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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

### **MEAFORD PROTEST FLOTILLA SHOWS WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION TO TC ENERGY'S PUMPED STORAGE PROJECT**

MEAFORD, ON: Canoes, kayaks, even inflatable dinghies and paddle boards—an enthusiastic mix of more than 50 watercraft took to the waters of Georgian Bay off Meaford Saturday, led by a 42-foot Catalina sailboat named the Impromptu, all wielding protest signs against TC Energy's massive drilling rig anchored offshore for the last month.

The rig, which was towed to a new location farther north the day before the widely publicized protest, has been conducting geo-technical testing of the lakebed for TC Energy's controversial \$7-billion pumped storage project. That project will involve boring massive tunnels under the lakebed to carry 23 billion litres of public Georgian Bay water a day up to a manmade reservoir on the Niagara Escarpment from 20 intake/outflow ports, each 10 metres in diameter, to be installed across a sweeping expanse of the bay.

The three-hour protest flotilla, organized by Save Georgian Bay, the Meaford-based volunteer group that has emerged as the chief opponent of the project, did not attempt to directly confront the drilling rig or board it. But the boaters brandished a megaphone and signs reading "Say No! Save Our Bay," while the sailboat flew a lengthy banner proclaiming: "TCE Greenwashing Does Not Reduce CO2 Emissions. Say No To One of Canada's Worst Climate Change Initiatives."

Despite storm forecasts and a brisk southwest wind, the group rallied boaters from as far away as Creemore, Tiny Township and Toronto for the protest, aimed at focusing attention on the project's threat to Georgian Bay's drinking water, as well as its fishing and recreation industries.

Tom Buck, a director of Save Georgian Bay, counted the water-based protest, called Anchors Away to Save Georgian Bay, a major success. "But it's outrageous we should have to do this to stop such a senseless assault on Georgian Bay," he said. "People here really love the beauty of this environment and they don't want some multi-billion-dollar corporation sacrificing that for its own profits."

Meaford resident Amanda Greenfield pointed out the clarity of the water and warned that TC Energy's massive underwater construction was putting that vital resource at risk. "We want to protect the clean waters we have in Georgian Bay, she said.

TC Energy's proposal calls for pumping 23 billion litres of Georgian Bay water up to a 375-acre reservoir it wants to excavate on the 4th Canadian Division Training Centre base on the escarpment at off-peak hours. Then, when energy demands and rates are high, it would release that water back into the bay to generate electricity under a contract it has been seeking from the Ontario government.

But the proposed site of the reservoir on Defence Department lands is included in a list of contaminated federal properties. And internal DND documents warn that its construction risks unleashing buried toxins from 80 years of live-fire weapons training into the waters of Georgian Bay.

"Why would you ever put Georgian Bay in a position that would harm our drinking water?" Greenfield said. "We have to save our water for future generations."

The proposal still has not received official approval from either the federal or provincial governments. But last February the Ontario government handed TC Energy \$285 million to help the corporation prepare detailed cost estimates and environmental assessments for the provincial energy contract it seeks.

Now the opponents fear the province will fast-track the project under its newly-passed Bill 5 (the "Protect Ontario By Unleashing Our Economy Act"), which allows chosen corporations to dispense with environmental assessments.

Buck cast the fight as a David and Goliath scenario. "TC Energy may be good at lobbying and persuading politicians," he said. "But we have the people behind us who care about the environment and protecting Georgian Bay from these absolutely unnecessary risks."

At day's end, some participants were already calling for another flotilla protest as TC Energy's rig plans to continue test-boring the bedrock beneath the lakebed until the end of September.

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