

Responses



Introduction

We are pleased to note that there is strong support for our recommended actions to clean-up Lake Simcoe.

In February 2020 Lake Simcoe Watch released, *Cleaning-Up Lake Simcoe: A Discussion Paper*, which outlines a strategy to achieve the *Lake Simcoe Protection Plan's* phosphorus reduction target by 2026. Read the Discussion Paper here:

[Cleaning-Up Lake Simcoe: A Discussion Paper](#)



We have received responses to our Discussion Paper's recommendations from more than 30 individuals and organizations including Jonathan Wilkinson, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Jeff Yurek, Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Couchiching Conservancy, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the National Farmers Union - Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

We are pleased to note that there is strong support for our recommended actions to clean-up Lake Simcoe.

The purpose of this report is twofold.

1 First, it provides a summary of the responses we have received. The full responses are posted online here:

[Read the Full Responses](#)



2 Second, to respond to the concerns raised with respect to our recommendation that Lake Simcoe municipalities and the Government of Ontario should use development charges to recover 100% of their costs of cleaning-up Lake Simcoe.

Lake Simcoe Watch is a joint initiative of the following organizations: AWARE Simcoe, Innisfil District Association, Lake Simcoe Association, South Lake Simcoe Naturalists, North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance, the STORM Coalition and the West Oro Ratepayers' Association.

Question 1

Do you support Lake Simcoe Watch’s recommendation that the Government of Ontario should develop a plan to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorus pollution to 44 tonnes per year by 2026? If no, do you support the achievement of the 44 tonne per year target by a later date? If yes, please specify the date.

We support the science-based reduction target of 44 tonnes per year. It may take longer than 2026 but we must increase our efforts to make it happen.

Couchiching Conservancy

Yes.

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Supports achievement of 44 tonne per year target by 2045.

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Supports achievement of 44 tonne per year target by 2045.

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

Yes.

Barbara Heidenreich

Yes and the sooner the better.

Cynthia Sanderson

Absolutely in support.

Domenic Filippone

I approve a clean up plan by the government as soon as possible.

Donna Deneault

Absolutely. It’s not fair to leave it for our grandchildren to fix.

Frank Wice

Yes I would support it but only if proper authorities manage it.

John Barker

Yes.

Ken Davis

Yes. This is a beautiful lake and a great asset to the province of Ontario!

Ken Imrie

Yes.

Konrad Brenner

Yes.

Marg Gurr

Yes, they need to reduce excess phosphorus pollution as soon as possible.

Nicole

Yes.

Peter Nind

Yes. It is imperative to our long term enjoyment and sustainability of the area.

S Henry

Yes.

Texas Constantine

Yes.

John Bartosik

Yes.

Anonymous #1

Yes.

Anonymous #2

How can we STILL be asking when the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan was released more than 10 years ago! And, STILL the province and local governments have not developed a plan to reduce phosphorus pollution to 44 tonnes per year... I support the reduction of phosphorus pollution NOW... stop dithering and DO IT!

Anonymous #3

Yes.

Anonymous #4

Yes. Even earlier would be nicer.

Anonymous #5

Yes.

Anonymous #6

Wait until the CONservative government is turfed.

Anonymous #7

Yes.

Anonymous #8

Support a provincial plan to include developers, municipalities, farmers.

Anonymous #9

I agree that something needs to be done, however, I do not believe that it is the sole responsibility of the G of O to develop and implement a plan.

Anonymous #10

Yes.

Anonymous #11

Question 2

Do you support Lake Simcoe Watch’s proposed actions to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorus pollution? If no, please explain why not and outline alternative actions that you believe should be taken to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorus pollution.

Yes.

Couchiching Conservancy

Uptake on water course naturalization can be limited as it requires farmers to stop production on significant acreage... Encouraging good agronomic practices such as crop residue management, nutrient management, cover crops and reduced tillage should also be encouraged and may also see higher implementation rates than larger buffer areas.

It should be noted that there is significant history (i.e. 30 years) of delivering agriculturally focused cost-share programs in the Lake Simcoe watershed. As a general statement, the farm community demonstrated significant willingness to participate and adopt further best management practices; however, more recent programs (i.e. last five years) have seen relatively lower uptake by the agricultural community. Any funding programs must be strongly aligned to the diverse production practices of the Lake Simcoe watershed. It will also be critical to tailor funding opportunities to the needs of the growers in the Holland Marsh.

