not there.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you. I appreciate that.

I found interesting your comment around how it's important to have a multidisciplinary perspective on things. You mention that you're prepared to endorse the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance, but I'm wondering, just like the previous deputation: In preparing your thoughts and preparing your board for this particular piece of legislation, did you take care to reach out to other organizations, like source water protection committees, people responsible for protecting watersheds, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, to get that true multidisciplinary perspective?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I think that would be the role of the committees that are set up under this legislation. I'm afraid we don't have the resources to do that kind of consultation. I can say to you, though, that I've worked at a public health department that reviewed water quality in

an ongoing way when they were reviewing site plans and planning applications at the regional level. So I am aware of some of these things from hearing them first-hand.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: And what, in your perspective, is the number one issue in terms of Great Lakes protection?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I think that there are many different issues. I guess for me, I would say that we want to ensure that we have safe and reliable water supplies.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. Very good. Let me see. In that spirit of safe water supplies, do you feel that what's proposed in Bill 66 in terms of one overarching guardian council is adequate? Again, in the spirit of your comment—you mentioned the importance of having a multidisciplinary committee on a geographic basis. Given the importance of safe water, do you feel that it's adequate to have one overarching committee, or should we have the system broken down and have a committee per lake, so that we can capture that geographic importance that you alluded to?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I guess—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Five seconds. Go ahead.

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Thank you. I guess I would just say that I think for the geographically—there's the element that requires geographic-based projects, and I think you should have local people involved in those. I think it is useful to have an overarching committee that's multidisciplinary as well.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Very good. And you'll get us that information?

Ms. Kim Perrotta: I will.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Mr. Hatfield, from the third party.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): What? That's it? Okay, that's it, I guess. I apologize. You started.

Ms. Kim Perrotta: Am I done? Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate your presentation.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. We have Mr. Don McCabe with us—he is the president—and we have David Armitage, director of regulatory modernization.

Welcome, gentlemen. You have five minutes.

Mr. Don McCabe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I usually can't clear my throat in that period of time, but if I hit auctioneer speed, slow me down.

I do thank you for the opportunity for the federation to be here today. We would like to bring our comments on Bill 66 in the form of 16 recommendations to this committee. You will find details around these recommendations in the submission that is being left with the committee for further discussion. Four areas in which these recommendations will be covered off are defin-

itions, geographically focused initiatives, the Great Lakes Guardians' Council, and "other."

Under the area of definitions, the OFA recommends that the expression "ecological health" be defined in section 3 of Bill 66. As of right now, it is not.

The second recommendation is that the definition of "public body" in section 3 of Bill 66 be revised to indicate that only a municipality is eligible to be a public body. When developing a GFI, a municipality must be required to consult with stakeholders. GFI is our short form for geographically focused initiatives.

Number 3: The OFA recommends that the term "ecosystem approach" recognize that humans are an integral part of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin ecosystem.

Number 4: The term "precautionary approach" needs to be carefully defined in order to avoid situations where a lack of full scientific certainty with regard to environmental impact is used as a rationale for imposing unreasonable land use restrictions. The reality is that full scientific certainty may not always be achievable.

Finally, the term "adaptive management approach" should embody the principle of continuous improvement. It should reference a systematic process for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of all actions taken to mitigate water quality and other environmental concerns.

Under the second area, that of geographically focused initiatives, the OFA would recommend that clause 15(2)(a) be revised by omitting the words "in the opinion of the public body or public bodies."

Number 7: The OFA concurs with the need for an initiative to be subject to a cost-benefit analysis. The OFA strongly recommends that the cost-benefit analysis be a part of the proposal phase and a criterion upon which the minister determines the proposal's merit. The cost-benefit analysis should relate to the impact of the geographically focused initiative on stakeholders, not the administrative body responsible for its implementation.

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Under the area of the Great Lakes Guardians' Council, the OFA recommends that the guardians' council be comprised of members appointed for a period of five years who are invited to each meeting of the council.

Number 9: OFA strongly recommends that the five Great Lakes councils be established to ensure that those providing advice to the minister are truly knowledgeable about local drainage basin issues. An agricultural representative must be appointed to each of the five councils.

Number 10: OFA recommends the establishment of the five councils, but if the decision is to proceed with only one, then it should be populated with five agricultural representatives to make sure you've got the representation of agriculture that is necessary to bring the information forward.

In our final area, "other," the OFA recommends that OMAFRA be added to section 9 of Bill 66 in the same manner as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. This would ensure complete coverage of the province by the resource ministries involved.

Number 12: OFA recommends that the authority to enter property with neither the consent of the owner nor a warrant be limited to exigent circumstances only. Issues of biosecurity or other matters are of grave importance to the agricultural industry. Take a look at the recent avian flu incident that impacted this province.

Number 13: OFA recommends that offences and penalties relating to a GFI should be determined by the municipalities in which the GFI is operational.

Number 14: OFA recommends that the government of Ontario abide by its own Ontario regulatory policy and refrain from positions that suggest the most restrictive regulation is the most appropriate regulation.

Before I give the next recommendation, I would like to point out a quote that comes from subsection 34(6). The specific language reads: "Nothing done or not done in accordance with this act or the regulations constitutes an expropriation or injurious affection for the purposes of the Expropriations Act or otherwise at law."

To that effect, the OFA recommends that subsection 34(6) be deleted from Bill 66 as a means of expressing the government of Ontario's commitment to responsible government.

Finally, the OFA recommends that schedule 1 of Bill 66 be revised to give legal effect to a policy protecting classes 1 through 4 of agricultural land from conversion to natural habitat from productive farmland. Productive farmland gives you the result of your best economic driver in this province, and is a habitat in its own right.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, sir. We shall start with the government side. Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you very much, Don. Ironically, I just got off a plane late last night from going to Ireland to research my families who came over here in the 1846 famine, and all of them became farmers. My wife's family is all farmers. It was an experience, and we're in touch on a regular basis because family is family. So I appreciate what you're saying and I know where you're coming from, I think. You're the professional, so we welcome your input. I'm glad you brought that forward today. I just have a couple of questions.

I should tell you that I called the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change twice in the last three weeks. In both occasions, believe it or not—I think you will believe me—I found him in the middle of a farmer's field, each time in a different location in Ontario where he was reviewing some legislation with farmers and getting input from them. It's quite an eye-opener, and it's all related to the Papal encyclical.

The farmers have always been known as important stewards of the land. My first chair on regional council in the 1980s was a gentleman by the name of Gary Herrema up in the Uxbridge area. There are big farmers still in that area.

