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****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

**PARRY SOUND OPPOSES TC ENERGY PUMPED STORAGE PROPOSAL
URGES CLEAN UP OF CONTAMINATED DND BASE IN MEAFORD**

MEAFORD, ON: A major cottage-country town on Georgian Bay is urging the federal government to take immediate action to clean up unexploded munitions and other toxins on a Department of Defence training base in Meaford, Ontario where TC Energy has vowed to proceed with its controversial pumped storage proposal, which could cost at least \$7 billion.

In a unanimous decision last week, the council of Parry Sound became the fourth Georgian Bay municipality since mid-November to oppose TC Energy's plan, citing it as a threat to the environment and the area's vital tourism and sports-fishing industries.

But in an added twist, the council urged Diane Leboutheillier, the federal minister of fisheries and oceans, as well as officials at the 4th Canadian Division Training Centre in Meaford to "remediate" the military base.

According to Access of Information documents, the base, which was created from expropriated farmland in 1942 as a military tank range, is littered with unexploded ordnance. If TC Energy disturbs the soil while excavating its planned 375-acre reservoir, the hydro electric plant could contaminate local wells and aquifers and leak toxic pollutants into the bay waters below.

The Parry Sound Council also urged Ontario Energy Minister Todd Smith and his cabinet colleagues to listen to their own regulators at the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO). It has ruled twice against the project for providing no net economic benefit to Ontario's electricity ratepayers.

News of the Parry Sound vote comes on the first anniversary of a contentious 5-2 vote by Meaford's own Council, which chose to disregard substantial opposition within the packed council chamber and a petition signed by 3,300 opponents, to declare the municipality a conditional 'willing host' to the project. At the time TC Energy's John Mikkelsen had warned Council that Meaford would receive substantial economic benefits from the corporation "if—and only if"—it agreed to such a vote.

Now, a year later, those benefits have yet to materialize or be spelled out. But on February 26th, opponents once again jammed Meaford Council chambers, spilling over into the outer hall, to protest efforts by TC Energy to win a seat on a new nine-member Pumped Storage Advisory Committee set up to give residents a say on the impacts and risks of the project. According to the original announcement of the committee, the Meaford-based volunteer group, Save Georgian Bay, would have been allotted at least one seat as would a representative of the 300 property owners whose homes, farms and cottages lie in the "impact zone" below the planned reservoir.

In a heated two-hour session, kicked off by deputations from eight opponents, Council finally backed down from giving TC Energy a seat. But the project's most ardent supporters on Council also succeeded in eliminating the seats reserved for opponents, including Save Georgian Bay, and voted that all potential members would be pre-interviewed and selected by Council. Meaford mayor Ross Kentner declared that Council was trying to "depoliticize" the process but for spurned opponents, that final decision appeared to have the opposite effect.

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