



**Canadian
Society
of
Environmental
Biologists**

**Société
Canadienne
des
Biologistes de
l'Environnement**

June 26, 2012

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Prime Minister's Office
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Peter Kent, P.C.
Minister of Environment
House of Commons, Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

The Honourable Keith Ashfield, P.C.
Minister of Fisheries
House of Commons, Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Re: *Proposed Closure of Experimental Lakes Area (ELA)*

Dear Ministers

The Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists is a national non-profit organization with members from across Canada and is one of Canada's largest non-governmental associations of biologists in natural resources and environmental sciences. The overall objective of the Society is to encourage the wise management of our natural resources based on sound ecological principles. The Society facilitates interaction among its members and the public, and thus tries to provide balanced, objective, and informed views on environmental issues. Through various activities, the CSEB brings together persons with varied interests and backgrounds for the exchange of information and points of view.

We are concerned as biologists that termination of the funding for research at the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) in northwestern Ontario will greatly impact on Canada's ability to protect its environment and to deal with impacts of new stresses which we have yet to foresee.

Research conducted at the ELA has provided information which helped Canadian scientists to understand eutrophication, the harmful growth of algae in our lakes in response to nutrients from sewage and fertilizers. The results led to improvements in detergents and sewage treatment which continue to keep our waters clean. One need only remember the mounds of algae which covered the shores of Lake Ontario in the 1960's, to see a change that resulted in part from knowledge obtained from research at the ELA. Ongoing problems such as the inputs of nutrients from agriculture which are leading to large algal blooms in some of our largest lakes such as Lake Winnipeg; impacts of hydroelectric reservoirs on the chemistry and nutrients of lakes, and the potential impact of widespread emerging technologies such as nanoparticles widely becoming used in commercial products on our waters, are best studied under the carefully monitored conditions provided by the ELA. Without such facilities, their impacts may never be understood and corrected.

2...

Canada is well known for its research on the impacts of a wide range of human activities on freshwaters, and the Experimental Lakes Area provides an important platform. In addition, this “real world” laboratory is ideally suited for quality research relevant to northern latitudes, and from which Canada, being a northern country, can substantially benefit. Scientists in other northern countries look to Canadian research at the ELA for addressing problems in their countries. In turn, Canadians benefit from international sharing of information on how lakes respond to various stresses we humans place on the environment.

Disbanding Canadian scientific teams with technical expertise will not only curtail our ability to identify environmental pressures which face our lands, air and water now, but also will diminish our ability to respond quickly to these and other environmental stressors in the future.

The Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists urges you to seriously reconsider your proposed actions to eliminate ongoing funding for scientific programs at the Experimental Lakes Area, which has served Canadians and Canada’s environment so well.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Stedwill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert J. Stedwill, B.Sc.
President, Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists