



APRIL 1, 2013 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA CLOSURE DEADLINE PASSES WITHOUT EXPLANATION

Kenora, ON April 1, 2013 - The world renowned Experimental Lakes Area (ELA) was slated for closure as of March 31, 2013 and although there has been talk of a transfer to a new operator, the government remains tight lipped on the negotiations and any extension of the deadline.

With the Government of Canada showing no sign of reversing their decision to maintain financial and management responsibility of the ELA, the Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association (LOWDPOA) and the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) are urging the governments of Canada and Ontario to negotiate in good faith and to cooperate in making a realistic transitional offer to alternative operators so there is an increased chance of ELA's future success. Recognizing the limited time available to ensure this plan can be put in place, there must also be an extension of the original closure deadline to accommodate a fair and achievable transition.

"With the significant public outcry, including from the international community related to the closure of the ELA over the past nine months, we are extremely concerned by the lack of communication from the government. Canadians deserve to hear their intentions with respect to any negotiations for a takeover, and to the activities currently being undertaken on site," stated Barry Baltessen, President of LOWDPOA.

Canada will only be prepared for emerging opportunities, or threats from issues including harmful algal blooms, mercury contamination in fish, and the health impacts of hormones, flame retardants and antimicrobial nanoparticles in water - if we remain focussed and committed to the underlying science, much of which can only be conducted at the Experimental Lakes Area.

Since the closing announcement was made in May of last year, both LOWDPOA and FOCA have been vocal against the decision and have shared the concerns of their more than 50,000 members in Ontario with government representatives, with little response. "While we are based in Ontario, ELA research impacts freshwater resources across the entire country and around the world," stated Terry Rees, Executive Director of FOCA. "The government's decision to close the ELA goes directly against their commitments to improving the health of Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg and Lake of the Woods/Rainy River watersheds." Both LOWDPOA and FOCA agree that without applicable research, water quality improvement and long-term sustainability will be negatively impacted.

The Experimental Lakes Area is a world-renowned facility, and the first to make the connection that phosphates and detergents in household cleaners were impacting algal blooms in our lakes – leading to international changes in ingredients. For close to 50 years, the ELA has undertaken ground breaking research into acid rain, climate change, fish management and essentially all the ways humans and industry impact our freshwater systems.

LOWDPOA and FOCA remain committed to making every effort to ensure the ongoing operation of the Experimental Lakes Area research station. It is imperative to future generations needing freshwater both in Canada and internationally, that this important and groundbreaking work continues.

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