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

OFA has a long history of supporting the development, review and voluntary implementation of BMP supported by cost-share

programs. The greater issue will be ensuring adequate cost-share dollars to support farmers with these initiatives. The implementation of BMPs by a farmer must also remain voluntary.

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Developed and promoted as a result of algae problems plaguing the west basin of Lake Erie, Ontario’s 4 R Nutrient Stewardship concept promotes the use of fertilizer in cropping systems that incorporates the 1) Right fertilizer source at the 2) Right rate at the 3) Right time, and in 4) the Right place.

Livestock producer groups, NGO’s, and the three general farm organizations have created the Timing Matters: Peer to Peer Reference Group to address concerns about livestock manure leaching into watersheds draining into Lake Erie....Lake Simcoe could easily be added to the Reference Group’s mandate...

The complete package of P control measures for urban stormwater as suggested in the Cleaning Up Lake Simcoe report is thorough and very well done by the authors. Historically, the pace at which municipal sewers are separated from stormwater overflows (CSO’s) continues to plod along in the province, with risks to water quality becoming increasingly evident during flash rainfall events that we can

expect with climate change.

Heavily promoting the routine pumping of private septic tanks, every four or five years will go a long way towards ensuring that septic systems and their networks continue to work safely for their owners and the community at large.

National Farmers Union - Ontario

OMAFRA created the “Best Management Practices Series”, a collection of publications to support individual farm planning and decision-making by presenting affordable options for protecting soil and water resources on the farm.

You can access these documents here: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/bmp/series.htm>.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Affairs and Food (OMAFRA)

The OFAH supports Lake Simcoe Watch’s proposed actions to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorus pollution; however, it may be beneficial to elaborate on exactly what Lake Simcoe Watch is requesting.

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

Yes.

Barbara Heidenreich

Yes.

Cynthia Sanderson

Absolutely in support.

Domenic Filippone

Question 2 / Continued

Yes.

Donna Deneault

Again keep up the good work.

Frank Wice

Yes.

John Barker

Putting fines in place where preventable discharge of soil and silt into storm sewers and natural waterways.

John Bartosik

I support any action that will contribute to the solution.

Ken Davis

Absolutely support.

Ken Imrie

Yes.

Konrad Brenner

Yes.

Marg Gurr

I support them.

Nicole

If you want residents living in the Lake Simcoe watershed to get concerned about its health then you should provide more opportunity (shoreline) for us to enjoy. As it stands the York Region section of the lake is a personal playground of shoreline property owners and boaters.

Paul Jolie

Now that we are free of the Liberal Gov in Ontario...LET'S MOVE FORWARD!!

Peter Nind

Yes.

S Henry

Yes.

Texas Constantine

No it does not go far enough. Ground source water is being pumped out faster than it can recharge during growing seasons. That run off is very difficult to control when millions of litres are pumped on any given day from aquifers and surface waters.

Anonymous #1

Yes.

Anonymous #2

OF COURSE, the reduction of Lake Simcoe's phosphorus ought to be the OVER-ARCHING GOAL for all municipalities in the Lake Simcoe Watershed.... This could go hand in hand with establishing undisturbed areas of forests and wetlands while they are STILL THERE.

Anonymous #3

Yes.

Anonymous #4

Yes.

Anonymous #5

Yes I support the plan.

Anonymous #6

No it is a constant up hill battle because there is far too many high volume pumping wells (PTTW) surrounding the Lake... Some folks are missing the signs of loss of wetlands, aquatic habitats in water tributaries that we are already facing from overburdening aquifers...They need to revoke many of these permits to reduce what they are discharging back to the Lake.

Anonymous #8

Yes.

Anonymous #9

I think that groups like Lake Simcoe Watch have a role, however plans and implementation efforts are surely a government responsibility.

Anonymous #10

Yes.

Anonymous #11

Question 3

Do you agree that the Development Charges Act should be amended to permit the Government of Ontario and Lake Simcoe municipalities to levy development charges to recover 100% of their costs of reducing Lake Simcoe’s phosphorus pollution? If no, please explain why not and outline how you believe the pollution reduction measures should be paid for.

New development should pay for increasing the phosphorus in the lake.

