



Cindy Forster M.P.P.
Welland

Hon. David Oraziotti, MPP Ministry of Natural Resources
Suite 6630, 6th Floor, Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3

Dear Minister,

I am writing this letter to echo the concerns of city councilors, regional councilors, conservationists, residents of the Niagara Region as well as past and present members of the board of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority over the recent actions of the NPCA.

Since January of 2012 the NPCA has termination of no less than 20% of their staff, including many long-serving senior positions such as, Senior Planner, Engineer, Senior Corporate Manager, Conservation Planner, Director of Land Management and the Site Administrator of Ball's Falls. These positions have been filled with junior employees, some just out of school, one without a public posting and given new titles such as: Supervisor of Construction Approvals, Planning Approvals Analyst and Operations Manager.

These personnel changes have not been the only major changes taking place. The NPCA recently released their Strategic Plan that outlines their goals for the next four years. Concerns have been raised over the direction in the plan and the shift towards the potential sale, purchase and development of NPCA land.

In the plan, one of the key objectives is the 'Streamlined, Efficient Delivery of Development Approvals Process', which clearly defines development as a priority. Also, I understand that a separate committee has been struck to deal specifically with property acquisition and disposal. The committee is comprised of representatives from the development community.

The NPCA's new shift in direction is evident in a current land deal that was confirmed on Wednesday, March 19, 2014. The NPCA has purchased a 15 acre parcel of land in Wainfleet, which was conditional on the Wainfleet Council waiving their 5% in lieu of parkland fee. On March 10th, the St. Catharines Standard reported that the NPCA was urging the Wainfleet Council to waive the fee to give the developer a break. Not only does this mean a loss of precious tax dollars for Wainfleet, but this is a piece of land which the Region of Niagara Council deemed unsuitable for purchase in 2012.



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According to the mandate of Conservation Authorities of Ontario, the NPCA is here to ensure that Ontario's rivers, lakes and streams are properly safeguarded, managed and restored; to protect, manage and restore Ontario's woodlands, wetlands and natural habitat; to develop and maintain programs that will protect life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion; to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy, learn from and respect Ontario's natural environment.

Many are worried that the NPCA is diverting away from their mandate.

I am writing this letter to request that the Minister of Natural Resources:

1. Allocate Ministry staff to review the recent personnel issues at the NPCA.
2. Review the NPCA and their adherence to their mandate and Ontario Conservation Authority standards.
3. Institute a moratorium on current and future NPCA land acquisitions and disposals until the reviews are completed.

I strongly urge the Minister to take these steps to ensure that the NPCA is operating in accordance with their mandate and Ontario Conservation Authority regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Forster".

Cindy Forster
MPP Welland Riding

Cc:
Welland City Council
Port Colborne City Council
Thorold City Council
Pelham Town Council
Niagara Regional Council
Niagara Falls City Council
Niagara-on-the-Lake Town Council
Fort Erie Town Council
West Lincoln Town Council
Grimsby Town Council
St. Catharines City Council



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Wainfleet Township Council
Hamilton City Council
Haldimand County Council
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Board of Directors
Ontario Conservation Authority
MPP Jim Bradley
MPP Tim Hudak
MPP Wayne Gates
MPP Toby Barrett
MPP Paul Miller
MPP Andrea Horwath
MPP Monique Taylor
MPP Linda Jeffrey