



August 26, 2023

Elizabeth Purcell, Manager of Planning  
District of Muskoka  
Via Email: [Elizabeth.Purcell@muskoka.on.ca](mailto:Elizabeth.Purcell@muskoka.on.ca)

Dear Ms. Purcell:

Re: Review of Lake System Health and Causation Studies Policy

We understand from a summary of the District's Community and Planning Services meeting held July 20<sup>th</sup> that the District of Muskoka has retained a consultant to undertake a review of the Lake System Health and Causation Study policies. Having now the experience of conducting these studies and reviewing their results we concur that changes need to be made. The ability of a causation study to succeed in part depends on the data available and the funds allocated to each project. The data typically available for these studies was not intended to determine cause and effect, although the consultants completing them did their best with what they had to work with to theorize what might be occurring. We also acknowledge that since we worked with the District on the Lake Health policies 8 years ago, conditions are changing in the lakes.

Therefore, we are supportive of this project but would ask two things:

1. that the District consider allowing the MLA to actively participate given our role as a key contributor of data through our citizen science water quality program and major stakeholder in the outcome of the review; and
2. that the review be supported by the creation of an expert panel (3-4 experts) to provide independent technical review to ensure that any revisions have been vetted by numerous experts in this field of study, are scientifically sound, supported by future research and responsive to emerging trends.

We would be happy to discuss this request. My contact information is included below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Deborah Martin-Downs'.

Deborah Martin-Downs,  
Chair, Environment Committee  
[martin\\_downs@sympatico.ca](mailto:martin_downs@sympatico.ca)  
416-399-6050

c.c. Lisa Marden, Director of Planning, [lisa.marden@muskoka.on.ca](mailto:lisa.marden@muskoka.on.ca)  
Liz Lundell, Chair Government and Land Use Committee, MLA

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