I'm curious for your input on how the province can best involve the agriculture community in the implementation of the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act, should

it move forward. I'm interested in any further comments you might have on that. We're looking for your input, sir.

Mr. Don McCabe: Thank you, sir, and I too believe there's some Irish heritage behind "McCabe," so it allows me to be totally stubborn on issues of great importance.

The reality is that to move this particular act forward and have agricultural input, we need to remember that a systems approach has to be brought to agriculture, because there is only one landscape and one farmer that has to be able to manage that. We're the only ones, along with foresters, who are going to put carbon back in the ground, while dealing with phosphorus out of the Great Lakes, while increasing your biodiversity, all while we're "out standing in our field," in more ways than one.

Bottom line: Make sure we're involved; make sure we're involved in your advisory. The OFA has done numerous documents on best management practices. By the same token, always remember there is only one person who wins in agriculture, and that's Mother Nature. I hope I get an opportunity to take her on one more time this fall.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Am I finished, Mr. Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Yes. I know you wanted two questions, but you only gave the opportunity for one.

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's better I listen.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you. Good point.

To the official opposition. Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Don and David. A brief question, and my colleague has a question as well.

You list about nine pieces of legislation that cover a lot of what this new proposed legislation would do with respect to our Great Lakes, on the Ontario side anyway. Of course, there's the International Joint Commission and issues dealing with farmers up the Maumee River and Ohio and up through Indiana; there's some pretty serious cash crop country up that way.

With this new legislation, as with a number of these other pieces of legislation, they always seem to include a law that allows warrantless entry onto property. Do you feel that's necessary with legislation that seems to focus on maybe creating guardian councils? Do we really need warrantless entry in this environmental legislation?

Mr. Don McCabe: No.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Okay. I'll pass this over to Lisa.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Very good. Thanks very much, gentlemen, for being here today.

A lot of your submission, you've focused on the GFIs. One of our concerns with Bill 66, as with other reiterations of this initiative, was, where's the money coming from? Ontario is broke. I'm sure you've bantered this around quite a lot. Where do you feel the Liberal government of today will find money to enable geographically focused initiatives?

Mr. Don McCabe: It's not my place to tell the Minister of Finance where to find his money, but if people are planning incorrectly, they are going to find their plans fail. I would offer that there's a direct opportunity here for the governments of Ontario and Canada to both take a hard look at the issues of opportunities that are being done in other regions of the globe. I'm in a world of global competitiveness, so whether it's carbon trading, phosphorus trading, or bobolink trading, for that matter, let's get at it. That will bring in opportunities to allow a market-based solution, to offer great opportunity to extend a very limited tax dollar.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Interesting, and I followed your path there, Don. Thank you very much. But I have to tell you—and you might be familiar with it—we have a very successful watershed just a few miles away from where I live: the Pine River watershed. They're worried that they are going to be stripped of funding to propel forward something that's really not needed because of all the good work that already is happening. How do you respond to something like that?

Mr. Don McCabe: This comes back to the issue of consultation, because, bottom line, if we have programs that are already working, there is no reason for reinventing wheels. We're finding that certain conservation authorities are a wonderful, helpful unit to advise on putting in berms and whatever else. Farmers will automatically take that up when they have times of profitability in order to meet the issue of sustainability, which has planet and people also involved.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much; we appreciate it. We shall move to Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We all know Don McCabe is a farmer from the Lambton area. Are you the same Don McCabe who's the vice-chair of the Bioindustrial Innovation centre?

Mr. Don McCabe: I'm pretty sure that's on a milk carton someplace.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: And are you the same Don McCabe who is a member of the Thames-Sydenham and area source water protection committee?

Mr. Don McCabe: That might be Fridays.

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Mr. Percy Hatfield: And are you the same Don McCabe who's a leading advocate on environmental farm stewardship in the areas of air, water, biodiversity and climate change?

Mr. Don McCabe: I would gladly accept your opinion.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: And are you the same Don McCabe with a chemistry degree from the University of Western Ontario?

Mr. Don McCabe: That was a long time ago, but I still remember the headaches.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: And you're the same Don McCabe with a doctorate-level education in soil genesis and classification from the University of Guelph?

Mr. Don McCabe: To be clear, I've studied at that level, but due to personal reasons, I still have a defence to do, and I'm planning it around my 99th birthday.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I only asked those questions, Chair, to establish the credentials of the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. We hear from various groups. Sometimes credentials mean something to some people. I just want to point out that we have a very distinguished, educated man in front of us.

Don, I guess my question is: A lot of people blame the farmers for the nutrient levels going into the Great Lakes. I take it you don't agree with the people who are pointing fingers in your direction.

Mr. Don McCabe: No sarcasm is intended here. Those same people who wish to point fingers at agriculture need to remember three things: (1) There are three fingers pointing back at them and they'd better look at their own sewage system; (2) I buy at retail, I sell at wholesale, I pay the trucking both ways, and I use soil testing and every method possible to ensure those nutrients are where they are—we're now taking on a voluntary 4R program to further expand that opportunity; and (3) Please go home and make sure you're not over-fertilizing your lawn.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We appreciate that. I believe that concludes the presentation. We thank you both, gentlemen, for coming before committee this afternoon.

Mr. Don McCabe: Thank you.

SIERRA CLUB CANADA FOUNDATION

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the Sierra Club Canada Foundation. I believe we have the chair with us, and I welcome you. You have five minutes.

Ms. Mary Muter: Thank you for offering this opportunity to us, Chair Crack and members of the committee. We are here to comment on the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act. This act has the potential to benefit the Great Lakes' complex aquatic ecosystems. Ontario has about 50% of the Great Lakes shorelines, including the 30,000 islands on Georgian Bay. But unless this act has some teeth and support funding, it will accomplish little. The cabinet exemption clause, section 38(1), needs to be removed if this act is to have the integrity that it requires.

This legislation, if enacted, provides an opportunity to protect wetlands from impairment or destruction. The current "no net loss" wetland language will not do that. Wetlands are the most important ecological element of freshwater ecosystems. They filter and clean the water, including removing toxics. They provide essential fish spawning and nursery habitat. We know that approximately 70% of coastal wetlands on Lakes Ontario and Erie have been destroyed due to contamination or development encroachment.

Our Great Lakes project has been partnering with McMaster University's Dr. Pat Chow-Fraser's Great Lakes freshwater research lab since 2003. Their assess-

ment includes water quality, wetland health, the fishery, and fish habitat. We have assisted their team of researchers to get out to difficult-to-access wetlands and, for instance, with special Ministry of Natural Resources permits, they set out nets overnight and then the next day identify and live-release all the aquatic life captured—mainly fish but also turtles and occasionally snakes. They also do wetland plants and water quality assessments.

