

Holland Marsh Growers' Association  
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Simcoe County Council  
Office of the Warden and CAO  
1110 Highway 26,  
Midhurst, Ontario  
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To Simcoe County Councillors and Warden Tony Guergis:

In an effort to better understand why a small regional group of farmers from the lowest part of the county would become involved in a landfill dispute, one need only be reminded that crap does, indeed, tend to flow downhill.

As an association, we opposed a decision to expand onto farmlands along the 400 – not because we believe that progress and commercialization is a bad thing but because the decision made by government infringed upon valuable farmland that this province continues to pave over and the industrialization of those lands may dramatically impact upon the water quality of the canals around the Holland Marsh. Those canals make this area in the province entirely unique. For further proof of how unique it is – ask California's multi-billion dollar agriculture industry how easy it is to grow without water.

And that is really where our opposition comes from – the obtuse usage of land, valuable resources, and the short-sighted inability to think beyond the almighty dollar while jeopardizing future generations. Those who have come out as opposed to the dump site have been labeled with the term “NIMBY”. It is the same term that the Holland Marsh farmers have endured for the past year over their opposition to a peaker plant being constructed within a few hundred metres of those above-mentioned canals. Interesting that the terminology is applied to those who would question the so-called science of the

day knowing full well that history has already shown, time and again, that the science of today is deeply flawed mere years later.

When one talks of the paper-trail environmental assessments and the computer generated models lacking real world input, one can only chuckle at the absurdity in which our governments put their faith and trust in – the hands of the very people out to exploit the resources of our lands and water in favour of ill-gotten revenue.

And let's not forget what this entire process is all about – a dump; a place for garbage for an expanding, sprawling society incapable of actually finding a useful way to dispose of its own crap. Farmers have been dealing with waste and composting for more generations than we can count, returning to the soil what needs to be for the next year, and giving to nature what is nature's due. Farmers were environmentalists long before the word became vogue. Stewards of the land was the apt description of how a farmer used to be defined. Now, a farmer is an endangered species, less than two per cent of this entire nation's population – yet a dynamic part of the largest, thriving industry in Canada now that the automotive sector is still in decline.

Those in favour of the dump argue that no alternatives have been offered and that the status quo is good enough for them. Our association would beg to differ. The status quo is no longer good enough for anyone. The status quo is this society's legacy of dumping anywhere it has ventured. There is no disputing this. Mankind, our society, has established dumps everywhere they have gone, from the high Arctic strewn with metal debris, abandoned facilities, and unthawing heaps of eternal garbage to the low Antarctic with its so-called "no man's land" filled with test tubes and failed experiments. As if that were not enough, mankind – our predecessors – even managed to leave tens of thousands of tons of debris on the moon and in orbit, furthering the concept of our "best management practices".

Compounding our own ignorance for the sake of a few thousand tax dollars against the municipal rolls will not be enough to sedate future generations when they ask the question why? As in, why did we pollute the water needed to drink? Why did the fields of golden food become a waste land of contaminated goods? Why is it possible that we can dump our trash anywhere that suits our fancy but we are unable to eat locally grown product and drink pristine water – like those who made these decisions mere years ago were able to do?

That is the legacy that this decision will invoke – maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow – but in a decade, our fellow citizens, our children will wonder why we didn't fight harder to ensure that the wealth of resources we have enjoyed our entire lives weren't passed onto them.

Put in place the moratorium – not because it will make all of the bad publicity go away for a year or so but because it is the right thing to do; because it preserves farmland at a time when farmland is becoming a premium and a finite resource; because it protects the water that will nurture our society and our agricultural industry – providing two of the

four basic essentials for human beings to survive (air and shelter being the other two); and because it shows to your constituents that governments are not just focused on today but are innovative enough to plan for the future while avoiding the mistakes of the past.

We, as a farmer organization dedicated to providing our fellow citizens with one component of human existence, never want to be around when the question is asked, where is our food coming from now that we have laid waste to all the best growing land in Ontario and in Canada? The answer may be something we don't want to hear – and the decisions made today could result in a far more positive answer for our children.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Reaume', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jamie Reaume  
Executive Director  
Holland Marsh Growers' Association