Couchiching Conservancy

OFA does not support changes to the Development Charges Act for this purpose. The purpose of this act is to cover capital costs associated with new development.

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

In general, OFAH is in agreement with a developer pay system to protect and conserve the environment, but we are not optimistic that this approach will work...Because the Government of Ontario is currently loosening restrictions and reducing red tape for developers, it may be important to investigate alternative methods for revenue generation.

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

OSCIA agrees that levying development charges seems a reasonable way to offset the costs of improving water quality in Lake Simcoe.

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Of course!!

Barbara Heidenreich

Yes.

Cynthia Sanderson

Yes.

Domenic Filippone

If that is the option that makes most sense, then yes.

Donna Deneault

We all need to pay our share not just the new people moving into our area.

Frank Wice

In Georgina we are using the development fees to build a MURC oh joy vs bringing water and sewers to the rest of Georgina which would reduce the load from bad septic.

John Barker

Yes.

John Bartosik

I don't believe 100% of the costs should be applied to development charges however new development should bear a significant percentage of the costs with the balance coming from a strategic fundraising strategy which remains to be developed.

Ken Davis

Yes.

Ken Imrie

No! Correcting things created in the past should be levied on the entire tax base.

Konrad Brenner

You haven't provided me with enough information to make an informed decision.

Marg Gurr

I think the major polluters ex. Farms and agriculture should be charged.

Nicole

Yes, plus increase in boat licence fees and slight increase in property taxes.

Peter Nind

Yes. However, I would like to clarify that this should be for new developments and should not penalize homeowners who want to make changes to their properties.

S Henry

Yes.

Texas Constantine

No I think industries that pump surface and ground water should be paying as well.

Anonymous #1

Yes.

Anonymous #2

ABSOLUTELY....This should have been instituted a few decades ago. For too many levels of government, development has become an unquestioned religion - and the primary source of campaign donations from 'satisfied developers'.

Anonymous #3

Question 3 / Continued

Yes.

Anonymous #4

Yes.

Anonymous #5

Development charges need to be levied...There are many wealthy people who do not seem to pay their share of taxes.

Anonymous #6

No - industries using high volumes of surface and ground waters for profiting for decades should indeed pay a share of the clean up costs.

Anonymous #8

Yes but should be shared costs.

Anonymous #9

No....Perhaps instead of LSW producing an expensive report, they could have used the funds to create a swale planting, or help a few people who can't afford to connect their septic system to the municipal sewer system.

Anonymous #10

Yes.

Anonymous #11

Question 4

Please provide any other comments about *Lake Simcoe Watch's report: Cleaning-Up Lake Simcoe: A Discussion Paper.*

Environment and Climate Change Canada is committed to developing further protections and taking active steps in the clean-up of the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg, Lake Simcoe and other large lakes. The details of these protections and actions are in development and will be more fully articulated at a later date.

**The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson,
Minister of Environment and Climate Change**

While the current phosphorus load entering the lake is still higher than the estimated goal of 44 tonnes per year, the high loads in recent years are largely driven by high volumes of water flowing into Lake Simcoe. This is due to more frequent and intense rain events, and more winter snow melts. More water flowing into the lake adds to more phosphorus.

Dissolved oxygen levels have been continuing to increase and the overall ecological health of the lake has improved. In some years we have surpassed our dissolved oxygen target of 7 mg/L. As a result, we are seeing some naturally reproducing lake trout, a positive step towards our desired outcome of renewing and sustaining a cold-water fish community...

The Plan will evolve and improve over time, based on new science and implementation experience. For this reason, the Act requires a review of the Plan every 10

years to determine whether the Plan should be amended. The ministry anticipates launching the first 10-year review of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan before the end of the year. Public input into the Plan review is encouraged; people living within the watershed and all who have an interest in the health of the lake will be encouraged to provide their feedback.

The Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

It is clear, concise and science based. Thank you for providing it.
Couchiching Conservancy

The OFAH administers ALUS Peterborough, one of OFAH's Fish and Wildlife conservation programs. It's designed to support and guide farmers wishing to convert marginal farmland to functioning ecosystems, who are then recognized via management payment support for providing ecological services to the community. This model and approach to conservation has been successfully operating nationally for over a decade. At this point, it is our understanding that there isn't a chapter for the Lake Simcoe region, and could be an excellent, innovative opportunity for approaching phosphorus reductions.

