

June 08, 2007

From:

Cindy Duncan McMillan,  
President,  
Comité du bassin versant de la rivière Gatineau

Attention :

Mme. Renée Poliquin,  
Coordonnatrice du secrétariat de la commission  
Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement  
Québec (Québec)

Téléphone (418) 643-7447, poste 424  
Télécopieur (418)643-9474

Dear Mme. Poliquin, please find attached the brief which I would like to submit to the commission next week. If there are any suggestions or requirements you would like me to address, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you,



June 8, 2007

Brief submitted to the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement regarding the proposed project to establish a technical landfill site at Danford Lake, in the Municipality of Allevyn-et-Cawood.

My name is Cindy Duncan McMillan. I am respectfully submitting this brief on behalf of the Comité du Bassin Versant de la rivière Gatineau in my capacity as President.

The Comité du Bassin Versant de la rivière Gatineau has as a mandate to improve and preserve the water quality of the watershed, the whole watershed of the Gatineau River, regardless of political boundaries.

The Picanoc River is an important and pristine tributary of the Gatineau River. Since our mandate from the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks includes the protection and preservation of the entire watershed, I am obliged to object to the proposed landfill site as I believe it is a threat to the continued pristine quality of the Picanoc and by consequence will eventually have a negative impact upon the Gatineau River.

Our watershed committee has just completed a series of public consultations. The concern for the preservation of the quality of the Picanoc River has been identified repeatedly at these consultations. Indeed, citizens have spoken passionately against the project and have serious doubts about the capacity of the technology to protect the surrounding natural environment.

At the first part of the BAPE hearings on this project, held at Mont Sainte-Marie on Wednesday May 16, 2007, both the promoter of the project and the representative from the Quebec Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks agreed that eventually the plastic liner will breakdown and untreated leachate will leak. They assured the audience attending the hearing that it would take many years. A figure of 138 years was suggested.

I have consulted an experienced contractor of various international irrigation projects, Mr. Giorgio Vecco, regarding the technology proposed for this project. He believes that this project's plastic liner will break down long before 138 years, especially when you consider the use of heavy machinery crossing over it in order to pile and compact the garbage.

I believe it is wrong to allow a project to take place when we know there will be eventual leaking of leachate, regardless of whether it takes place in 138 years or in 38 years. It is still pollution, no matter if we who allow it to take place are still living when it eventually occurs.

When I addressed the first phase of the BAPE hearings, in Gatineau on May 17, 2007, with my concerns about the acknowledged eventually leaking of leachate, I was assured that the leaking would be from treated leachate and by consequence there would not be harm done to the Picanoc. However, both the promoter and the representative from the department of environment had agreed the day before that eventually **untreated** leachate would also leak over time. I was very frustrated at that hearing in Gatineau when I asked if the ministry was going to permit the degradation of the rivers and the promoter and the ministry representative skillfully switched the topic from untreated leachate to treated. This switch allowed the witnesses to promote the position that leaking leachate would not be harmful because it would be treated. I believe my objections to the untreated leachate were ignored and by consequence the issue of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks permitting the eventual degradation of the rivers was dropped.

I acknowledge that the concerned citizens opposed to this landfill project and the promoter have different opinions regarding the possible harmful consequences of the leaking of treated leachate. However, I believe the objections of citizens to the leaking of untreated leachate are valid and need to be considered by the BAPE commissioners as a justifiable reason to oppose the proposed landfill project.

The committee du bassin versant de la rivière Gatineau is funded by the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks and works under the guidance of this Ministry. We are obliged, as a table de concertation, to work together as a community to protect and manage the Gatineau River watershed. We are completely perplexed and we vehemently object to the position espoused by the ministry to allow the inevitable degradation of the pristine waters of the Picanoc and by consequence, the Gatineau River, regardless of when this degradation occurs since we believe that polluting our rivers in the future is wrong, even if it is a very distant future.