

April 18, 2016

The Honourable Bill Mauro  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Room 6630, 6th floor, Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley St. W.  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Mauro,

The Muskoka Lakes Association is the oldest and largest cottager association in Ontario and represents over 2,300 families. We have a number of key areas on which we focus attention and represent our members. Two of those areas are the safe enjoyment and conservation of the Muskoka environment, and we write today about the impact on these from the power plant that is planned for Bala.

We understand that:

- o A developer, Swift River Energy Limited, plans to build a generating station in Bala (see <http://balafalls.ca> ), and that when operating, there is fast and turbulent water exiting such generating stations.
- o The Wilson's Falls generating station was the cause of a tragic drowning of a 16 year-old-boy in 2008 (see [http://www.thestar.com/news/ontario/2008/07/27/toronto\\_teens\\_body\\_recovered.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/ontario/2008/07/27/toronto_teens_body_recovered.html) and also <http://savethebalafalls.com/?p=6977> ), and the Bala generating station would be much larger.

We are familiar with some of the other generating stations in Muskoka, such as the Muskoka South Falls and Trethewey Falls generating stations and know that these are not close to cottages or their docks. We also know from the Ontario Provincial Police / Ontario Power Generation "Stay Clear, Stay Safe" education campaign (for example, see [http://www.opg.com/about/safety/Documents/watersafe\\_eng.pdf](http://www.opg.com/about/safety/Documents/watersafe_eng.pdf) ) that in-water recreation must not be near hydroelectric generating stations due to the fast and turbulent water below them.

But the fact is, in-water recreation is now extremely popular both above and below the planned Bala generating station. Due to the proximity of both public and private docks and property, we don't see how the public could be instructed, required, restricted, or obligated to "Stay Clear, Stay Safe". As there has not been any information presented on how this generating station could operate safely in this location, is the assumption that the public would learn for themselves after a few drownings?

Could you therefore reply to the following:

1. The steps that would be taken to ensure the Bala power plant's operation would be safe, such as where the downstream safety boom would be so people swimming and boating can't get near the dangerous water from the station,
2. How people in the water at the base of the Bala north falls, or using the portage the developer plans to build on the Township land south of their station would be safe. Would fencing be installed at these locations to prevent people from accessing the water from these locations,
3. How nearby cottagers and visitors would know if the station is operating,
4. How people swimming and boating from their nearby docks would be safe.

We would appreciate you letting us know to whom in your Ministry we should be addressing our future letters on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Hart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Hart,  
President

Cc: The Honourable Glen Murray, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change,  
GMurray.mpp@liberal.ola.org