McMaster University's work has identified that the highest-quality, most extensive and diverse—but also the most sensitive—wetlands found anywhere in the Great Lakes, including the US side, are found on the east and north coasts of Georgian Bay. These wetlands have established over thousands of years on glacial till sediments scattered in among the Precambrian 30,000 islands. But these wetlands are in most cases unable to migrate since there is often adjacent exposed rocky shoreline.

As a result of our significant work with McMaster University's Dr. Pat Chow-Fraser, we have some very serious concerns regarding the language in this act on wetland protection. In part IV, Targets, we find the following language:

"(3) The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry may, after consulting with the other Great Lakes ministers, establish one or more qualitative or quantitative targets in respect of preventing the net loss of wetlands in all or part of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin."

Unless one is aware of what this really means, it sounds good. The reality is, though, that this proposed legislation allows any Great Lakes shoreline property owner, developer, golf course or mining company to create, or pay to have created, a new wetland that one might call an artificial wetland, to compensate for destroying a natural coastal wetland. The purpose would be to satisfy some development or docking convenience needs.

In reality, no Great Lakes coastal wetland will ever, even under the best of conditions, match the diverse ecological values of a glacial till sediment coastal wetland that has developed over thousands of years. Further, any exposed created coastal wetland risks being eroded out by wave action before wetland plants can become established.

Just to give you an example, between 1999 and 2001, Michigan-Huron-Georgian Bay water levels fell four to five feet. In 2002-03, we were observing significant dredging operations taking place at marinas around Georgian Bay. That dredge material was put into trucks, taken away and put into wetlands that used to be hydrologically connected to the lake, but they were filled in. Now McMaster University, using their Transport Canada-approved drone, have noted that some of those areas now have tennis courts on them.

I also saw some of that material being deposited along rocky shorelines to compensate for filling in wetland areas, but the first storm washes that away.

Another method of so-called "preventing the net loss" is to build a dam or dike and pump water up into a

created wetland. Again, McMaster researchers have found little long-term benefit for diked wetlands. Wye Marsh is a diked wetland near Midland, Ontario, that now has mainly dense cattail reed populations and very little open water for fish habitat. That wetland was diked in the early 1970s, and now the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre is struggling with the resulting management challenges.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. I apologize. I don't want to appear to be heavy-handed. Maybe I do appear to be heavy-handed, but we have to stay on schedule.

Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you for being here, and thank you for all the work that you do. Would you like to take the rest of our time and finish what you were about to say?

Ms. Mary Muter: I just want to say: Let us not repeat mistakes. The language in this act should simply say that no coastal wetland 0.5 acre in size or greater can be destroyed or disturbed in any way.

We need to now put in place policies to prevent any further loss of Great Lakes coastal wetland habitat. That includes not allowing wetlands to be created in vain attempts to compensate for destroying natural wetlands. Simply remove the word "net" in "Targets," section 3, and apply it to wetlands that are 0.5 acre or greater in size, and you will provide the teeth needed to prevent further destruction of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Thank you.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you. Now tell the committee, in your own words, what they should do with this bill.

Ms. Mary Muter: With this bill? I just said it. Under "Targets," section 3, remove the word "net."

Mr. Percy Hatfield: And that's your big ask?

Ms. Mary Muter: That's the big ask; absolutely.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to the government side: Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you for your presentation. As a former elementary school teacher who took her classes to wetlands every year—because the children don't get a chance to go very often, and there are not enough of them left—I appreciate your presentation.

You have asked for the deletion of the provision allowing for exemptions. You've also asked that there be target commitments in regard to the wetland targets and the mandatory action plans. Correct?

Ms. Mary Muter: Yes.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay. I wonder if you think that this bill, on the whole, is a positive step towards protecting the Great Lakes and the people of Ontario.

Ms. Mary Muter: It's a positive step, as long as it has teeth and it has funding to support it.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay, thank you very much. Follow-up question: Ms. Mangat.

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Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you for your presentation today. I know that your organization has championed the need for increased environmental protections. Can you tell us how targets and tracking performance are important?

Ms. Mary Muter: Obviously, if we've lost 70% of the Great Lakes wetlands on Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, we need to protect and preserve what good wetlands we have left.

There are a lot of people, the general public, that just call them swamps and bogs, and they don't understand their ecological value. There is education involved here, so that people can understand that dredging, digging them out or removing them is not a good idea.

There needs to be education, and then there needs to be teeth to prevent that from happening.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: How could the province work with Sierra Club?

Ms. Mary Muter: Work with Sierra Club?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Yes.

Ms. Mary Muter: We'd be happy to help, and with McMaster University—they've been doing a lot of mapping. They've been working with the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium, which was started by the US EPA, to map all of the wetlands and then give that information to the government agencies, give it to the local municipalities, so they all have it. So when an applicant comes in and wants to do something, they can say, "Oh, oopsy daisy, there's a wetland here. You cannot disturb that wetland."

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

Ms. Thompson, from the opposition.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thanks for being here. A question that I have out of the gate is, how many organizations, traditional and non-traditional, do you find the Sierra Club that you belong to interacts with?

Ms. Mary Muter: For one thing, on the binational coordinating committee for all of the Sierra Club chapters, nine of them around the Great Lakes—we collaborate on Great Lakes issues that way. We are part of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance. We collaborate with smaller groups when we're working in a specific area, like the Federation of Tiny Township Shoreline Associations on the south shores of Georgian Bay.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Are you familiar with Ducks Unlimited?

Ms. Mary Muter: Yes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Are you familiar with the mapping and the extensive work that they've done to capture every wetland in Ontario?

Ms. Mary Muter: I'm somewhat familiar with it, yes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Because I'm concerned that there's such an overlap of Bill 66 on existing legislation. I'm hearing a little bit of overlap, as well, in terms of initiatives to map out our wetlands and our bogs and our swamps, per se. I think it's important—huge message—as we work through Bill 66 that we need to strip down

silos; if we truly care about the environment, that we start working with every organization that has spent so much time, and step away from all the redundant or specific-agenda-seeking initiatives.

How do you feel when you hear that?

Ms. Mary Muter: I agree with it; however, I am familiar that Ducks Unlimited mapping generally shows where there is water, but where there is water does not necessarily mean that there is fish habitat. Right now, they don't have the expertise to do fish habitat assessment. When you're talking about Great Lakes coastal wetlands, that's a very important function that you need to keep in mind.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: With that said, they were here just last year, back in the spring. They have a beautiful software system where they map out every defined wetland. It's an interesting initiative that certainly stands out in my mind as an example of how all of our organizations that care about the environment could potentially be working better together.

