



GREAT NEWS FOR SAVE GEORGIAN BAY SUPPORTERS: ANOTHER COUNCIL VOTES AGAINST TC ENERGY'S PUMPED STORAGE SCHEME IN MEAFORD

An unexpected boost from across Georgian Bay: another key cottage-country municipality has joined the growing chorus of opposition against TC Energy's contentious \$4.5-billion Pumped Storage Project slated for Meaford, Ontario. This week, the council of the Township of Georgian Bay—which includes Port Severn, Honey Harbour, Cognashene and historic Go Home Bay—voted unanimously against the costly megaproject, warning it could cause “irreparable harm” to the environment and the area's vital tourism, sport and commercial fishing industries.

The councillors also urged Energy Minister Todd Smith to “cease” his support for the proposal and heed the recommendations from his own regulator, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO). In the past three years, the IESO has twice declared the project fails to deliver any real economic benefit to electricity ratepayers. But on January 9th, the minister tasked the IESO with reviewing the proposal yet again while negotiating to pay TC Energy's pre-construction costs—a highly unusual arrangement for a project that was both unsolicited and never subject to a public tender. As the resolution concludes: “It is a very bad financial deal for Ontario.”

That vote makes the township the third municipality around the Georgian Bay basin to take a stand against the proposal in three months. On November 17th, the council of the Township of The Archipelago in Parry Sound District first passed a resolution “vehemently” opposing the project. Then on December 18th, the Town of Blue Mountains, incorporating Meaford's next-door neighbour, Thornbury, followed suit with a similar unanimous vote.

“This resolution rightly recognizes the waters of Georgian Bay follow no municipal boundaries,” said Tom Buck of Save Georgian Bay. “The water touches all of us.”

Those three votes—two from municipalities on the far eastern shore of Georgian Bay—refute TC Energy's claim that mounting protests from grassroots groups like Save Georgian Bay are based on a case of NIMBYism.



“This demonstrates that there is widespread concern about this project beyond the immediate area and beyond the opposition of Save Georgian Bay,” said Rupert Kindersley, executive director of the Georgian Bay Association, an umbrella advocacy group for 18 community associations.

That trio of unanimous votes stands in stark contrast to Meaford’s own controversial embrace of the project nearly a year ago. On February 27th, 2023, opponents jammed a special session of the town’s council in Meaford Hall to present deputations and a hand-signed petition from 3,300 residents—almost a third of the town’s voting-age population—protesting TC Energy’s proposal. But five of Meaford’s seven councillors succumbed to warnings from TC Energy’s John Mikkelson that the municipality could lose out on an economic bonanza from the Calgary-based pipeline corporation. “Benefits will come to Meaford if—and only if—the council votes for the project to proceed,” Mikkelson declared at the time.

But a year after Meaford proclaimed itself a conditional “willing host,” those benefits have not yet materialized nor even been spelled out. In fact, this week, TC Energy forced a minor council crisis by objecting to the makeup of a community Pumped Storage Advisory committee to which Meaford had just posted a public invitation for applications. Among Mikkelson’s objections: the committee’s “prospective membership,” which would include one representative from Save Georgian Bay and another from the 300 homes in the “impact zone” directly below TC Energy’s planned 375-acre reservoir. In a sharply worded letter, he complained that TC Energy itself had not been given a seat. Council promptly went into closed-door session and voted to put off debate for two weeks.

Come join us in fighting this corporate behemoth’s environmentally-devastating plans, either by supporting our 3rd annual Polar Dip on Saturday February 24th at 1 p.m. in Meaford’s Fred Raper Park (sponsor a dipper or brave the brisk waters of Georgian Bay yourself) (polardip.savegeorgianbay.ca). Or donate at smallchangefund.ca/project/save-the-bay/

TOGETHER, LET’S FIGHT TC ENERGY AND SAVE THE BAY!