



Premier Dalton McGuinty
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Premier Greg Selinger
204 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

Dear Premiers McGuinty and Selinger:

We are writing you to express our grave concern over the fate of the Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) in the coming months. It is imperative that management and funding of the ELA remain in public hands so as to preserve the integrity of the research and purpose of the program. So we are requesting that the Ontario and Manitoba governments fund and oversee the ELA on a temporary basis until it is re-instated as a federal responsibility or another solution can be found, at the very least for a minimum of three years.

As you know, there has been a huge public outcry over the federal government's announcement of the potential closure of the ELA. The ELA is a unique facility that conducts cutting-edge research. ELA research has focused on developing strategies for hydroelectric utilities to reduce greenhouse gases from reservoirs, and on the efficacy of stricter regulations of mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants for reducing mercury concentrations in fish. The whole-ecosystem mercury experiment currently underway at ELA is invaluable to Canadians for developing the new mercury emission regulations required to reduce mercury contamination of fisheries.

Without question, the federal government needs the ELA to fulfill its obligation to protect Canadians and their environment. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans claims that research at the ELA is "no longer aligned with its core mandate", and is about to abandon the ELA research center and its team of freshwater experts. Unless it remains funded by the government and staffed by public service scientists, the research priorities at ELA will cease to reflect public policy priorities or serve the public interest.

The federal government is abdicating its responsibility in research on climate change, fish populations and the health of lakes which is sorely needed for long term water and energy strategies as well as ecosystems protection.

Right now, ELA belongs to the people of Canada. The science is done in the public interest. The scientists are public servants. The data are public. The science responds to government priorities and feeds into public policy. Once ELA is sold to whoever might be the buyer, the role of ELA in Canadian society will undoubtedly change. It is critical the ELA remain within public hands.

Sadly our federal government is failing in its responsibility to foster credible scientific research on which to base decisions affecting our water, environment and climate. For this reason we look to your governments to fulfill this critical role. The lakes are located in Ontario and the Freshwater Institute is located in Manitoba. Each province would need to contribute \$1 million annually until federal funding is re-instated.

This is an important undertaking for your governments but one for which current and future generations will be significantly indebted to you.

Sincerely,

Brent Patterson
Political Director, Council of Canadians

Susanne McCrea
Executive Director, The Boreal Forest Network