



Update on Save Georgian Bay's Ongoing Efforts

October 31, 2023

Dear Supporters of Save Georgian Bay,

When Save Georgian Bay was established, our primary goal was to shed light on the proposed pumped storage project by TC Energy. We aimed to expose its shortcomings, petition all levels of government, and inform citizens across Georgian Bay and Ontario. At the outset, it seemed logical that our efforts would prompt a reconsideration, given the project's use of outdated technology, its lack of ratepayer value, and strong community opposition.

However, hindsight reveals that our initial optimism may have been somewhat naive. Despite our engagement with the community, garnering thousands of supporters in Meaford and beyond, and our petitions to local, provincial, and federal authorities, the project persists. This persistence can be attributed to several unforeseen challenges:

- Elected municipal representatives reversing their campaign promises and environmental commitments.
- A proponent using financial incentives (e.g. financial participation in the project, community benefits agreement, construction contracts, etc.), to influence First Nations and Municipal decision-makers, despite their communities' environmental concerns.
- A provincial government that exerts undue influence on municipal politicians and prioritizes deals with big business over common sense (similar to what we saw in the recent Greenbelt scandal).
- Political decisions superseding sound agency analysis.

In our previous update, we mentioned a strategic renewal, and we are now pleased to provide more details on the new directions we are pursuing:

1. Collective impact and coordinated advocacy.

Save Georgian Bay is collaborating with the Escarpment Corridor Alliance (ECA), focused on safeguarding the Niagara Escarpment in Southern Georgian Bay, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. We have also strengthened our relationship with the Georgian Bay Association, whose purpose is to protect and preserve Georgian Bay's

precious and fragile freshwater ecosystem for generations to come. Our three organizations have a shared goal of protecting the lands around, and waters of, Georgian Bay.

2. Retained Donnelly Law.

In anticipation of potential legal battles, we have retained one of Canada's most renowned environmental lawyers, David Donnelly, Donnelly Law, who is dedicated to environmental advocacy and public interest causes. www.donnellylaw.ca

3. DND concerns related to the TC Energy Pumped Storage Project.

Over three years after our Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) request, we have obtained over 1,500 pages from the Department of National Defense (DND). These documents shed light on the Department of National Defense's serious environmental concerns related to the TC Energy Pumped Storage Project.

- **Species at Risk** - In these documents, the DND expresses their concern for the many federally protected species at risk that call CFB Meaford home. Specifically, DND wrote *"There are potentially up to 30 federally protected species at risk (SAR) throughout the 4 CDTC [4th Canadian Division Training Centre] property; and potentially 20 SAR within the proposed project location."* They go on to write that *"This proposed PSP is estimated to devastate approximately 10% of 4 CDTC's wildlife with direct effects alone."*
- **Contaminated Soils** - The DND also expresses their concern about the spread of soil contamination. Specifically, DND wrote *"Over the years the impact area has been heavily used for various types of fires. The expended rounds have caused various types of contamination from heavy metals to other toxins. Disturbing the soil would expose more of these elements to the surrounding area (air, land, and water) and if the soil were used as part of the reservoir walls, then the heavy metals and toxins could cause increased contamination of the water. Pollution of the water creates large concerns for marine animals' health and for any person drawing water from the bay for personal use."* They go on to write *"Given the nature of the area being proposed, there is a very real concern that contaminants introduced by the CAF over years of training area use could spread once the area is disturbed by construction."*
- **Unexploded Ordnance** - These documents also show that the current estimated \$4.3 billion construction cost and completion date for this project are unrealistic, due to the enormous scope of work associated with the Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) that must be performed before construction can begin. Specifically, DND wrote: *"TransCanada has limited to no experience working in an area with UXOs. Their current estimate states three years of consultation and planning and four years of construction. They have not factored in*

the UXO problem. ADM(IE) pers around the table stated that UXO clearance could add years to construction” and “DND expressed that they have concerns with TCE’s proposed location given their lack of UXO expertise, given their history of projects.”

We are working to share these serious concerns with project decision-makers and stakeholders.

4. Media Engagement and interest.

We have continued to share our message with local, provincial, and national media. We are pleased to share that we have generated some interest from several high-profile media outlets that we expect will amplify our voice.

5. Collaboration with Small Change Fund.

To support our fundraising efforts, we have collaborated with Small Change Fund, a platform to amplify the impact of community projects. The Small Change Fund crowdsourcing platform will help to expand our reach and amplify our impact. The Small Change Fund has an expert team helping us and is managed by its very experienced President, Burkhard Mausberg, the former President of the Greenbelt Foundation and Executive Director of Environmental Defence. Among the values that the Small Change Fund brings is the ability to issue tax receipts to donors. You can find our project on the Small Change Fund website.

<https://smallchangefund.ca/project/save-the-bay/>

We remain optimistic that these avenues will yield positive outcomes. Just as the Ford government reversed its decision on the Greenbelt, we believe that the pumped storage project can be the next major reversal of a proposed project. ***We need your help more than ever.***

In the coming months, some key decisions will be made and we need your help to continue to share our message. As you may know, the Ontario Ministry of Energy chose to advance both this project and two others to the second stage of the Independent Electricity System Operator’s (IESO) three-gate evaluation process despite the IESO’s conclusion that none of these pumped storage projects were forecast to provide insufficient value to Ontario’s electricity consumers. ***We expect the Minister of Energy’s next decision to be made by the end of November.*** Here's what you can do to help:

- 1. Letter writing** – Have your voice heard by continuing to share your views with all media, stakeholders, and decision-makers. Watch your e-mail for letter-writing campaigns or write an independent letter. You can find mailing addresses and e-mail addresses on our website. <https://savegeorgianbay.ca/political-contacts/>

2. **Social Media Engagement** - Follow Save Georgian Bay on social media. Re-posting, sharing, and commenting on our content will help to expand our reach. When you do so, tag the stakeholders too. You can find their social media handles on our website <https://savegeorgianbay.ca/political-contacts/> and you can follow Save Georgian Bay here:

<https://twitter.com/SaveGeorgianBay>

<https://www.facebook.com/SavingGeorgianBay>

<https://www.instagram.com/savegeorgianbay/>

3. **2024 Save Georgian Bay Polar Dip** – It's almost that time of year again! Start training now and gearing up your friends and family to cheer you on. This will be our third annual Polar Dip and we expect it to be bigger and better than ever. Stay tuned for your chance to sign up or to volunteer at the event!
4. **Financial Support** – Support our fight to Save Georgian Bay with a contribution towards our efforts to uncover the facts, petition all levels of government, and inform citizens around Georgian Bay and beyond about the proposed pumped storage project by TC Energy. Donate through the Small Change Fund to receive a tax receipt or directly to Save Georgian Bay on our website.

<https://smallchangefund.ca/project/save-the-bay/>

<https://savegeorgianbay.ca/donations/donation-form/>

Your unwavering support, whether through letters, contributions, or advocacy, is deeply appreciated. Together, we strive to preserve the well-being and beauty of Southern Georgian Bay. Thank you for standing with us in this crucial endeavor.

Sincerely,

Tom Buck

for Save Georgian Bay
www.savegeorgianbay.ca