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The Honourable Jeff Yurek
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Via email

September 22, 2020

Dear Minister, Yurek:

Re: Release of the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group Report

In August 2018, Ontario announced a \$5 million [Muskoka Watershed Conservation and Management Initiative](#) to better identify risks and issues facing the Muskoka Region. A year later it appointed the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group (MWAG) to provide advice and recommendations to you to help protect and conserve the Muskoka Watershed and support the economic growth of the region.

In the winter of 2020 the MLA, Muskoka's voice for waterfront residents participated in listening sessions with MWAG and submitted a series of recommendations important to our members. We understand that the report was submitted to your ministry in June of this year and have been advised that it will be released publicly.

It has now been 2 years since the announcement was made, and in the interim Muskoka experienced spring flooding in 2019. Incidents of blue green algae are increasing, and our forests are under siege from all manner of disease, pests, and invasive species.

It is time for the report to be released, an organization formed to begin the job of managing the Muskoka River watershed and monies spent in the watershed to address some of our immediate challenges.

The Muskoka economy depends on a healthy environment. A healthy environment in a region as populated as Muskoka is, requires management. The initiative is welcome, and the MLA stands ready to assist in any way we can – but the report needs to be released to facilitate the next stages of action.

Yours truly,

Deborah Martin-Downs
President, Muskoka Lakes Association

c.c. John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Mardi Witzel, Chair MWAG
Norm Miller, MPP
Geoff Ross, Chair, Muskoka Watershed Council
John Klinck, Chair District of Muskoka