



138 Hopedale Avenue, Toronto, Ontario  
M4K 3M7  
(647) 824-2922  
executivedirector@georgianbay.ca

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*Via email*

## **OPEN LETTER: A \$285 MILLION MISUSE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS —WE DEMAND ANSWERS**

We are writing to express our deep concern over the Ontario government's decision to allocate up to \$285 million in taxpayer funds for cost estimates and environmental assessments to advance the TC Energy pumped storage project in Meaford.

The Georgian Bay Association (GBA) represents 18 community associations along the east and north shores of Georgian Bay. This includes four municipalities—Township of The Archipelago, Township of Georgian Bay, Town of Parry Sound, and McDougall—that have passed resolutions opposing the project due to concerns about its far-reaching impacts on the greater Georgian Bay region.

While we acknowledge the government's intent to address energy demands, GBA has serious concerns about the proposed project's costs to taxpayers and risks to water quality, aquatic life, and the habitats of at-risk species. The damage will extend far beyond Meaford, disrupting fisheries, tourism, and shoreline stability throughout the region. The opposition from multiple municipalities within our catchment area underscores significant community concerns about the project's long-term environmental and economic consequences.

### **Our Primary Concerns - \$285 million dollars of taxpayers' money allocated prior to investigating, resolving and/or mitigating these issues:**

1. **Environmental Risks:** The project threatens the health of **Georgian Bay's fragile ecosystem**. The process of pumping water from the Bay into a reservoir and returning it to generate electricity could increase turbidity, which can damage fish and other organisms, smother habitats, and interfere with recreation and drinking water supplies.
2. **Toxin Contamination:** The proposed project site is located near a Department of National Defence property, which raises concerns about the possibility of toxins from munitions and heavy metal compounds leaching into the water, further compromising the health of Georgian Bay's ecosystem. ***Please refer to the attached document outlining our concerns in detail.***
3. The project could **disrupt habitats for up to 30 at-risk species amounting to a loss of about 10 per cent of local wildlife**, as displacing 375 acres of critical habitat to build the reservoir will put these species at greater risk during construction and operation.
4. **Lack of Economic Viability:** Ontario's energy regulator, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), has rejected the proposal twice, citing its lack of net economic benefits to ratepayers. More cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable alternatives, such as large-scale battery storage, have been identified. Investing in such a high-risk project with limited economic return is a poor use of public funds.

5. **Local Opposition:** Several municipalities around Georgian Bay—including the **Township of Georgian Bay, Archipelago, Parry Sound, and McDougall**—have passed resolutions **opposing** the project.

### **Smarter Alternatives to Pumped Storage**

Ontario has more responsible and effective energy options than committing \$285 million in taxpayer money to a private corporation for an inefficient and environmentally harmful project—alternatives that are both financially and environmentally sound while better meeting the province’s energy needs:

- Battery storage, which is significantly more efficient (95-98 per cent vs. 70 per cent for pumped storage), more cost-effective, and highly flexible in deployment. Projects like the Oneida battery storage facility showcase the potential of modern technology to support Ontario’s energy needs without major environmental harm.
- Expanding Ontario’s east-west transmission connections with Quebec, allowing access to Quebec’s vast hydro-electric reservoirs for energy storage at a fraction of the cost—estimated to be up to 90 per cent cheaper than TC Energy’s proposal. This approach would also help Ontario avoid unnecessary damage to Georgian Bay while reducing reliance on expensive nuclear power.

Given these significant concerns and the alternatives outlined above, we strongly urge the Ontario government to reconsider its commitment to this project. Public funds should not be used to subsidize a project that threatens our environment, lacks economic merit, and is opposed by many affected communities. We respectfully request that the government halt further investments in the TC Energy pumped storage project and prioritize alternative, more sustainable energy solutions for Ontario.

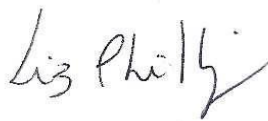
The Georgian Bay Association (GBA) has advocated for our members for over 100 years, reaching an estimated 30,000 residents of Georgian Bay. Our mandate is to work with our water-based communities and other stakeholders to ensure the careful stewardship of the greater Georgian Bay environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response and to a decision that reflects the best interests of both the environment and the people of Ontario.

Sincerely,



Allison Needham  
Interim Executive Director  
Georgian Bay Association



Liz Phillips  
President, Georgian Bay Association