Ms. Mary Muter: Yes. I wish there was time for you to see some of the mapping that McMaster has created with high-resolution satellite imagery and using drone images.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Ms. Muter, for coming before committee. We appreciate your comments.

LAKE ONTARIO WATERKEEPER

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We have, from the Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, Mark Mattson, who is waterkeeper and president. We welcome you, sir. You have five minutes.

Mr. Mark Mattson: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm Mark Mattson, and I have been an environmental lawyer for the past 20 years. I am also president and waterkeeper for Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, which is a charity working for swimmable, drinkable and fishable water in Lake Ontario. I'm also a member of the Great Lakes Water Quality Board for the IJC, and I'm a resident of Wolfe Island, a farming, fishing and hunting community on Lake Ontario.

Lake Ontario Waterkeeper's programs bring together law, science, culture and digital media in order to connect and empower people to restore polluted places, protect human health, and promote thriving natural spaces. Through our swim guide, we connect more than half a million beach lovers to their closest swimming holes, and through our new Watermark Project, we'll help individuals document their personal water stories, and I hope you'll contribute someday.

I'm here—I think this is the third time—to support this important Great Lakes Protection Act. I've spoken about it in the past and I'm sure it's on the record. Things that we've talked about in the past are that the Great Lakes have a need for leadership from Ontario. Ontario is the largest jurisdiction on the Great Lakes with the most power over the eight states and two countries.

This act can empower Ontario to do more on the Great Lakes and it does provide Ontario with that opportunity to show leadership, which is so sadly needed on the Great Lakes.

I want to repeat some advice I gave the Minister of the Environment in the early days of the legislation's development. The Great Lakes Protection Act should not be seen as environmental legislation. It is as much an economic bill, an industry bill, and a culture and tourism bill as it is an environmental bill. This is legislation that helps to ensure Ontario can prosper in the future. You should not pass the act just because environmentalists support it. You pass the act because it is the smartest investment in the province's future that a government can make.

I mentioned that my organization works for a lake where everyone can safely swim, drink and fish, so obviously it pleases me to see those same goals enshrined in the legislation. We're also happy to see that progress reports are mandatory in the new version of the bill.

We recommend further strengthening the bill with a few modest adjustments. The recommendations are extrapolated and spelled out in more detail in our submission, but I'll just briefly mention them:

- guaranteeing public consultation when the strategy is revised;

- ensuring the public has access to all proposals for initiatives, including those that the cabinet does not approve; and

- removal of section 31, which gives the minister unilateral authority to skirt deadlines.

This last point is especially important for the progress reports, for which there should be mandatory reporting with no loophole.

Swim, drink, fish isn't my mission because I like to swim or fish, though I do. It is my mission because my time as an environmental lawyer has taught me this: No community can prosper when its waters are too polluted to touch, when its drinking water supply is not secure or when its wildlife cannot survive. Without clean water, economies falter, human health suffers and our social fabric is weakened. Only when your waters are swimmable, drinkable and fishable can your community prosper.

When I say I work for swimmable, drinkable, fishable water, I mean that I work to protect the very future of our community, my community, that I value. Protecting water is not society's only goal, but it is the most important place to start. To protect these Great Lakes is to protect ourselves.

I thank you very much for bringing forward this important piece of legislation.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, sir, and we shall start with the government. Ms. Kiwala.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you very much, Matt, for your presentation today—I'm sorry, Mark.

Mr. Mark Mattson: I get called Matt very often.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Do you?

Mr. Mark Mattson: Because of the last name Mattson.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Oh, because of the last name. Okay. I'm glad I belong to the masses.

I want to thank you, though, for being here today. I would also like to highlight the work that Waterkeeper has done in the Kingston area. I'm sure you're aware of it and probably behind spearheading it. They've done amazing things to really focus on the value of preserving our water and making sure that it is fishable, swimmable and drinkable, so great job.

In fact, you'll be aware of the event that they had there last year in June. It was fabulous. I think they did another one this year as well.

Mr. Mark Mattson: Yes.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: So keep up the good work.

This proposed act will enable the establishment of a geographically focused action on the Great Lakes. I just wanted to get a bit of feedback from you in terms of whether or not you see value. Do you have issues with the geographically focused approach, or suggestions for change there?

Mr. Mark Mattson: It's not something that I'm here really to talk about one way or another. I know many of the other stakeholders who are before you have very great concerns and they're here to represent their local communities.

Being a Lake Ontario Waterkeeper—I'm also on the Waterkeeper board and I'm on the Great Lakes Water Quality Board—I do see the Great Lakes as a whole. I think there's an opportunity for leadership over the Great Lakes and a real, bigger vision for the Great Lakes: swimmable, drinkable, fishable. How that ultimately relates to local communities is always very different. Some have commercial fisheries; some don't. Some have beaches; some have poor beaches. Some are agricultural; some are industrial. Each community has a very different issue that ultimately will prioritize them and get them excited about the community.

I can say universally that the love of the Great Lakes and the need for the Great Lakes—a healthy Great Lakes—is very similar to all of them, but how they go about achieving swimmable, drinkable, fishable will be different. The geographic—the GFIs might be an appropriate way to deal with this, given that many communities have lost swimmable, drinkable and fishable water. The signs are on the waterfront—don't swim, don't fish and don't drink—and I'm sure they would like to pull those signs down someday.

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Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Just a last quick question: Do you see value in having the Great Lakes Guardians' Council?

Mr. Mark Mattson: Yes. That's one of the reasons I support the legislation. I think it's very important that the public be involved to bring their energy and their knowledge and that grassroots enthusiasm to the government, and make this a people issue. It's not just about the

policies, and we can get lost sometimes with the stakeholders as to how to protect them moving forward.

The guardians and that group can bring real knowledge to this piece of legislation going forward, and give it meaning and give it relevance so that it connects with people in Ontario and they have the opportunity to use it to really achieve great things.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. I appreciate that. We shall move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thanks very much, Chair. Thank you for being here. A few things jumped out at me that I'd like to just revisit, and then I will ask my question of you.

Mark, I found it interesting that you mentioned that you're connected or associated with the farming community on Wolfe Island. I do appreciate your other comment in your submission where you said that we "should not pass the act just because environmentalists support it. You pass the act"—or any legislation, really—"because it is the smartest investment in this province's future that a government can make." You also went on to say, "No community can prosper when its waters are too polluted to touch, when its drinking water supply is not secure, or when wildlife can't survive." My question, Mark, is this: How do you feel about industrial wind turbines going into the Great Lakes?

