

Open letter to Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario

When you became Premier, you committed to a more open and accountable government and to give municipalities more say in issues and projects that had significant impact on their citizens. In your throne speech you committed to listening to the needs of communities and ensuring that local towns and cities had more “say” in proposed development projects.

They must have a voice in their future and a say in their integrated, regional development so that local populations are involved from the beginning if there is going to be a gas plant or a casino or a wind plant or a quarry [or a landfill] in their hometown. Because our economy can benefit from these things but only if we have willing hosts.

On Thursday of last week the City of Ottawa was informed through the media that your government had approved a new garbage dump for the west end of the city. We use the term dump rather than landfill because it truly is dumping garbage in the ground for eternity. Approval was given even though throughout the environmental assessment (EA) process; citizens, city staff and city council strongly opposed the proposal and requested numerous conditions be considered by the proponent to address major concerns about odours, property values, groundwater impacts, traffic and more.

When the new dump was first proposed; over 12,000 people signed a petition stating categorically that they did not want another big dump in their community. Throughout the EA process The Mayor and City Council on several occasions voted unanimously for motions that presented concerns about the proposed dump and suggested conditions that would address those concerns. In fact, the last set of conditions voted on by city council was hand delivered to the Minister of the Environment by the Mayor to emphasize the level of concern the city had with the proposal and outline the conditions the city felt were needed to address those concerns.

Yet on September 5, 2013 the Mayor, city council and the citizens of Ottawa learned through the media that the EA for the proposed dump had been approved by the Minister of the Environment with little reference to any of the concerns and conditions brought forth by Council and the citizens of Ottawa. How can such disregard of the concerns of the citizens and city council of Ottawa; the second largest city in Ontario with 900,000 people; be justified given your stated commitment to open and accountable government.

In keeping with the promise of your government to give municipalities more say in decisions and approvals for projects impacting their citizens; the people of Ottawa respectfully ask you, as Premier to take ownership of this issue and listen to the concerns raised by council and the community. For this dump to be approved as is; without addressing community concerns; runs contrary to your promise of change in how Ontario is to be governed.

Sincerely;

Harold Moore
Don't Let Ottawa Go To Waste