

Dear Mr. Mayor and members of Council , I am writing this letter to express my concern about the Blue-Green Algae issue which has recently been discovered in Lake Ontario here in Hamilton.

I am writing because as a resident, tax payer and parent I am very concerned about the ongoing issues we are facing regarding environmental damages. We have heard concerns from council and residents of the city regarding the air pollution , the declining bee population , pesticides/ neonicotinoids and unfortunately now we are faced with issues in our water ways. As humans on this planet, there are a few things we need for survival and they are non negotiable. For the continued survival of the human species and most living things we share this planet we require water , air , food and shelter.

We are facing issues with the increasing air pollution which is coming from manufacturing , automobiles , fossil fuel products and other items. We are facing problems regarding our food supply, area vegetation , water ,animals and insects due to the use of pesticides, neonicotinoids and other poisons which are used on foods and outdoor areas. These things are also responsible for the illness and potential death of animals , insects and can cause danger and death in humans as well.

As of now we are also facing the possibility of a toxic water supply to our citizens and the animals which live in and require that water for their own survival as well. It is well documented that the continued use of phosphorous is responsible for the outbreak of the Algae that is growing in our lake. We did not have a hot sunny summer which can also cause an outbreak so we can only assume it is the use of phosphorous which is leached, spilled and dumped into our water ways that is responsible. With the ongoing issue of a zebra mussel infestation only makes the matter worse.

Phosphorous is ends up in our water ways as it is heavily used in household and industrial materials and is expelled in waste from soaps , fertilizers , manufacturing materials, farming materials , food , human waste , plus probably over a million other products we see and use day to day .

Recently there has been many spills of various products into the Great Lakes and the bodies of water that connect them and most recently one from the American side into the lake which was probably responsible for the and a ban on drinking the water after Algae spores were found growing and contaminating the water. This is very dangerous and I am assuming it eventually flows into our lake as well creating problems. We probably have many things which go into our lake as a result of illegal dumping , run off and general waste water .

I am not a scientist but I am concerned about the growing problem of environmental damage and I think we should begin addressing these issue municipally. I am asking that the Mayor and Council come to an agreement of sorts to perhaps implement an environmental plan of action and educational campaign to encourage citizens to be more environmentally friendly and set up something to encourage better behavior . Perhaps by creating environmentally friendly incentives and setting up some programs we can face this issue together and all play our part in being responsible and recognizing the danger and real threats from water pollution, contamination and pollution/damage in general.

I see that the City has ads in bus stops and other areas about illegal dumping and this is one thing that can be done to help educate the public is to place pictures and text ads in high traffic areas used by citizens to display the dangers of polluted/contaminated water and ways to reduce the possibility of it happening. Perhaps adding something to the city website as well regarding water safety education about how to dispose of chemicals and hazardous materials safely and other things that effect the water. Perhaps having a page where it displays household items which are dangerous , or can be if over used and that are put in water can be displayed and categorized by name and type (soaps, fertilizers etc). It would help people identify the products and look for things with little or no dangerous chemicals and phosphorus while shopping. Perhaps even having something where every month the city can have a draw and give one household a "cleaning basket" which would have low toxin cleaners and what not to encourage people to come and read . Maybe have a small read up and fun test people can do on the site and after they finish their name goes into the draw if they did well.

Another thing that can be done is to makes sure that companies are aware of the dangers of using phosphorus and like products and ask that a limitation be put on their use and enforce some sort of action if they are caught dumping , spilling or not disposing of products safely in an environmentally friendly fashion. Also asking them if they want to voluntarily support a water ways fund in which the city would get the money and use for additional testing and clean up . If wish to agree they can perhaps have their name on a banner or something showing they support the intuitive.

If perhaps we could set up a bi weekly pick up for hazardous waste and products which effect the water so that they aren't being dumped down sewers , onto lawns , thrown into fields or off the mountain that would be something to curb unnecessary run off as well. I understand there is a drop off for these products but it would probably be more helpful if people could just get it picked up from their home or near by. Maybe have people call ahead and place them somewhere safe until pick up.

I think by being proactive and offering education , motivation and other programs like the free pick up or disposal we could halt some of the problem. The cost to put some of the budget towards a program like this will cost less than the amount if left untouched and ignored.

As for the other problem of zebra mussels, they do not eat the algae and causes it to become over abundant as well. The Province of Manitoba has been experimenting with different methods of eradicating the zebra mussels so perhaps we can contact them and encourage the Province of Ontario to get on board and contact them and see what has worked and start assessing the issue and come up with a plan .

I am just asking on behalf of the myself , my family and other residents in the city we do something now to stop this before it becomes unmanageable and there is no return. For us , our children and the generations after them we need to do something as without water there is no life.

Thank you,
Sarah Warry-Poljanski