Mr. Mark Mattson: Industrial wind turbines? Lake Ontario Waterkeeper was involved in the Green Energy Act. One of our great criticisms of it was that it didn't have enough public participation. We felt that there would have been a great benefit to having the community more involved. The Wolfe Island windmill project went forward, I think, to most people's regret, without that public consultation that was needed. Some could have been moved. It was a siting and a scale issue. But I think overall, that was something that Ontario has learned from.

I was out in Alberta last week at the climate change summit, and one of the things they took from the Green Energy Act bill was that they felt that there needs to be more public consultation to legitimize the process. Even if these things are being done for the good of the community, or that's the overall motive, they still require due process and they require bringing the public on board. The process is really important. We have always believed that, and certainly we are on the record. We were one of the groups, environmental groups, on Lake Ontario that really was part of that process to try and encourage that public participation where we felt it was lacking.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I thank you for that. I appreciate that. That leads to my next question. We find, when we review Bill 66, that it could potentially lead to as much loss of municipal autonomy as the Green Energy Act. You just said that the process is very important. How can we stand up and say, "Let's get this right in Ontario"?

Mr. Mark Mattson: I think if you really look at the Great Lakes Protection Act, what it's signalling is that

Ontario—and I am hopeful that it's not a partisan issue—seeks to be a leader on this issue, that it's stepping forward.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Absolutely.

Mr. Mark Mattson: It's going to bring those individuals and those groups together, and it's going to really find a common vision for the Great Lakes. I am hopeful that when it uses the words “swimmable, drinkable, fishable,” which date all the way back to the Great Lakes water quality of the late 1960s—it was something that was really a term, an important one, that defined the standard by which we hope to bring people around. We can grow, we can use the lakes, but we have to keep it swimmable, drinkable and fishable.

I think that this is a great starting point. The act certainly spells out that vision, and now it is going to take leaders to actually make it happen. Certainly, the Great Lakes guardian panel and the opportunity to be here today—all of this public consultation and involvement are important to making it work. Otherwise, it will become a bill that will gather dust in the corner somewhere; it will be meaningless. It really is going to take true leadership.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. We shall move to the third party. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mark, good to see you this afternoon.

Mr. Mark Mattson: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You remarked that the bill will empower the government to do more. Can you outline, in particular, what you think it should be doing more of?

Mr. Mark Mattson: I've been very clear from the very beginning. It needs to show that Ontario, as it relates to the other eight states, as it relates to Canada and the United States, is prepared to be a leader on the Great Lakes, to recognize the flaws and the mistakes that have happened in the past, and to stand up for a vision—a vision, whether it's for the 45 million people on the Great Lakes or the nine million on Lake Ontario. We've heard all the other facts about the Great Lakes and 20% of the world's surface fresh water.

I think it needs to show that Ontario is going to do a better job of protecting the Great Lakes. My own personal opinion has been that there has been an abdication of that role for the past couple of decades. I think that this is a sign that Ontario is going to ultimately no longer leave it to the federal government or the others to do the work for it. It's going to take a leadership role. I think that swimmable, drinkable and fishable water, and Great Lakes where you can swim, drink and fish, is an important mission and an important vision.

So I am really supportive of this act as a way to move forward, to educate the public, to empower them, and to ensure that, you know—it takes all of those other political jurisdictions for Ontario to be successful. We need leaders.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. You suggested the removal of section 31. Would you enlarge upon that?

Mr. Mark Mattson: Sure, and I did enlarge on it on the back of our submission: “Section 31 is a brief

sentence at the end of the bill that creates a loophole by which the minister can avoid complying with any of the timelines otherwise required under the act. This is particularly problematic for the strategy reviews and the progress reports. The six- and three-year reporting requirements should be fixed and unalterable.”

That's really so that it gets to the point that this doesn't become a document that ultimately gathers dust somewhere but keeps the public involved. It keeps them aware of the progress and keeps them excited about being part of this, and really being part of an overall effort to protect the Great Lakes and show leadership.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Mattson, for coming forward.

Mr. Mark Mattson: Thank you very much, and I apologize for my yellow glasses. My other ones broke.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): I never noticed. Thank you, sir.

SIERRA CLUB ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the Sierra Club of Ontario. I believe we have Mr. Lino Grima with us. He's the chair of the Great Lakes committee. Welcome, sir. You have five minutes for your presentation.

Dr. Lino Grima: Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act. The Sierra Club and its Ontario chapter have been advocates for the Great Lakes basin for many decades. I do not just mean ecological integrity but also economic health and also human health. The most recent example of this is the toxic algae blooms of Toledo that closed the drinking water facility. We cannot have a healthy economy and human health without also ecological integrity.

I have four brief points. First, the Sierra Club is very disappointed that Bill 66 includes a provision for broad exemptions from this act. This, in effect, spoils the act, and it goes against the spirit and purpose of the act. My brief recommendation is to remove it: Remove clause 38(1)(l).

Second, this is an exciting piece of legislation but it is only a series of promises. Please implement it as soon as possible with significant budget support.

Third, this bill gives the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry the authority to establish targets in respect of preventing the net loss of wetlands. I think in a previous brief you heard this simple ask: to remove the word “net,” so that the text would read “preventing the loss of wetlands.” I don't think there is anybody in this room who would suggest that we do not need to prevent the loss of wetlands, especially in the lower Great Lakes and Georgian Bay. Most of the wetlands are gone, so we need to protect them to prevent the loss of the few that we have.

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Fourth, and last, we strongly support the provisions for increased citizen participation, the development of the

geographically focused initiatives, regular progress reports to the Legislature and the continuing development of the Great Lakes Strategy.

In conclusion, please pass Bill 66 without delay, with the removal of 38(1)(l) and the word “net” in part IV. Please expedite timely and meaningful implementation of this act. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Mr. Grima. We shall start with the official opposition: Ms. Thompson.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Actually, I think we’re fine. We’ll pass.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to Mr. Tabuns, from the third party.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Grima, it’s good to see you. I’ve followed you on water issues for decades now. You have not stopped, and I appreciate it.

The matter regarding wetlands: Could you talk to us about the state of wetlands around the Great Lakes and your concern about this provision that would allow for net protection of wetlands rather than protection of wetlands as they exist?

