

Honourable Scott Moe

Minister of the Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water Corporation

Room 345, Legislative Building,
2405 Legislative Drive,
Regina, SK, Canada, S4S 0B3

June 15, 2017

Dear Honourable Scott Moe

Re: **QUILL LAKES WATERSHED DIVERSION PLAN TO MOVE WATER THROUGH KUTAWAGAN LAKE INTO LAST MOUNTAIN LAKE**

We are writing to share our concern over the confusion and mis-information that has caused our communities within the Quill Lakes and Qu'Appelle Watersheds to be divided in opinion and facts. This circumstance has eroded relations among farmers in the impacted regions and those farming, of course, in the downstream riparian communities along with other water users. As a result, we believe provincial *leadership* at this time is most important to ensure economic, social, and environmental sustainability; and, as foundational as this, to build community trust within Saskatchewan; it is imperative that we work together.

The Calling Lakes Ecomuseum has experience both in water sustainability issues and in bringing communities together at the local level to build long-term solutions. As a flagship project of the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development here in Saskatchewan (RCE Saskatchewan) we are also connected to other communities and organizations throughout the province with a sustainability focus including researchers at the province's 3 largest post-secondary education (PSE) organizations: the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Polytechnic. This academic expertise in multiple disciplines along with local expertise of our partners has been vital to our own success in improving water quality and use in the Calling Lakes area. As part of RCE Saskatchewan, we are also part of a global network of 154 RCEs under the UN University sharing sustainability solutions (see <http://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/>). The UN University, in turn, is committed to supporting the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals approved by governments around the world, including the Government of Canada in 2015 to guide the development agenda until 2030 (<http://en.unesco.org/sdgs>). Saskatchewan also shares these commitments through the Federal Government's commitment.

Of the 17 goals, a number specifically apply to the Quill Lakes and the leadership of your ministry (alongside other relevant provincial ministries) would go a long way in

advancing the global SDGs through win-win solutions at the local and regional level for current and future generations affected by the management of this watershed. In particular the relevant SDGs include: goal 2 (to promote sustainable agriculture), goal 6 (on sustainable management of water), goal 9 (on building resilient infrastructure), goal 12 (on ensuring sustainable production patterns), goal 15 (on promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems including halting land degradation), and lastly (and perhaps most importantly in this case) goal 16 (on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies including building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions).

We have serious concerns that, to date, the inclusive and accountable institution building needed to effectively address the Quill Lakes water issues has not occurred. Minimally it is the responsibility of the Government of Saskatchewan to lead in this area. Large numbers of communities that will be directly affected by what is being proposed have not been included nor consulted and will pay the costs for the negative externalities imposed on them by upstream decision makers. This creates tremendous legal liabilities for the province and degraded water for future generations. Lack of transparency, participation, and voice for affected individuals and groups, not to mention strong support for the general and long-term citizen interest means that optimal solutions will not even be found, much less implemented. Nor has the input of those holding local, regional, and/or scholarly knowledge and technical expertise been sought. The following list of developments to date support the above claims:

On Feb 14, 2017 we learned from Kerry Holderness that a meeting between the delegations of Wascana Upper Qu'Appelle Watersheds Association Taking Responsibility (WUQWATR) and the Quill Lakes WaterShed Association (QLWA) #14 took place on January 13, 2017. From these deliberations WUQWATR agreed that fresh water could be diverted while all possible higher TDS water must be retained in the Quill lakes system.

On April 27, 2017, we learned at the meeting, held in Raymore, that the diversion of three creeks would be moved into Kutawagan Lake with a controlled structure in place to move water into Last Mountain Lake. This is despite the much higher saline content in Kutawagan Lake (4000 – 5000 TDS) relative to Last Mountain Lake (1400 – 1800 TDS).

As you may recall, on September 18, 2015 Environmental Minister at the time, the Honourable Herb Cox **reversed** the proposed plan to divert water into Last Mountain Lake through Kutawagan. He stated in his media release “the reaction [to divert water into Last Mountain Lake] wasn't positive, with 74 per cent of those consulted not approving the proposal.”

Unfortunately, we are again facing the same question, but expecting a different outcome. We know that the Quill Lakes flooding is manmade and considered a disaster by many. Since 2006 the lakes have risen from an elevation of approximately 515 metres to 520.9 metres, a height differential of 4.9 metres. The KGS report indicates that 38% of the inflows are from drainage so that would mean that 1.9 metres of this

increase is due to drainage. This flooding and the need to spend tax payers' dollars to raise the highways would not be happening if the lakes were almost 2 metres lower than they are to date.

Our communities are looking for trust, leadership and a collective solution. We have learned from the past that community engagement with, in this case, the Quill Lakes Water Shed Authority will generate solutions. Solving problems that involve the best and the brightest from our: First Nation Communities; research communities; industries (such as potash, oil and gas); water champion communities; and, policy makers will built trust and result in workable solutions.

Our communities are being divided and this is leading to protests and unrest. Our questions to you Mr. Minister are these: ***(1) Will you begin an equitable problem-solving process, which reinforces open collaboration, evidence-based decision making, engagement of all concerned, and which seeks positive solutions and trust amongst our communities? (2) What will be your timeline for such a process?***

We want to share that we are very much opposed to water being moved through Kutawagan and will do what we need to do to ensure the wellbeing of the Qu'Appelle watershed river, and lake systems.

We look forward to your timely response to the above two questions and the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Aura Lee MacPherson
Chairperson of the Calling Lakes Ecomuseum

Cc:

Hon. Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan

Hon. Ralph Goodale, MP, Regina Wascana

Hon. Catherine McKenna, Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change

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