

**Subject:** Big Falls

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**To:** Minister.MECP@ontario.ca <Minister.MECP@ontario.ca>

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December 3, 2020

Honourable Jeff Yurek,  
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks,  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
777 Bay St.,  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Jeff Yurek:

I am from Namekosipiink, Trout Lake, Ontario, and am a descendant of signatories to Treaty #3. My ancestors, along with the Lac Seul and Sturgeon people, signed the adhesion to the treaty in June 1874. The Namekosipiikw Anishinaape community is the most northerly community of Treaty #3. Although we are dispersed all across this great Turtle Island, our community is still vibrant and we will protect our waters, and those of our brothers and sisters who live downstream from our homelands and waters.

The Trout Lake River has since time before memory been our travel route to and from Lac Seul and other places south. That river system is still a travel route. The river is full of wild rice fields, medicines, and other relations who thrive in the interdependence of this water system. The Trout Lake River meets with the Chukuni River and both then flow into the English River. Downstream of the English River are two communities, Grassy Narrows First Nation and Wabaseemoong First Nation. These two communities have already been devastated by the presence of methyl-mercury in the water and in their local food sources. I am sure that you are aware of their ongoing efforts to have the river cleaned up and for their people to be given proper medical care for having been poisoned by this polluted river.

Recently, Linda Heron, of the Ontario River Alliance (ORA), let me know about a letter she received from the Ministry, as well as a letter to Mr. Frank Belerique, Vice President of Horizon Hydro Operations Limited. Linda was contacted to inform ORA that their Part II Order request made back in May of 2013, about Big Falls on the Trout Lake River, would no longer be considered unless the concerns were related to Aboriginal Treaty Rights - any other concerns would not be considered. ORA did speak up for the lack of proper Aboriginal consultation and about the methyl-mercury that would concentrate in our fish, so she was informed that their Part II Order request still stands.

I also made a Part II Order request in May of 2013 in opposition to this hydroelectric project. These Part II Order requests sat in the Ministry files for over 7 years with no one contacting me to inform me that this project was still active and being considered. I would like to know why I have not been contacted? Is my Part II Order request still being considered or has it been terminated by the amendments to the Environmental Assessment Act?

On May 14, 2014, with a Band Council Resolution, reference number 06-14, Lac Seul First Nation declared the Trout Lake River, between the Trout Lake Conservation Reserve and the Bruce Lake Conservation Reserve, the KichiPaawitik River Park and protected from any and all industrial development. We NamekosipiikwAnishinaapek are committed to carry out this protection and continue to be care-takers of this river which was given to us by KicheManitoo.

Please take Big Falls off the list of rivers for **hydroelectric development** in order to create a short term economic boost for a small group of people. This project in no way can be a part of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act.

Sincerely,

Kaaren Dannenmann, NamekosipiwAnishinaapeKwe  
Anton Beach, Trout Lake, Ontario

c.c

Sarah Paul

Assistant Deputy Minister  
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Environment Assessment and Permission Division  
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