Dr. Lino Grima: Certainly. Most of the wetlands, say, around the north side of Lake Ontario have disappeared. In fact, the last time I looked, there were really only two left. One for some reason is called Second Marsh, in the Ajax area, and the other one is in Mississauga—half of it was actually developed, but it’s still a functional wetland. So we have two good wetlands left on the north shore of Lake Ontario. We need to prevent any further loss. Lake Erie is in slightly better shape, but not much.

By the way, I’m not suggesting that we should have kept all the wetlands, especially in the lower Great Lakes, because farming is important and some of these wetlands have been converted to farmland, and people need houses. I’m not saying, “Let’s reverse.”

Why do we want to remove the word “net”? Because the language is not clear. We need clear language in a piece of legislation. If I have a bank account, I can keep the net at the same level by taking out and putting in. We do not want that for wetlands. We do not want the natural wetlands to be developed and then create artificial wetlands to make up. The current wording would provide for that. I think that would be poor legislative text, but I’m not an expert on legislative text. It’s common sense.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I don’t have a further question. That was the one thing that I had curiosity about. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. We shall move to the government side and Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Mr. Grima, thank you for being here. My understanding is you’re supportive of the intent of the bill, Bill 66. Are you?

Dr. Lino Grima: Yes, very much.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Very much—thank you so very much. I really appreciate that you’re very supportive of the bill, and I appreciate your organization’s dedication

and passion when it comes to protecting and restoring the health of the natural environment, and, as I’m sure you’re aware of, so is our government.

I’m very pleased to share with you and all the stakeholders and the committee members that last week, our former Premier Dalton McGuinty was awarded North America’s largest environmental organization award from the Sierra Club.

Dr. Lino Grima: Exactly.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: And the interim executive director of the Sierra Club Canada Foundation, Diane Beckett, said, “We honour those who despite significant challenges make the right decisions for our environment. Premier McGuinty persevered in the face of strong dissenting forces to close power plants and create a green power industry in Ontario. No other government leader in North America has made a greater contribution to fighting climate change.” It’s great news. I’m very pleased, and I’m very pleased I’m a part of that government.

Having said that, would you mind sharing with the committee members: Is it important to have a Great Lakes Guardians’ Council as a collaborative forum to discuss future initiatives and Great Lakes priorities?

Dr. Lino Grima: Yes. I think that’s one of the more exciting parts of the legislation because it gives the opportunity for more discussion and more consensus of the stakeholders. The stakeholders are not likely to agree on everything just by say-so, but if they come together—and this council would help bring them together and create this goodwill feeling.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Grima, for coming before committee this afternoon. We appreciate your comments.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): From Environmental Defence, we have Natalija Fisher, who is the water program manager. We welcome you. You have five minutes.

Ms. Natalija Fisher: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the standing committee. As was mentioned, my name is Natalija Fisher and I’m the new water program manager at Environmental Defence.

As you may know, Environmental Defence works to protect the environment and human health. Protecting fresh water is one of our main focuses.

Environmental Defence is a founding member of the Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance, with whom my predecessor in this role has been working to ensure the passage of three different iterations of this bill. A draft of the alliance’s written submission has been provided for your consideration. My fellow colleague from the alliance, Ms. Anastasia Lintner, will be able to speak in depth during tomorrow’s session specifically regarding the amendments that are recommended.

From the shores of Kingston to the beaches on Lake Huron, Environmental Defence works with beach and

marine managers, their partners and communities to ensure the water quality is safe for swimming. This brings me to my first point. With three of the four Great Lakes in decline, the future recreational, economic and environmental well-being in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin is threatened unless action is taken to address emerging threats.

The lakes are key to the fabric of Ontario. We have a responsibility to protect them, to keep them healthy for the enjoyment and use of the present and future generations of Ontario.

In the 1970s, Lake Erie was severely threatened; it was considered dead. It took the effort of governments at all levels to successfully revive the lake and significantly improve water quality. Unfortunately, the problem of rising levels of phosphorus and algae is back, in addition to a host of new challenges, including climate change, invasive species, habitat loss, toxins and microbeads. If not addressed, the quality of the Great Lakes drinking water and the basin's \$4.4-trillion economy will be negatively impacted. The cost of inaction will be borne by everyone through increased drinking water costs, lowered property values and revenue loss across industries, to just mention the economic costs.

We applaud that the bill provides innovative new tools to address the complex challenges I mentioned. We're supportive of collaborative coordination across the ministries and stakeholder groups, as done through the Great Lakes Guardians' Council, with the inclusion of representatives from environmental organizations, the scientific community, and the industrial, agricultural, recreational and tourism sectors. The collaborative process of identifying regional priorities is key to watershed-based planning.

That brings me to my second point regarding public involvement. We're happy to see that, if passed, the act would create new tools to foster grassroots solutions. It would empower local groups to develop solutions that protect their communities' water. We're setting targets and implementing the geographically focused initiatives. And we applaud the act's legal recognition to consult the traditional ecological knowledge of the First Nations communities.

The third point is that the success of the act is going to depend upon the ability to actually implement it. Environmental Defence wants to see that action is taken, and is happy that at least one meeting of the Great Lakes Guardians' Council will have taken place within a year of the act coming into force. Environmental Defence is a strong proponent of science-based decision-making, and is pleased that the proposed legislation will help do so with improved monitoring and reporting. Specifically, the act requires that the minister prepare a progress report at least once every three years, which will outline, amongst other criteria, the progress made on achieving targets. We are keen to engage on strategies to meet those targets.

Environmental Defence supports Bill 66 with one exemption, and that's the appearance of a broad power to

grant exemptions. You'll see page 8 of the submission make reference to that. Protection of the Great Lakes is of serious importance. Last year, toxic algal blooms in Lake Erie poisoned the water supply for 400,000 people in Toledo, Ohio. With the majority of Ontarians, about 80%, relying on the Great Lakes for their drinking water, and with the basin accounting for about 40% of the country's economic activity, it is not a question of should this act be passed, but one of how soon it can be implemented for the greatest benefit of all Ontarians.

Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much. I appreciate that. It was a little over a minute under schedule, so congratulations.

1720

Ms. Natalija Fisher: I sped through.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall start with the government side. Ms. Hoggarth?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you for your presentation. You went very quickly. I see that you have some things that you would like changed, and it seems to be the same areas where some of the other presenters have had issues in regard to doing away with allowing exemptions, strengthening target commitments and clarifying that the purpose includes protection for habitats for birds, bats and insects.

Those are some of the things that you would like changed, but on the whole, would you say that this proposed legislation that's before us now is a positive step towards protecting the Great Lakes?

