

Ministre de l'Environnement



Minister of the Environment

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3

JUN 15 2012

The Honourable Jim Bradley, M.P.P.
Minister of the Environment
Government of Ontario
Ferguson Block, 11th Floor
77 Wellesley Street West
Toronto ON M7A 2T5

Dear Minister:

Thank you for your letter of May 23, 2012, confirming your commitment to the negotiation of a new *Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem* (COA)

As you noted, for over 40 years, Canada and Ontario have worked together under a series of agreements to restore, protect and conserve the Great Lakes. Environment Canada is proud of this historical cooperation and values the contributions that were made to meet Canada's obligations under the *Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* (GLWQA).

In 2010, Canada and the United States began negotiations to amend and modernize the GLWQA, and I would like to express my appreciation for the vital role that Ontario has played throughout the negotiations process. Taking into full account the advice and input provided by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Canada and the United States are negotiating a streamlined and expanded GLWQA to more comprehensively address current problems in the Great Lakes, including issues not adequately addressed by the existing Agreement such as the nearshore environment, aquatic invasive species, habitats and species, and climate change impacts.

I would also like to recognize Ontario's work in the development of a proposed *Great Lakes Protection Act* and accompanying *Great Lakes Strategy*. The amended GLWQA will provide the foundation for making even greater progress on the achievement of tangible results for the restoration and protection of Great Lakes water quality. I am pleased to see Ontario move forward with legislation that will help Canada deliver these results.

With the GLWQA negotiations drawing to a close, and Ontario's proposed *Great Lakes Protection Act* tabled, I propose that negotiations for a new COA begin immediately and that our two governments move as expeditiously as possible to conclude a new agreement. A new COA will set out the action plan for the federal and provincial governments to work cooperatively toward its shared goals.

Over the coming months, the Government of Canada looks forward to working with Ontario to meaningfully engage and involve the Great Lakes community in the development of a new COA. As we begin formal negotiations, I am pleased to name Mr. Michael Goffin, Regional Director General for Environment Canada in Ontario, as Chief Negotiator on behalf of the Government of Canada.

In the meantime, I remain committed to continuing the solid collaboration that Canada and Ontario have always exercised in improving Great Lakes water quality.

The Government of Canada continues to sustain its strong commitment to the Great Lakes, even in these times of fiscal restraint. Federally, we have made significant investments towards cleaning up Areas of Concern and the remediation of contaminated sediments, addressing toxics and nuisance algae, improving water quality in Lake Simcoe and addressing threats posed by Asian Carp. I am enclosing some information on recent federal commitments in the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes are vital in supporting our environment, our economy, and our society. By continuing our collaborative efforts, we can continue to make progress on this rich and valuable natural resource.

I appreciate Ontario's continued commitment to protect and improve our shared Great Lakes, and we look forward to continued cooperation under a new Agreement.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Peter Kent, P.C., M.P.

Enclosure

c.c.: The Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
The Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health
The Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources
The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Public Works and
Government Services
The Honourable Denis Lebel, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and
Communities
The Honourable Ted McMeekin, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and
Rural Affairs
The Honourable Michael Gravelle, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources

b.c.c.: Michael Goffin, Regional Director General, Ontario Region

FEDERAL COMMITMENT TO GREAT LAKES

- The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have access to clean, safe and healthy water, that there is a reliable and secure supply of water, and that our water resources are used wisely, both economically and ecologically.
- Under the Government's Action Plan for Clean Water, action is being taken with a commitment of \$48.9 million to remediate contaminated sediment, a key source of toxics, in the Canadian Areas of Concern.
- The Government of Canada's commitment to the remediation of Great Lakes Areas of Concern remains strong, with funding of \$8 million per year having been renewed and made permanent in Budget 2010.
- In addition to specifically targeted Great Lakes funding, the Government of Canada also contributes to cleaning up and protecting the lakes through a wide array of national programs and legislation delivered by multiple departments; including Environment Canada, Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Health Canada, Public Works and Government Services Canada, and Infrastructure Canada.
- Canada continues to invest resources in addressing high priority issues, with Budget 2011 providing new funding (\$16 million) to address the reoccurrence of toxic and nuisance algae in the Great Lakes, with a particular focus on Lake Erie and Budget 2012 announcing the continuation of the fund to clean up Lake Simcoe.
- The Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, recently announced new federal funding totalling \$17.5 million to protect the Great Lakes from the threat of Asian carp.