



House of COMMONS
(HAMBRE DES COMMUNES)
(->NAIJA)



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Mayor Mike Savage
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Councillor Barry Dalrymple
Councillor Darren Fisher
Councillor Brad Johns
Deputy Mayor Lorelei Nicoll
Councillor Bill Karsten

January 28, 2015

Dear Mayor Savage and members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainability,

I am writing today to express concern over the possibility of using herbicides in Lake Banook and Lake MicMac.

As you know, the municipality has been considering solutions to the problem of weeds in these lakes for almost five years. A Stantec report was completed in March 2014 which studied the problem and offered three possible remedies. A public meeting held on June 26 gave residents a chance to hear about the report and offer feedback.

That report outlined three strategies to manage the weed problem in the short-term; dredging, mechanical harvesting, and herbicides. As I have said to you in previous correspondence, I believe the only reasonable option is selective mechanical harvesting. Dredging was never seriously considered because of its extreme cost, environment impact, and logistical impracticality, while herbicide was widely rejected by those who attended the June meeting. Selective mechanical harvesting allows for the work to be targeted where it is most needed and have the least impact on the environment. Also, if the weeds are removed from the water after cutting, those nutrients are removed from the water table whereas herbicides will leave decaying plant matter in the water to feed the next generation of weeds.

Following the meeting, a municipal staff report was requested to review the possible solutions in greater detail. That report was presented to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainability on January 15th of this year, recommending harvesting as the appropriate course of action. From there, the report was expected to move to Regional Council for consideration. Instead, to my surprise, the committee delayed its decision so it could get more information about the herbicide option. This is very troubling.

That report also cites correspondence from Lake Management Services Canada, based out of Texas, which was sent to staff in September and copied to you. It is signed by the same gentleman who stood up in the audience at the public meeting

three months earlier and explained how safe his company's herbicides are. His letter dismisses public apprehension as a lack of education and suggests Sullivan's Pond be used as a pilot project for the herbicides that he wants to use in the entire lake system. The persistent nature of this company's efforts, plus the delay in a decision by the committee, suggests that serious consideration is being given to the herbicide option.

When it comes to our lakes, rivers, and streams, the passion and expertise within our community is deeply impressive and the value our community places on their enjoyment is immeasurable. Herbicide use in our lakes is unacceptable to me and, I believe, the majority of residents. As the Member of Parliament and the Official Opposition critic for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) I understand the environmental risks in the use of herbicides and I will recommend that DFO reject any application for its use in our lakes.

I urge you to make a clear public commitment that herbicides will not be used in our lakes.

Thank you for your time on this important matter, I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Robert Chisholm, MP
Dartmouth – Cole Harbour

cc. Councillor Gloria McCluskey