Ms. Natalija Fisher: I would certainly say that it's a positive step, and one that is sorely needed at this point.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Great. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the official opposition. Ms. Thompson?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I was taken by your one comment. During your deputation, you talked about concern about lower property values. Could you expand on what you meant by saying that?

Ms. Natalija Fisher: For the properties that are specifically on the beachfronts and on the shorelines, they might be negatively affected by algae blooms. Whether those are toxic or not, they could be a nuisance, and that would be a concern to the property owners.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: That's interesting, because you mentioned the shores of Lake Huron. We have a number of industrial wind turbines cropping up very close to our shorelines as well and lower property values are being dismissed. I just find it interesting how you're equating concern over something evolving out of the Great Lakes on one side in terms of lowering property values, while on the east side of the property, so to speak, industrial wind turbines are being dismissed as not having any effect.

I'd just say good luck with that. I understand where you're going, but if history is any indicator, it will be interesting how that concern is dealt with on a go-forward basis, because just this past week, an individual

was dismissed because of his concern over lower property values due to industrial wind turbines. It will be interesting if this continues to impact on the west side of the property, coming from the Great Lakes.

How do you feel—are you going to comment on that?

Ms. Natalija Fisher: Sure, if you would like me to respond. Thank you for your comments. The reason that I pointed that out was merely to illustrate that there are many potential economic downsides to not taking action by passing this bill. I also want to point out that it's not just for the economic reasons but also for the environmental reasons, both for the enjoyment of current and future generations, that we should be protecting these bodies of water, the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence basin.

In terms of the difference in the use of one particular argument or another to defend sources of energy or an act, I'm not sure if you're speaking directly about Environmental Defence and previous positions that have been taken. As I am one week and a half into my new job, I wouldn't be able to speak to that fairly, but—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: That's okay. You talked about algae blooms; what about phragmites? That's another big concern around our lakeshore.

Ms. Natalija Fisher: I wouldn't be able to provide a personal opinion, as I am here on behalf of Environmental Defence, but if the member is interested, I could forward comments to the Clerk, which I hope would be forwarded on to you afterwards.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. I would appreciate that, because that's another big concern as well, especially with property values.

Ms. Natalija Fisher: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): We shall move to the third party, the NDP. Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you for the presentation. Ms. Fisher, the previous speaker, Mr. Grima, talked about the protection of wetlands and not supporting this idea of the protection of net wetlands, preserving the ones that are there now and not setting up a system where artificial wetlands were an option for a developer who wanted to clear out a wetland that had been there since probably the end of the last ice age. What's your position and what's your analysis of the problem?

Ms. Natalija Fisher: On that particular question, we've decided to focus specifically on the four recommendations that have been outlined within the report. My position on this would be reflected within there as it represents the work that has been done over the past few years from two of my predecessors on what is now the third attempt at trying to pass this bill.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. That was it. Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Ms. Fisher, for coming before our committee this afternoon. We appreciate it.

Ms. Natalija Fisher: Thank you.

FEDERATION OF ONTARIO COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATIONS

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Next, we have from the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations Mr. Terry Rees. He is the executive director.

We welcome you, sir.

Mr. Terry Rees: Thank you. I didn't have my playbill, so I wasn't sure when I was on the—

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Well, we're a little early, but it's great that you're here and the floor is yours. You have five minutes.

Mr. Terry Rees: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I'm pleased to be here today and I appreciate your time and your attention. I have provided written remarks as well which you can have a look at, at your leisure.

As I mentioned, my name is Terry Rees and I'm with the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations. I'm the executive director. Just for a bit of context: We're a province-wide not-for-profit association and we represent over 500 community groups in over 100 municipalities in Ontario. Our members include over 50,000 member families, and we've spoken for over 50 years on behalf of Ontario's 250,000 waterfront property owners.

The vast majority of our members live in the Great Lakes basin, either on the shores of the lakes themselves or within the basin, so needless to say, collectively, we've got a considerable interest and concern about the present and future conditions.

FOCA supports Bill 66, the proposed Great Lakes Protection Act, and we welcome the opportunity to provide a few details, including a few suggestions, in our remarks today.

The objective of a carefully planned and appropriately funded Great Lakes Protection Act will, when implemented, protect and restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin, which is a necessary condition for healthy populations and a healthy economy, as we've heard.

The structure provided by the Great Lakes Protection Act helps to clarify and direct Ontario's obligations under the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health, which was signed last year. FOCA appreciates the complexity of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region ecosystem and the urgency of continued and targeted efforts to restore and maintain the health of the environment through a fully implemented Great Lakes Protection Act.

FOCA believes the proposed act could be further improved with a couple of suggestions and related amendments. I'll list those now:

To ensure that real progress is made towards meeting the proposed act's objectives, we recommend the removal of the exemption clause, as you would have heard, which would be consistent with other enabling legislation that the province has in place.

To increase transparency and ensure progress under the proposed act, we recommend that progress reports be

submitted to the Legislature every three years, in addition to the public release of annual reports.

A stronger public constituency for the Great Lakes—and I represent a fairly large section of vested members of the public—must allow input into decisions that impact the health of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region. Specifically, the public should be allowed to request new GFIs—geographically focused initiatives—targets and performance measures.

Implementation of the act has to be open and transparent to ensure we're monitoring the right things, collaborating effectively, taking full advantage of public capacity and knowledge, and encouraging innovative, local solutions.

As has been our contention in the past, FOCA believes that a healthy Great Lakes basin can only be accomplished by a credible plan that protects and preserves the watersheds that feed them; this isn't just about the Great Lakes proper.

We encourage the province to bring into law a strong and effective version of the proposed GLPA that incorporates these suggestions.

FOCA looks forward to working with the province to foster Ontario's commitment to conserve and protect its water resources, to meet its international obligations and to help address the shortcomings in our current approaches.

In closing, I might just add my comments that we provided at the launch of the act in February, where we said, "As a uniquely watery jurisdiction, Ontario has both the incredible legacy, and the obligation, to steward the waters of the Great Lakes basin for the continued prosperity of our communities, and for the restorative powers of our lakes and rivers."

I'd be happy to take any questions. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Mr. Rees. We shall start with the official opposition: Ms. Thompson.

1730

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thanks very much, Chair. The one bullet point that you had: "A stronger public constituency for the Great Lakes must allow input into decisions...." I appreciate that very much as well.

How does your organization feel about industrial wind turbines in the Great Lakes?

Mr. Terry Rees: I'm not sure that it's relevant to this discussion, but—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I think so, in terms of the ecological systems.

