

Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway
185 King Street, Unit 100
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 2R8

September 5, 2007

Dear Chairman Downey, Ms. Barrett, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Peters, Mr. Rollins and Mr. Symons:

My wife, Christine, and I are owners of two lots on Haliburton Lake. We have a year round residence on one lot and a rental cottage on the other. I have been cottaging on Haliburton Lake since 1951. My wife and I attended your public meeting in Haliburton on July 28. Clearly our interests lie mainly with the reservoir lakes. However, in order to become better informed about the other issues facing the Panel, I have also visited your website. I have downloaded and read the Study of the Past, Present and Future of Water Management in the Trent-Severn National Historic Site of Canada Water Management Program and also the Observations and Conclusions, which were prepared by Ecoplans Limited, as well as the seven Discussion Papers. Before sharing my observations with you, I do have a question. It is clear that Haliburton Lake is one of the reservoir lakes, yet it is not included in the list of reservoir lakes set forth in Table 5-1 in the overview of the Water Management Program. That Table describes in detail control parameters for the reservoir lakes. Is there a reason for Haliburton Lake not being included? I know that I and presumably other stakeholders who own property on Haliburton Lake would appreciate receiving clarification from you or Ecoplans regarding this omission. Thank you in advance for your anticipated response.

I would like to preface my thoughts with observations regarding the ever increasing value of water. Currently there is serious concern about the fact that the Great Lakes are near record lows with an all-time low expected this fall. It is obvious that steps must be taken to conserve water. In an editorial, the Ottawa Citizen set forth that, according to estimates, Lakes Huron and Michigan are losing 2.5 billion gallons of water a day. As The Ottawa Citizen stated: "...low water levels...alter ecosystems and are bad for human activity." It further stated that local people are the best early warning system for any environment. The Georgian Bay Association has been worried about their water levels for some time. Also, Federal Minister of the Environment, John Baird, has stated: "Our freshwater is one of Canada's greatest natural resources... We are committed to protecting water in its natural state and to preserving the integrity of our ecosystems. Our government values our freshwater resources."

As a result, it appears to me that the primary focus of your Panel ought to be on the preservation of water and assuring adequate water levels at all times in the reservoir lakes. I was disappointed that the primary focus of the seven Discussion Papers (and the accompanying research) was on the waterway itself and not on the reservoir lakes. It appears that a great deal of research has been conducted and data gathered relating to the

waterway itself and regarding the economics, tourism, jobs, visitors, etc. relating to the waterway. I would have anticipated that similar studies would have been done on the reservoir lakes as well. Only in Ecoplans' observations and Conclusions is there a reference to similar data relating to the reservoir lakes, citing a claim of the Coalition for Equitable Water Flow that the number of shoreline residents in the Haliburton Sector is approximately 35,000 and property values in that area is about \$3.6 billion. Those numbers do not surprise me. The Haliburton Cottager's Association has advised you that Haliburton Lake has 526 existing cottages with 42 more proposed to be developed. It is anticipated that the asking price for each of those proposed 42 lots will be \$500,000. Currently there are four new lots for sale on Oblong Lake, those four lots having an average asking price of \$500,000. Though not a great deal of research has been conducted about the reservoir lakes, the Panel needs to keep in mind that the property owners (referred to as part of the "stakeholders" by Ecoplan) have a tremendous investment involved. The Panel should not only focus on the economics relating to the waterway, but also on the economics relating to the reservoir lakes.

Anecdotally, within the past few weeks, an elderly gentleman who owns property on Haliburton Lake was away for about a week. When he returned he found his boat and motor, which had been tied to his dock when he left, on dry ground. Throughout the documents on your website, communication with all stakeholders is emphasized as being extremely important. Section 3.5 of Observations and Conclusions sets forth that successful organizations minimize conflict by communicating with stakeholders through formal and informal outreach programs, including advance notice, early warnings and well maintained websites. Issue #8 of the Observations and Conclusions states: "An open, timely and responsive electronically based communications program is essential but cannot be effectively delivered within the current organizational structure because of a lack of resources and the Federal Government's communications rules." It is clear that the waterway, and management of the reservoir lakes is woefully under funded. The importance of the reservoir lakes and the waterway must be kept in front of the legislators at all times. That is why I am forwarding copies of this letter to Member of Parliament Barry Devolin and Member of Provincial Parliament Laurie Scott.

Even though this under funding is present, I hope the Panel does not conclude that not much of the Panel's mandate can be accomplished without more funding. I hope the Panel will make substantive recommendations based upon the resources currently available. For example, relating to the predicament of the elderly gentleman, advance notice and early warning about removal of a log from a dam could have been communicated at very low cost. A well maintained website should not be all that expensive. Information about all draw downs, for example, could be posted on the website. In addition, the website should allow any interested person to sign on to receive e-mails about steps which will be taken by Parks Canada, or by whomever the decision will be made, which will affect them. Since I live on Haliburton Lake, I should be able to sign up to have advance notice of decisions relating to this lake sent to me by e-mail. As an example, a broadcast e-mail could be sent to all Haliburton Lake residents (who have signed up) that a log is coming out or being put in at the dam on Percy Lake or the dam at Oblong Lake. Those stakeholders would then have the advance notice which is key. For

those who have not signed up, word of mouth would get around very quickly. Communication is essential and sending out communication by e-mail is certainly very cheap.

