

Brief to the Commission of the Bureau d'audiences publique sur l'environnement
concerning

Projet d'établissement d'un lieu d'enfouissement technique
à Danford Lake dans la municipalité d'Alleyn-et-Cawood

We are writing to express our serious concerns and objections to the regional engineered landfill site proposed to be built near Danford Lake, in the municipality of Alleyn-et-Cawood, Quebec. We have owned property in the Outaouais region for more than 35 years and have recently become permanent residents of Bouchette, Quebec.

Several years ago, we were involved in opposing a proposal to establish a landfill site in the Bouchette area on a site with poor access to the highway and close to the Gatineau River and several lakes and streams. Although the proposal was eventually defeated, the community was torn apart by the process. It has taken many years to put the experience behind us. We were devastated to learn that the citizens of Alleyn-et-Cawood are being forced to go through a similar experience.

We believe that, in order to fully protect its citizens, the process of where and how to manage waste and dispose of garbage should to be led and guided by government and its citizens and not by 'promoters' whose main interest is making money.

Our concerns:

- Using the legislation and guidelines currently in place, a private company was able to: identify a potential landfill site; develop a proposal; and approach the mayor and municipal council of the municipality in which the proposed landfill site was proposed to be situated, before ordinary citizens were able to obtain adequate information to become involved. This put citizens at a clear disadvantage since, at the early stage, they lacked detailed information, an established committee structure, specialized knowledge, and the human and financial resources needed to adequately consider the implications of such a proposal and make recommendations or voice objections.
- It appears that what was first presented to local citizens as a proposal to deal with a local landfill problem became a proposal to bring in and dispose of waste from the entire Outaouais region, with much farther-reaching implications.
- We object strongly to a private company essentially setting the agenda by proposing a regional engineered landfill site, thus depriving citizens of each municipality and MRC in the Outaouais of the right, through a more democratic process, to determine both the scope and type of waste management alternatives they deem appropriate. We do not believe that a private business should make the decision that an engineered landfill site is the most suitable type of waste management for the Outaouais region (or any region) without the involvement, at a very early stage in the process, of all

levels of government and their citizens. The fact that an engineered landfill site is *permitted* by the province should not be a determining factor. The provincial government must ensure that there are appropriate and clearly understood guidelines and legislation, to provide a level playing field for its citizens. It is always more difficult to fight something ‘after the fact’ and communities are put at a serious disadvantage by the current process. While we applaud the BAPE process, the fact is that this is a body that does not have decision-making power and can only make recommendations to the Minister.

- In an area such as the Outaouais, we strongly disagree with transporting garbage from the entire region to a regional landfill site. We believe that the traffic generated would present a significant safety issue on the highways. While the highways may technically qualify to handle this type and amount of traffic, it is clear to anyone who lives in, or travels through, this region that there are serious concerns with regard to both the state of the roads themselves and the safety of those who use them.
- We also believe that the increased traffic, along with environmental concerns, will be a significant deterrent to tourism in the region. This is particularly concerning when increased tourism is being touted by federal, provincial and local governments as a key way to increase employment and help the economy in an area that chronically suffers from high unemployment and has lost significant numbers of jobs in the logging industry.

Waste disposal is an emotionally-charged issue with the potential for serious environmental consequences. Landfill sites affect many aspects of citizens’ lives – health, safety, quality of life, environment, potential economic loss or gain (which is a factor that pits a community’s citizens against one another), etc. It is our strongly-held belief that private ‘promoters’ – whose main motivation is making money and, most often, providing returns to their investors – should not be the driving force in a community’s efforts to deal with waste disposal. Governments and citizens – not promoters – must lead a community’s efforts to seek environmentally sound waste management solutions.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lynn Harris and Barry Ambridge