

**Ministry of Economic
Development, Employment
and Infrastructure**

**Ministry of Research
and Innovation**

Office of the Deputy Minister

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**Ministère du Développement
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February 12, 2016

Dr. Dianne Saxe
Environmental Commissioner of Ontario
605-1075 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2B1

Dear Dr. Saxe:

Congratulations on your new role as Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, and thank you for your letter seeking the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure's confirmation of our commitment to our responsibilities under the Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993 (EBR). I am pleased to respond.

The Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is making significant contributions toward sustainability and reducing Ontario's environmental footprint. The ministry has funded programs and projects that support several environmental initiatives, including reducing industry greenhouse gas emissions, reducing vehicle emissions, constructing energy-efficient buildings, encouraging the development of renewable energy, and supporting green transportation and public transit. The ministry has also financially supported the Water Technology Accelerator Project (WaterTAP), which champions and supports Ontario's status as a significant clean water/water conservation technology hub. Compliance with the EBR helps to ensure that the ministry's policies balance the interests of the public, stakeholders and the environment.

The EBR provides the people of Ontario with the means to voice their opinions before decisions are made that can impact the environment. The Environmental Registry was created as a way to share information on the environment and facilitate the submission of comments by the public to government ministries.

As our Statement of Environmental Values says, MEDEI believes that public consultation is vital to sound environmental decision-making. We reaffirm our commitment to the EBR by:

- complying with our legal responsibilities under the EBR to post environmentally significant proposals on the Environmental Registry in order to provide the public with notice of the opportunity for comment
- posting decision notices on the Environmental Registry as required by the EBR and updating the status of notices in a timely manner
- meaningfully considering the ministry's Statement of Environmental Values whenever a decision is made that may significantly affect the environment.

As always, the ministry remains deeply committed to the EBR and our statutory obligations contained therein and recognizes the EBR's value in improving public engagement and government performance on environmental stewardship. We will continue to comply with our legal responsibilities under the EBR and will strive to ensure that the Environmental Registry continues to allow the public to exercise its rights as governed by the EBR and its regulations.

Going forward, the ministry stresses that we:

- recognize the importance of communicating significant decisions with the public through the Environmental Registry, will continue to use the registry as one of its primary public consultation tools and to place great importance on the registry's proper use
- will work to manage all outdated decision and proposal notices in a timely manner
- acknowledge the importance of responding to Applications for Review and Investigation within statutory timelines, while recognizing that some EBR applications raise complex matters and issues requiring an integrated, multifaceted response by government
- will continue to apply its Statement of Environmental Values to environmentally significant decisions. As a demonstration of the ministry's commitment to applying it to our decision-making process, we will strengthen the statement in the coming year to include consideration of climate change.

Once again, thank you for writing. I look forward to working with you in our shared goal of protecting Ontario's environment.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Giles Gherson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Giles Gherson
Deputy Minister