Due to Haliburton Lake being so low, some boat owners decided several weeks ago to take their boats out of the water. Since the end of the first week in August of this year, owners in South Bay of Haliburton Lake have been unable to travel into the main lake because the channel is so shallow due to so much water having been let out of the lake. This precludes those owners from being able to take their boats to the marina to get gas or to enjoy the use of their boats. Depriving stakeholders of the use of their boats is not justifiable. This excessive draw down is extremely inconsiderate of those stakeholder owners. I would anticipate that there are countless other similar situations in the over 40 reservoir lakes. This leads me to another recommendation. It is my understanding that the intent has been to maintain a six foot depth in the waterway at all times. Since the purpose and use of the Trent-Severn Waterway has changed so dramatically since 1905, the priority of intentions or mandates must also be changed. The presence of global warming and the value of water require this. Rather than the priority being to maintain a certain depth of the waterway, the priority ought to be maintaining certain various depths at various times throughout the year in the reservoir lakes. This is necessary for ecological reasons, for water preservation reasons and simply for water usage reasons (so that stakeholders are not precluded from using their water crafts starting the beginning of August).

It is interesting to note that the first consideration relative to the provision of navigation on the waterway is "...availability of adequate water levels". (1.1.2 of Parks Canada Principles and Operations Policies) 1.1.3 goes on to provide: "Where navigation is maintained, Parks Canada objectives will be to maintain adequate canal water depths, structures and navigation aids in order to provide navigation." In other words, availability is the priority, not the canal depth. Water should not be considered "available" if it adversely affects the reservoir lakes, the quality of the eco-life of the lakes, the fish, birds, loons, wetlands, wildlife habitats, nesting areas and spawning, as well as use of the lakes by the stakeholder owners.

Also, apparently none of the watersheds that drain into the waterway contain the minimum 10% wetland coverage recommended in 2004 Environment Canada guidelines for Great Lake watersheds. Lack of wetlands suggests potentially impaired ecological health. The Panel must keep this in mind as well when making its recommendations. Further, if not already done, research should be conducted to determine the effect of the draw downs of water on the eutrophication of the reservoir lakes. Apparently there is evidence already that this is taking place, but the effect of the draw downs on eutrophication appears not to have been addressed. As Minister Baird stated, our government values our fresh water resources. The Panel needs to make certain that it makes sure to protect that resource. If eutrophication takes place, that resource is not being protected.

Based upon global warming, there should be regular updated studies and reports made and communicated to the stakeholders regarding both the state of the reservoir lakes and the state of the waterway. These could also be sent by e-mail. Minimally, e-mails could be sent to those who had signed up, giving them notice that these reports or updates are available at the website.

As indicated above, water preservation is becoming an increasingly critical issue. 2.7 of Observations and Conclusions indicates several dams are leaking. Vast amounts of water are being wasted and lost. I was amazed to learn that the 10 centimeters leakage reported at Dam 1 spills an amount of water equivalent to 2,592 hectare meters of water per month. That means that the dam leaks an amount equivalent to 6 percent of the available water in the reservoir lakes in one month or 24 percent in 4 months. Steps should be taken to repair those leaks. Again, a lack of funds will make it difficult to fix all the leaks at once but a program should be put in place so that over time all of the dams are repaired, or replaced if necessary. In the meantime steps should be taken along the waterway to preserve water in other ways. Discussion Paper #3 indicates that lockages has steadily declined since 1985 (see Figure 2). Discussion Paper #4 indicates lockages have declined by 50% since 1988 and not since 1967 have there been as few lockages as in 2006. As a result, putting in place numerous restrictions on the waterway will not adversely affect nearly as many people now as it would have 20 and even 40 years ago. In order to save water, it has been suggested that the locks not be opened unless a certain minimum number of users has gathered. Other suggestions which would affect water preservation would be to reduce the season of the waterway; perhaps limit boat usage in some way to even and odd numbered days; do not mandate six feet depth in the waterway (in fact, I have requested that there be no mandate); regulate the size of craft utilizing the system so that the periodic appropriate reduction in depth will not affect the smaller crafts using the locks; research lockages with a goal to significantly reduce water usage; close the waterway for certain days of the week; reduce the operating hours on a daily basis. These are merely a few suggestions.

As Section 2.7 sets forth, it has been suggested that reducing or eliminating leakage at other dams in the system could make more water available for power production, thus raising more revenues for the Trent-Severn Waterway. The combination of reducing leakages and reducing the water usage in the waterway could potentially result in increased revenues to be used to repair or replace dams.

After having read all of the documents, I became aware that this Panel has a very complicated task, far more complex than I had originally envisioned. Nevertheless, as the Observations and Conclusions stated, the passage of time has created new economies and energy realities that are affected by water management (e.g. residential development in reservoir lakes, green energy). The Panel must be cognizant of these emerging realities. Appendix Three of Discussion Paper #7 states: "Water is an important resource and has not been fully appreciated from a policy and management perspective." This reiterates Minster Baird's statements. Based upon the value of water, the Panel should make water preservation, management and maintaining proper water levels in the

reservoir lakes the new priority for the proper operation of the reservoir lakes and the waterway.

Thank you for your time.

Yours truly,

Gordon A. Cochrane