



July 29, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: GWP 93-89-00 & GWP 5550-04-00
Replacement of Oxtongue Lake Narrows Bridge
& Oxtongue River Bridge, Highway 60**

There is agreement that the bridge work identified above needs to be completed in an expeditious manner. However, there are several critical issues that need to be addressed before construction begins. I believe Minister Bradley would be sensitive to the tourism implications this construction project would have on the region.

Tourism Profile of Oxtongue Lake

The Oxtongue Lake area is pristine wilderness that relies heavily on the tourism. There are a dozen tourism related businesses currently in operation. In the immediate vicinity of the proposed project, (50 feet from the construction site) are three successful tourism businesses.

Advance Payment For Loss of Business During Construction

The government of Ontario and specifically the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and other responsible parties should enter into a mutually agreeable plan with those area businesses that will be adversely affected by this construction. The plan must provide **advance compensation** for the resulting loss of business during the construction period, especially for the three tourism businesses immediately adjacent to the construction site. No one will want to stay in overnight accommodation next to a major construction project. The last time there was bridge construction at this location, it took 20 years of litigation to resolve the issue. MTO's legal bills exceeded the value of the final settlement.

Geo-Technical Assessment

After reviewing the existing material, it is unclear what level of geo-technical work is scheduled for this project. It is an environmentally fragile area that may also present significant construction challenges. A comprehensive geo-technical survey will help identify and hopefully avoid any surprises before construction begins. The Kearney Creek bridge project is a classic example of how not to manage bridge construction and partner relationships.

Maintain Two Lanes of Traffic During Construction

Highway 60 is a significant transportation artery connecting Muskoka to major markets in Eastern Ontario and the National Capital Region. During construction, two way traffic flows on Highway 60 must be maintained. Unnecessary delays will adversely affect visitation into Muskoka. It is recommended that bridge construction be limited to shoulder season periods and severe restrictions be placed on weekend construction activities.

Algonquin Park

Algonquin Park is the premiere facility of its kind in Ontario and a significant tourism asset for Muskoka. Anything that impedes visitation into the park especially on weekends is a major concern. For example, each fall the park hosts 750 motor coaches. When tour operators perceive traffic delays at strategic locations, they will re-route and not include Algonquin Park in order to stay on schedule.

G8 Event - June 2010, Deerhurst Muskoka

The proposed start and completion dates for this project are not clear. As you may know, the government of Canada is hosting the 2010 G8 meeting at Deerhurst in Muskoka. The estimated attendance is approximately 3,000 people plus world media representatives. There would be an interest on the part of the federal government to ensure this construction project did not interfere with G8 activities. When hosting previous G8 events in Canada, the federal government has provided capital funds for infrastructure improvements in the host region.

Post Project Landscaping

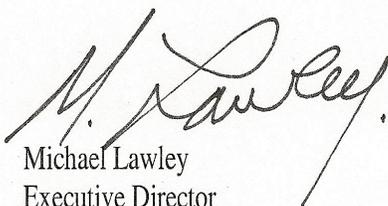
Please provide a detailed plan on what the site will look like after the bridge construction has been completed. Large mature trees, shrubs and other plantings should be incorporated into the site.

Other Construction Projects Planned

What other construction projects does MTO have planned for Hwys. 400, 11, & 60 that may impact the tourism industry of Muskoka?

It is essential that MTO and other responsible parties meet with the affected tourism businesses to discuss compensation before construction begins.

Sincerely,



Michael Lawley
Executive Director
Muskoka Tourism

cc: Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation
Honourable Peter Fonesca, Minister of Tourism
Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources
Honourable Tony Clement, MP - Muskoka Parry Sound
John O'Toole, PC Critic for Transportation
Ted Arnott, PC Critic for Tourism