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

I grew up on the shores of Cook's Bay at DeGrassi Point and as a child we drank the water from the lake...in May, the May flies (a sign of water purity) covered the lake and shore in their millions...I haven't seen a May fly for the past 50 years.

Barbara Heidenreich

I am a resident living on Canal Road on the Holland Marsh... My biggest concern is that there are no incentives for the land owner to create native plant windbreaks, followed by most important concern. What type of chemical weed killers are these farmers applying to the land? I do not, nor have I EVER seen any Ministry of Agriculture staff around to inspect what they are spraying on the land.... I also want to see more native plant species planted along the whole stretch of the Canal both south and north sides.

Domenic Filippone

I want to say that developments like Friday Harbour should never, ever have been approved. Thank you for all that you are doing to save this most beautiful lake.

Donna Deneault

LSRCA should have their wrists slapped for issuing permits which cause more loads into the lake and when notified they have excuse after another vs rectifying!

John Barker

Question 4 / Continued

It is essential we protect this lake not only for it's beauty, but, also the major contribution it makes to sustain nature! Let's not forget the major financial benefit to all the townships, cities, and towns that surround the lake.

Ken Imrie

Stop dumping harmful agents into the lake...Road salt and its unnatural additives are making their way into our natural environment.

Marg Gurr

Please let's not screw around... let's just get the NECESSARY JOB DONE before it's too late to recover from.

Peter Nind

I believe there should also be federal grant possibilities given the climate plan.

S Henry

When it comes to planning, watershed planning should be the paramount duty for Conservation Authorities, and the botched-up cross-jurisdictional 'responsibilities' of other layers of government (intent on development primarily) must take a backseat; otherwise we get this line-up of politicians at the municipal, regional and provincial levels whose devotion to developers prevents sound planning - and we end up with degraded landscapes, sprawling overly-standardized conformity, or land-use 'cramming', NOT planning.

Anonymous #3

I've noticed in the past that governments are given too much time, too much leeway, when it comes to fixing or effectively handling a problem...

So my advice...START BIGGER, START FASTER, START BETTER, DEMAND MORE than you would normally, then after the dust settles you will end up with what you want and accept.

Anonymous #5

You may as well forget about ANY support for any projects or concerns while the CONservatives/Fraud Nation are holding Ontario hostage.

Anonymous #7

It is a good report and informative. But efforts need to be put into being part of the solution, not just reporting the problem.

Anonymous #10

Conclusion

Reducing the windfall profits of landowners is a fairer option to pay for cleaning-up Lake Simcoe than raising property taxes or boat licencing fees

Should Lake Simcoe municipalities and the provincial government use development charges to recover 100% of their costs of cleaning-up Lake Simcoe?

While Lake Simcoe Watch's Discussion Paper recommends that municipalities and the province should raise development charges to recover 100% of their costs of cleaning-up Lake Simcoe, a number of people have suggested that it is not fair to recover all of our clean-up costs via higher development charges. They suggest that some of the costs should be paid for by raising municipal property taxes and/or boat licencing fees.

In this context, it is important to note that, when a municipality re-zones land from agricultural or rural to urban residential, the landowner receives a huge windfall profit. None of this windfall profit is clawed-back to reduce local property taxes. To add insult to injury, the municipality must then raise the property taxes of its existing residents to subsidize the cost of new infrastructure that is needed to service the new subdivision that results from the zoning change. Moreover, the new infrastructure (e.g., roads) and the new development will lead to a rise in Lake Simcoe's phosphorus pollution.

As the population in the Lake Simcoe watershed continues to grow, landowners will continue to receive windfall profits as their agricultural, rural and urban lands are re-zoned to permit increased density.

Growth should pay for growth. This can be achieved by raising development charges to pay the full cost of new infrastructure and the full cost of cleaning-up Lake Simcoe. While raising development charges will reduce a landowner's windfall profits, it will not eliminate them.

In short, Lake Simcoe Watch believes that reducing the windfall profits of landowners is a fairer option to pay for cleaning-up Lake Simcoe than raising the property taxes or boat licencing fees of hard-working families or seniors on fixed incomes.

For more information
please visit

LakeSimcoeWatch.ca