Mr. Terry Rees: The ecological systems? We've not had an official opinion on it. That's all I can say about it. We've had the same concerns about the public process. I think that's public knowledge. All of our opinions are on our website. But in terms of its ecological impact on the Great Lakes, I don't think we've made any opinion about that. That's all I can say on behalf of FOCA.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My position is this: In 2010—it could be 2009 or 2010; we can go check on the EBR—it was interesting. Around Thanksgiving weekend,

it was posted that industrial wind turbines were being considered for Lake Huron. Cottager associations were asked to give input in a very finite window over a long holiday weekend. It has raised concerns and has never been forgotten. That's why I feel, in terms of protecting our Great Lakes and all that we know and love about them, we need to be very considerate of this potential threat. Were you surprised by that or were you familiar with it?

Mr. Terry Rees: I'm not familiar with the window of comment that you're talking about. I might add that our involvement in other public policy realms, including the Ontario Biodiversity Council, which involves multi-stakeholders in source water protection—particularly in source water protection, that was a particularly robust system where they took advantage of local committees to have that kind of input. That was local expertise, farmers, First Nations and technical experts.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Very good. Source water protection committees: absolutely. We have a wonderful one in our Grey-Bruce community, if you will. But you bring up a very important aspect that Bill 66 and the manner in which it is written could absolutely overrule all that great work that you just referenced. How do you feel about that?

Mr. Terry Rees: My understanding of the language is that, not unlike the Clean Water Act, they defer to other prescribed instruments where they achieve the goals of the act. That's my understanding of how I expected it would roll out. So, while keeping the big picture in mind and the goals, objective and targets as the focus and as the end goal, I believe that there are all manner of tools, processes and pieces of legal instruments that are in place already that would feed into the goals of the Great Lakes act.

I know that many of my members are in the north and in rural Ontario. We have very different means and tools. We don't have conservation authorities, typically. So things generally defer to whatever most salient, relevant and resourced piece of legislation or enabling regulation makes sense.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Okay. No further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Ms. Thompson. We shall move to the NDP with Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Mr. Rees, for being here today. I asked previous presenters and I'll ask you: This section of the bill that allows for preservation of net wetland territories as opposed to preservation of wetlands—does FOCA have a position on that particular section of the act?

Mr. Terry Rees: I think as a part of the province's wetland strategic plan, we will. There's a month left in the consultations.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ah, okay.

Mr. Terry Rees: We're also involved with the biodiversity council. I think our overarching statement would be that preserving the ecological integrity is something that you can't replace. The no-net-loss thing

should only be considered, I would say—it would be our opinion that it would only be considered as a very last resort. It's usually not considered as a one-to-one type of thing because, as you've heard, it's impossible to replace the existing ecological function.

We're in favour of decisions that will retain the long-term integrity of our resources because our families, our members, are all multi-generational people that expect that their grandkids will be able to enjoy the resource the same way they did, and wetlands have an important function.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I don't have any further questions. Thank you, though.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you, Mr. Tabuns. We shall move to the government. Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the presentation, Terry. I guess I've been part of that group for half a century or so, having owned cottages from the time I was 20. You do a great job.

Mr. Terry Rees: We appreciate your support.

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's very important that we look after the water, because that's the primary focus, and privacy etc. is also a significant point.

Your organization has championed the need for increased efforts to protect the Great Lakes, and you've indicated that. Do you think that this proposed legislation before us, on the whole, is a positive step in protecting the Great Lakes?

Mr. Terry Rees: I think that what has been done to date is not working and that if we don't have a focus on the Great Lakes, through a dedicated act, we're never going to get there. Time is short, and we need to focus.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I have one quick question, and then I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Colle. Do you see a value in having the Great Lakes Guardians' Council as a forum to discuss Great Lakes priorities, that's bringing the public into the process?

Mr. Terry Rees: We'd encourage that type of forum.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Okay, thank you. Mr. Colle?

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, thank you for the opportunity. Again, like my colleague here from the east, I'd like to congratulate all the cottage owners who have really taken on the job of stewards of our lakes, as you said, because I think everybody now realizes that if you want to pass this on to your kids and grandkids, you'd better take care of the water and be cognizant of the environmental integrity. I think your organization has really succeeded in doing that. There has really been a cultural change, I think, in a lot of the attitudes that I've noticed in the last decade, certainly, in the stewardship role.

By the way, talking about water here, the amazing thing is—I've got part of the Don River in my riding. In Toronto now, we have salmon going up the Humber River as soon as it gets colder here, in October—25-pound salmon, going up the Humber—whereas in the old

days, you'd be lucky if you found a dead carp in the Humber River. So I think people have done an amazing job of cleaning up that heritage river. That demonstrates that Lake Ontario is a lot healthier, because you can catch great salmon, and that's right here in the city of Toronto.

I think 90% of the people in Toronto don't even know that you can see salmon going up to spawn, up the ladders of the Humber River. That's a plug.

Do you know that from Mississauga, you can see salmon?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Yes, I do.

Mr. Mike Colle: Have you ever seen them going up the Humber? In a couple of weeks—

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Yes.

Mr. Mike Colle: Anyway, the one concern I have is: Does the cottagers' association ever try to do anything to temper this move towards these mega boathouses? On some of the expensive lakes—I've been on a couple of those lakes, like Lake Joe and that, and I say, "Where has the shore gone?" I see these people living with two-bedroom apartments over the boathouses, and they've got workout gyms. They come to Muskoka and then they have workout gyms in the cottage, in the boathouse. Anyway, has there ever been an attempt to try to tell them they've got to naturalize that shoreline and forget about the mega boathouses?

Mr. Terry Rees: It's a long story, but I appreciate the question. I think the opportunity that might be within the Great Lakes act, if I can just circle back to that, is that there needs to be interjurisdictional responsibility for the things where we have obligations. When we've got federal obligations around fisheries habitat and provincial obligations around the fish themselves, and we've got land use obligations under municipal affairs, those things all need to feed into one another—and municipal obligations around zoning bylaws and official plans. Those things are often a bit of a dance between municipal government and municipal affairs and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

That's a long story, and there is some stuff before the courts, so maybe I shouldn't say anything else about boathouses.

Mr. Mike Colle: Good luck.

Mr. Terry Rees: Thank you for your question.

The Chair (Mr. Grant Crack): Thank you very much, Mr. Rees, for coming before the committee this afternoon. We appreciate your comments.

I'd like to thank all the delegations who made presentations and took questions from members of the three parties.

I thank all the members. Great job this afternoon. We shall see you tomorrow at 2 p.m. as we continue with public consultations on Bill 66.

This meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 1739.

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