

OFAH FILE: 420A/459  
August 2, 2006

Honourable Laurel Broten, M.P.P.  
Minister of the Environment  
135 St. Clair Avenue West, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
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Dear Minister:

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (O.F.A.H.), our 81,000 members and 640 member clubs, I am writing to apprise you of our profound concern over the permit fees that are being assessed against local nonprofit conservation clubs engaged in the running of fish hatcheries. Over the past two weeks, I have attempted to discuss this issue with your staff, but since this has proven unsuccessful, I am bringing this issue directly to your attention.

Local conservation clubs across Ontario are responsible for approximately 50 per cent of all fish stocking in the province, which benefits all recreational fishing and contributes \$2.5 billion annually to the provincial economy. Given the cutbacks at the Ministry of Natural Resources, this percentage is likely to increase in the near future. These local conservation clubs, who operate strictly on a volunteer basis, with members who selflessly contribute thousands of person hours of service each year, can not possibly afford the exorbitant fees being assessed against them by your Ministry when they seek to renew their permits under the Approval of Municipal and Private and Industrial Sewage Works.

In the case of the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association (S.S.A.), which has operated a hatchery in the Owen Sound area since 1985, and runs the annual Salmon Spectacular, they have been attempting to renew their permit with the M.O.E. to treat their hatchery outflow water. M.O.E. staff suggested that they alter their setup to change three existing drainage pipes into one, and that the discharge be directed into an existing concrete effluent pond. The S.S.A. agreed to undertake this construction at the request of Ministry staff and submitted the proper application forms in order to obtain the permit to treat water for the hatchery. In attempting to do this, they were informed by the M.O.E. Environmental Assessment and Approval Branch that the permit fee will increase from the previous level of \$800 to over \$11,000, which is far beyond their capacity to pay.

Minister, It is ironic that after M.O.E. staff requested these changes as a condition of issuing the permit to treat water, that the Ministry now expects the club to pay over \$11,000 if they wish to secure the required permit. With the assistance of an engineering consultant hired by the club, they were able to negotiate a reduction of the fee to \$5,200, which is still exorbitant for a local club. They did, however, remit this amount to the Ministry on June 19, 2006, but have yet to be issued a certificate of approval.

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Many of these clubs started these hatcheries with the assistance of the government's Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (C.F.W.I.P.), and have labored long and hard to make them a success. By working to enhance the resource, local clubs like the S.S.A. benefit all Ontarians and help to boost tourism to the province. They are neither municipal nor industrial sewage works, and only discharge a small amount of effluent into the water system. Surely the M.O.E. can find a better way of classifying and dealing with nonprofit clubs like this, and we would appreciate your intervention in this matter.

Yours in Conservation,

Greg Farrant  
Government Relations Manager

GF/jb

cc: Premier Dalton McGuinty  
Honourable David Ramsay  
John Wilkinson, P.A. to the Minister, M.O.E.  
Craig Hughson, Minister's Office, M.N.R.  
Theresa McClenaghan, Minister's Office, M.O.E.  
Bill Douglas, President, S.S.A.  
O.F.A.H. Board of Directors  
Michael A. Reader, O.F.A.H. Executive Director  
Dr. Terry Quinney, O.F.A.H. Provincial Manager, Fish & Wildlife Services  
Dave Brown, O.F.A.H. Fisheries Biologist  
Andy Houser, O.F.A.H. Special Advisor – Conservation Issues