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February 10, 2003

Reference # PR-1359A/PR-1106B

Mid-Halton Region Sewage Treatment Plant Expansion

Dear Mr. Ohashid, Mayor Mulvale and Councilors:

I attended the public meeting held on January 29, 2003 and was surprised to learn of an expansion plan that would grow the sewage treatment capacity from six to eight times current levels. As a long term resident in the Glen Abbey Community living adjacent to the proposed site I have real concerns over the Halton water and wastewater master plan while there are so many unknown variables/factors.

- 1) Odour samples were only taken once in Oct 2002 and no sampling in summer months. I can assure you that we have had many days (between 5 & 10 days) where there have been odours that were so unbearable I was forced to stay indoors. Not thinking about the wastewater plant that until now I thought was a water purification plant (drinking water and not sewage); I assumed it was somebody using manure for fertilizer.
- 2) The homes adjacent to the site were built in the late eighties. When I bought our present home from Mattamy Homes in 1988 we were told the property to the south was a water purification plant (drinking water) for the local area. If this site was in the works from 1972 as the preferred site to handle North Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills future expansion plans for wastewater treatment as we learned at the public meeting, it looks like the site area and buffer zone was mismanaged and the expansion plan is now flawed. Why were developers allowed to build homes a stone throw away from the site? We do not have a sufficient buffer zone for the current plant's capacity. There are a number of homes including my own that are in the eye/heart of the odour/contamination zone. A preliminary prediction by O'Conner Associates shows detectable odours at 875 hours in the eye zone. Does that equate to over 100 days at say 8 hours per instance? That amounts to a lot of restrictions on our outdoor activities. A few trees do not act as a filter for smells and/or volatile odours or contaminants that linger over the adjacent area especially during smoggy humid days.
- 3) Our neighbourhood already is dealing with the social effects from high levels of noise from the QEW that runs 24/7. In the early spring, late fall and winter months it is especially loud because there is no tree cover. With the proposed sewage expansion the late spring, summer and early fall will be effected strong offensive odours. This severely impacts the adjacent community and recreational or leisurely out door activities in all seasons.
- 4) How many spills/accidents have we had over the course of the last ten years? Are there any correlations between this and when we notice odours or is it correlated to normal processing with the right weather conditions and wind patterns?
- 5) Are or can the spills be hazardous to our health? Have there been studies?
- 6) Are the odours and/or air bore emissions hazards to our health? Are their volatile organic compounds released using present technologies during the processing of raw sewage at the Mid-Halton plant?
- 7) Do we know the long-term health effects of major sewage treatment plants adjacent to highly populated areas? Glen Abbey, West Mount and West Oak Trails have approximately 25,000 to 35,000 homes (guessimate).

- 8) Is there other sewage treatment plants of this proposed size in the middle of neighbourhoods the size of Glen Abbey in North America? How old are the neighbourhoods? What has been their experience (e.g. social, economic, environmental)? Can we apply their learning's?
- 9) We heard at the meeting that scientists from Environment Canada and from the Canada Centre for Inland Waters have great concerns over the effect this expansion will have on the Great Lakes water quality, shoreline algae and animal life in the region. Is this not enough to have us stop and ponder if we are making the right decision here?
- 10) Have all the alternatives been put on the table including expanding capacity at all sites and adding new localized sites as needed? Should each local area share in the wastewater management responsibilities with point of generation treatment plants? Have new technologies been investigated as to feasibilities? Is growth required at all costs? Is this all about monetary constraints, budgets and the lowest cost option?
- 11) Has the Town already sunk capital on infrastructure including trunk sewers and underground networks of piping to handle 60 million cubic metres annually at the Mid-Halton plant? Is the amount of volume proposed at this location adjacent to a densely populated neighborhood and in close proximity to Lake Ontario fiscally responsible with non-purified liquids and phosphorus draining into the lake, and large amounts of bio-solids being trucked off-site and disposed of?

I believe we need an indefinite extension to this proposal until such time as proper studies are conducted. Proper studies would include: a public health assessment of chemicals used in processing, byproducts of processing including volatile bio-solids and spills (short and long term health affects); an environmental assessment (air, land, water); an odour concentration assessment including social affects; an economic assessment including property values and other economic fallouts and a technology assessment including risk factors.

Sincerely,

Al Sawatsky
Concerned Long-term Resident