

PRESENTATION TO THE
COMMISSION OF THE BUREAU
D'AUDIENCES PUBLIQUE SUR
L'ENVIRONNEMENT
On the topic of
DANFORD LAKE MEGA-DUMP

I would like to commence my brief presentation by thanking the Commissioners for your excellent conduct of the BAPE process ... and for allowing me to present my feelings.

I find it incredible that this poorly managed and greatly resented project has reached this point in its progress. Considering the huge time dispensed by members of three levels of government, by the Citizen's Coalition Against the Mega-Dump, by various other organizations, by the citizens at large, by the promoter, LDC, and by the BAPE process, it is easy to assume that the cost to date, easily over a million dollars minimum, has been ENORMOUS ... and, mostly, unnecessary. I believe that the main party responsible for this waste of time and money has been the Quebec Ministry of Environment.

The Ministry of Environment has been well aware since the beginning that a huge majority of the local population has been against the mega-dump. They have been aware of all of the facts, or, if not, have had every opportunity to have made themselves aware of such. The BAPE process appears, incorrectly, to be a process of last resort. If some form of this process had been performed at the beginning, much wasted time and cost could have been avoided. It would appear to me that the BAPE process that is currently being undertaken, is a fair and just one. I now strongly believe that common sense and the will of the people will prevail and that the mega-dump will be stopped. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Environment's approval procedure and actions have failed to arrive at this conclusion much earlier. I know that the Commissioners will take this into consideration when developing your recommendations.

The originators of the mega-dump proposal were LDC and the Municipality of Danford Lake. Together, and with the support of the Pontiac MRC, they have demonstrated extremely poor marketing and communication capability with the potentially affected public. In fact, they have purposely found means, entirely approved by the Ministry of Environment, to avoid proper, thorough, fair and just communication to, and with, the concerned public. All of these parties have used every possible means to avoid consulting with the public and have acted in a manner which has greatly breached the trust of the population of whose interests they are supposed to represent.

In fact, I believe that the Commission will find significant evidence of government action which has been demonstrated that can only be described as the **worst** manner possible for representing the interests of the people.

It is factual that:

- over 4,000 citizens have signed a petition condemning the proposed project;
- the potentially affected population (much greater than just the residents of the Danford Lake municipality) have never been properly consulted and the opportunity for them to have had a referendum was **purposely avoided** by three levels of government;
- all three levels of government **purposely** sought every means possible to force only one option, the proposed mega-dump land-fill, to be the only one to be given consideration;
- all three levels of government **purposely** created a situation whereby no tenders to provide the service would be permitted. Only LDC would qualify;
- other, more modern and more publicly acceptable, technologies are currently available;
- on at least two occasions, the promoter, LDC, has refused to answer questions from the public as to whether or not they have provided benefits, or bribes, to any elected officials or municipal employees.

Given the above facts, it is impossible to argue, in our day and time, that the process which has taken place has made any **common sense** whatsoever. How can any of the parties, who have forced this situation to have occurred, argue credibly that they have represented the will of the people?

In 1998, the Quebec government decreed that municipalities had to subscribe to a new Waste Management Plan across the province and that such was to be completed by the end of 2008. For the most part, the government provided weak leadership to implement this plan, and mayors paid little attention to the requirements until recently, with the deadline imminent.

With respect to ultimate garbage disposal, the government has provided **absolutely no leadership whatsoever**. 85 MRC's and 915 rural municipalities are expected to separately find solutions. No technical research is centrally coordinated or performed. Each organization has been left to find a solution by performing their own research, dealing with extremely technical matters and an enormous gathering of data relative to emerging technical solutions across the world. This remains the current situation.

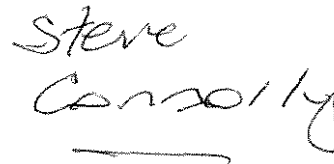
Given the uncoordinated and separate approach situation forced upon municipalities, it is no wonder that compliance is late and that solutions will be technically and financially sub-optimal and totally inconsistent across the province. Even if the municipalities of West Quebec can demonstrate a unified approach to a modern solution, such as gasification, the Quebec Ministry of Environment does not currently have the capability to review and to approve such a proposal. This will inevitably cause further delays. Yet, at the same time, the government has stated that it will impose \$50,000 penalties upon municipalities who do not shut down their existing land-fill operations by the end of 2008. **This is not leadership. This does not make sense.**

Thanks to the hard work of all members of the Coalition Against the Mega-Dump, the MRC's in West Quebec were encouraged (if not forced to, by embarrassment) to form, in 2006, a technical team to review various solution options using modern technology. This has resulted to date, I believe, in a preference for gasification technology which would commonly serve all municipalities in West Quebec.

Hopefully, the Ministry of Environment can begin to demonstrate leadership by encouraging and supporting a common approach for West Quebec. At the same time, given demonstration of such, the deadline for closing existing municipal dumps should be extended several years in order to reasonably accommodate a common and publicly acceptable solution which will allow the province of Quebec to catch up with other countries who, unlike Quebec, have demonstrated common sense and leadership.

In conclusion, I would like to again thank the Commissioners for your fair and just assessment of this whole situation. The citizens are counting on you, at last, to represent their interests and to do what is right for them. I know that you will do so.

Merci beaucoup!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Connolly". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Steve Connolly

Professional Engineer, retired,
and Councilor, Low & District
Municipality

28 May, 2007